

“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 ninety years**

April – June 2013

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. ◆

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 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	Philippines

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.

A Guide for International Relations

An analysis of Prophet Muhammad's method of transforming societal chaos into communal peace

By Dr. Noman Malik

[This article was presented by Dr. Noman Malik at the Symposium titled "Muhammad: The Last Prophet" held in conjunction with the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society's annual convention in Columbus, Ohio in July 2009. As related in the introductory presentation titled "A Universal Prophet" by the Editor (available at: <http://www.muslim.org/light/light094.pdf>), the essence of the unique distinction afforded to Prophet Muhammad as the "last" prophet lies in the fact that he was able to provide a comprehensive model of life experiences for all mankind. In this article, Dr. Malik presents an in-depth assessment of the foundations for peaceful inter-societal relations using the life and lessons of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as examples. In doing so, he analyzes the nature of man, the connection between man and God, and the means by which this connection can be established. He further asserts that it is only by the individual members of society establishing this connection that the elements necessary for communal peace and prosperous international relations (qualities of justice, fairness, faithfulness, tolerance, respect, etc.) may be achieved.]

With the twentieth century behind us, we, at the beginning of the now twenty-first century, still find ourselves mired in wars and in conflicts, ethnic and religious. The world has wearied of this continuous strife, and the desire to be rid of these evils has perhaps never been more universal or intense than at the present time.

The rapid scientific progress in the West during the nineteenth century, and its application to industry and weapons development, produced the economic powerhouse of the industrial revolution and a military machine which no non-Western power could challenge. The result was that most of the world was under either the direct or indirect control of European countries by the end of the nineteenth century. Technical advancements have definitely brought many benefits to mankind, but the promise which it held out in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries - that the abundance produced by technology would end poverty and conflicts over resources — has been an unmitigated failure.

The frequency and ferocity of wars and conflicts during the twentieth century, with resulting loss of lives, have been unparalleled in human history. In fact, the very technology which was supposed to have been a

panacea for the ills of society has been responsible for the extreme severity of these conflicts. The increasing destructiveness and accuracy of the weapons which this technology produced finally culminated in the hideous fireballs and mushroom clouds over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in which the world glimpsed the nemesis of the current civilization.

Increasingly, a culture of greed and violence seems to be becoming more common. There exist about half a dozen flash points for future large scale conflicts, and at least three of them have the potential of becoming nuclear holocausts, which may drag the whole world into a deadly maelstrom. We seem to stumble from one conflict to another, and, if left unchecked, this could lead to another major conflagration which may end civilization as we know it.

The problem lies in **human nature**. Human nature shares with animals the attraction for material acquisition and dominance, both of which are necessary for physical survival and together with sexual desire are, in fact, the drivers of evolution. In animals, these urges are controlled by instinct, but man has been granted free will; he is not bound by instinct, and unless these urges are brought under control, men will fight over wealth and resources like beasts. Although circumstances and times may change, human nature remains the same, and it is this human nature which determines whether or not we coexist peacefully with each other. Unless we can control these base desires in ourselves, we will be condemned to a state of perpetual conflict.

It is not that people are incognizant of the fact that moral values, such as justice, fairness, love, empathy, etc, are necessary for peaceful coexistence. All nations acknowledge the need for these values and hold them in high esteem. The United Nations Charter, which proclaims the equality of nations and the need for justice and peace, bears testimony to this awareness. The problem lies in human weakness, in abandoning these high ideals when tempted by some temporary material gain. In fact, many times the worst offenders of human rights are the ones who are most vociferous in their lip service to these principles.

Fifteen hundred years ago, a situation similar to our times, and perhaps worse, existed in seventh century Arabia. In spite of a common language, culture and ethnicity, the tribes in Arabia were locked in a deadly cycle of blood feuds which had been ongoing for generations. The weaker tribes were at the mercy of the larger and stronger tribes. Survival strategies necessitated the formations of pacts and alliances which were broken at the first opportunity, if that afforded some advantage to one party or the other. In the settled areas and towns like Mecca, trade with Byzantium in commodities, such as

myrrh and frankincense, had produced a rich oligarchy fond of pomp and show. The old tribal customs which previously had provided protection to the lesser members of the tribe were breaking down in these settled areas with resulting class differences and increasing mistreatment of the poor and the slaves. There was no central authority to dispense justice, and unless the under-privileged, such as women, children, slaves and the poor, were under the protection of some powerful individual or clan, their rights and properties could be usurped at will.

The Holy Quran, the written record of that time, aptly describes this state of affairs in the following verse:

“...And you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it...” (3:103)

J. H. Dennison, an author in modern times reaches the same conclusion in his book *Emotion as the Basis of Civilization*:

“In the fifth and the sixth centuries, the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos. The old emotional cultures that had made civilization possible ... had broken down and nothing had been found adequate to take their place ... It seemed then that the great civilization that it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe and sect was against the next, and law and order were unknown... The new sanctions created by Christianity were working division and destruction instead of unity and order ... Civilization like a gigantic tree whose foliage had over-reached the world... stood tottering... rotted to the core... It was among these people that the man was born who was to unite the whole known world of east and south.”

Yet within the space of twenty three years a single man would end this deadly cycle of decades of violence and mutual hatred, replacing it with brotherly relations which would transcend family ties, social status and ethnic origins. Thomas Lyell, the author of *Ins and outs of Mesopotamia*, states:

“A more disunited people it would be hard to find, till, suddenly, the miracle took place. A man arose, who, by his personality and by his claim to direct Divine guidance, actually brought about the impossible namely the union of all these warring factions.”

The man who achieved this “miracle” and whose influence would “unite the whole known world of the east and south” was the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the means, the “direct Divine guidance” by which he

brought this about was the Holy Quran. Never before, in the history of mankind, had such a complete transformation of a society been achieved, under such adverse circumstances, on so large a scale and in so short a time. This revolution was brought about not by some governmental decree or military coercion, but rather by something far more profound and permanent—it was brought about by effecting a change in the nature of men.

Today, we again stand at the brink of this pit of war and conflict. It is imperative, therefore, that we examine the singular practical success of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad in bringing peace among long entrenched enemies by changing human nature. Hopefully, we may be able to learn lessons which we may be able to apply to our present situation.

In order to change human nature, we must first understand the nature of man and the purpose of man’s creation. According to the Holy Quran, human nature is the soul of man, which is God’s own spirit that God has blown into every human being, as stated in the Holy Quran:

“So when I (God) have made him (man) complete and *breathed into him of My spirit...*” (15:29)

God’s purpose for creating man is for God to do good to him:

“Except those on whom thy Lord has mercy (“mercy” means to have so much love and tenderness for a thing that one is compelled to do good to it), and for this did He create them”. (11:119)

And the greatest good that God does to man out of love for him is to guide and perfect him in goodness in this world’s life so that he becomes fit to lead an eternal life with Him in Paradise in the hereafter.

The Nature of God

As our soul is the spirit of God which He has blown in to each one of us, then in order to understand the nature of man we need to understand the Nature of God. The proper name of God in Arabic, *Allah*, in itself defines the nature of God. The name, Allah, means *the being who exists necessarily by himself and who possesses all the attributes of perfection*. This means that God is one – There is no god but God – He is eternal, all knowing and all powerful and He possesses all the good attributes we can think of, such as mercy, justice, kindness, and so on, in their most perfect form. Because our souls are from the spirit of God, we possess intelligence, intellect and the ability to understand the nature of things, and by the same token we are able to understand and comprehend the goodness of virtues such as mercy, justice, truthfulness, kindness, and so on – all of which are the attributes of the Divine Being. Not only do we

understand the goodness of God's attributes, but we are also strongly attracted to them and love God and people who possess these attributes. Conversely, we are repelled by vices which are the opposite of these virtues and dislike people who commit these evils.

This idea of souls of all men being derived from God has several very important implications for relationships at all levels among us. Firstly, it means that the souls of all human beings, regardless of their race or religion, are endowed with divine attributes, and, therefore, all people are spiritually equal in their very essence. No person or nation is intrinsically superior or inferior based simply on their ethnic origin or religious affiliation. Secondly, as all human beings have the divine attributes within them, they should command our respect. This basic unity and worth of human beings provides the essential foundation for the unity of mankind, something that is absolutely vital for peaceful coexistence and mutual friendship.

Development of the Divine Attributes

The Holy Quran, however, likens these divine attributes within us such as mercy, kindness, justice, truthfulness, forgiveness, forbearance, etc., to *seeds* or *potential* which have to be developed by practicing them in our daily lives:

“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)

The object of developing these attributes is to get closer to God so that we become fit to lead an eternal life with Him in the hereafter (which is the reason for creating man). Thus, God has created man out of love so He can shower His blessings on us for eternity in heaven in the hereafter. The only way in which we can develop these virtues within ourselves is by exercising them (i.e., by doing good deeds). This state of Heaven is likened to a Garden in the Holy Quran. The following are two are some of the many verses in the Holy Quran which direct our attention to this fact:

“And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer these will enter the Garden, and they will not be dealt with a whit unjustly” (4:124)

“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah(God) 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).

Although the spirit of God, our soul, is pure in that there is no “original sin,” it has an intimate connection with our animal body, and because of this we have the same attraction for material acquisition, domination and sexual activity as animals do. As stated before these desires are necessary for our physical survival and are actually the drivers of evolution. In animals, these urges are regulated by instinct, but man has been granted free will in the exercise of these lower desires and must control and guide them along the right channels so they do not hamper his spiritual development and are sublimated into high moral and spiritual attributes. The entity within us which inflames these lower desires is called the *devil* or *satan*. We are not compelled or controlled by the devil. We has the power to resist them, but these desires have a very seductive attraction for us, and if satisfaction of these lower desires becomes our only object in life, then we will utilize any means to achieve that object, even if it involves violating the rights of others. Thus, we falls prey to selfishness, injustice, cruelty, and so on, all of which retard or prevent our spiritual journey to God.

The relationship of these lower desires the soul is analogous to that of fire to the body. Just as fire injures and kills a person's physical body, so does sin injure our souls and cause our spiritual death. This analogy between physical fire and sin can further applied to an internal combustion engine. The fire, if confined to the engine firebox, can be put to productive use, e.g. to power an automobile or plane. But if this fire gets out of control, it destroys everything in its environment. Similarly, if this spiritual “fire” is kept under control and these desires are exercised at the correct time and in appropriate circumstances, they can be harnessed to benefit mankind. For instance, the acquisition of wealth is not an evil activity per se. The *Holy Quran* clearly commands men to seek the bounty of Allah; but, it directs that it should be done honestly and that a significant portion of that wealth should be spent in charity. This leads to the development of the high moral and spiritual attributes of honesty and generosity.

Similarly, the desire to dominate or lead, if put under the yoke of humility, leads to good governance and peace and justice in society, and among nations. But if we become slaves to our desires, and commit all sorts of wrongs to satisfy them, then this uncontrolled fire of our lower passions will consume everything and create havoc in our lives, and this is the state of hell. This lesson is brought home very well in the allegorical account of Adam in the *Holy Quran*, in which ‘Adam,’ standing generically for ‘man,’ is able to harness the forces of nature with his superior intelligence, but is unable to resist the temptation of the devil, falling prey to evil. Similarly, although humanity today is reaching new

heights in intellectual and scientific progress, it is still acting in an animal-like way in many societies and international relations.

The performance of good deeds and refraining from harming people is thus the essence of spiritual development, something which makes us fit for an everlasting life with God, the goal for which God has created us. This will also lead to goodwill and peace among nations. To help us achieve this objective, God, in His infinite mercy, sends down His guidance, the Holy Scriptures, through his prophets, to teach us how to control the devil within us and how to develop the divine attributes within ourselves. The last and final guidance is the *Holy Quran*, and the last Prophet, and best role model for putting this guidance into practice, is the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It is this guidance and the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad which can enable people to successfully develop the divine within themselves as they did fifteen hundred years ago. The basic requirement for spiritual development is the awareness of a Living God capable of intervening in our lives. If this awareness is lacking then we will be unable to resist temptation to do evil for material gain and all development of our higher attributes will cease.

The Necessity of Prayer

In all religions, prayer to God is the most effective way of becoming aware that God exists. By remembering God, we become aware of His infinite goodness and the perfection of His attributes. This evokes intense love and attraction for the Divine being which inspires us to do good to his creation as he does good to us. This fact has been mentioned by God Himself in all His scriptures, and that is the reason why God prescribes prayer in all religions. Islam and the *Holy Quran* are no exceptions. The most effective means for establishing this awareness of a Living God on a daily basis is prayer, as is stated in the Holy Quran:

“Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book and keep up prayer. Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil; and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (force causing us to do good and refrain from evil). And Allah knows what you do” (29:45).

It is, however, the form and content of the Islamic prayer, which make it uniquely capable of establishing the reality of God’s existence within the individual and in society on a large scale.

Congregational prayer in Islam, five times a day, has been made mandatory. There is no priesthood in Islam, so people are individually responsible for establishing and maintaining prayer. When the call for prayer is sounded, Muslims leave their worldly pursuits, no mat-

ter how profitable they may be, and, standing shoulder to shoulder in an atmosphere of complete equality, they prostrate before their Lord and imbibe His attributes into their hearts. This intrusion of the Divine into their everyday life is a powerful force in establishing the sense of a living God.

But it is the *Sura Fatiha*, the main body of the prayer, which is most effective in creating a bond with the Divine. In the five daily prayers, the following seven short verses are repeated about thirty-five times as day:

“All praise is due to Allah (God), the Lord (*Rabb*) of the worlds/nations

The Beneficent (*Al-Rahman*), the Merciful (*Al-Raheem*)

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.” (1:1-7)

In the first three of these seven short verses, a person’s attention is drawn to the conception of God. His proper name is Allah, which means “the Being who possesses all the good attributes in their perfection”. And through these attributes He creates, nourishes and develops His creation to perfection for which He is known as *Rabb*, which is translated as *Lord* in English, but which has more the meaning of “*Nourisher unto perfection*”. Thus, He creates all human beings, and develops them equally both physically and spiritually. The prime attribute by which He brings about this development is His “*Rahma*”, translated as “*Mercy*”. In Arabic, the word ‘*Rahma*’ means “*to Love something so much that one must do good to it*”. This attribute of *Rahma*, or *Mercy*, may be considered as the prime attribute of God, from which all other attributes spring. It is the only attribute which God has made binding upon Himself, as it states in the Holy Quran:

“He (God) has ordained the (attribute of) mercy binding on Himself” (6:12, 54),

“He is ...*the Lord of all encompassing mercy*” (6:148)

“His ...*mercy encompasses all things*” (7:156).

This *Mercy (Rahma)* is expressed in two ways. As the “Beneficent” (*Al-Rahman*), God provides everything for humanity for its survival and development,

both physically and spiritually, without humanity having done anything to deserve it, and as the “Merciful” (*Al-Raheem*), He rewards humanity immeasurably when it follows God’s guidance, as revealed through scriptures and prophets.

God’s third attribute, stated in the *Sura Fatihah*, is that He is the *Master of the Day of Requital*. As *Master of the day of Requital*, God may either forgive or punish. In the Holy Quran, God is mentioned three hundred times as the *Forgiving (Al-Ghafoor)* and only four times as one who exacts retribution. This shows the immense preponderance of forgiveness in the Divine nature. Furthermore, God’s punishment is for the purpose to reform and not for revenge or torture, as it states in the Holy Quran:

“And indeed We sent messengers to nations before thee, then We seized them with distress and affliction that they might humble themselves” (6:42).

These attributes of God, which Muslims recite thirty five times a day in their prayers, serve as an ideal for them in their spiritual development. In order imbue these attributes themselves they must put them into practice in their daily lives. This emulation of divine attributes stated in the first three verses has been beautifully described by Maulana Mauhamad Ali in the following excerpts paraphrased from the chapter on *Prayer* in his monumental work, *The Religion of Islam*:

“Therefore just as God is *Lord (Rabb)*, the *Nourisher unto Perfection* of all creation, so must man endeavor to make the service of humanity the goal of his life. This care and fostering is not limited to human beings but even extends to his stewardship of the dumb animals.”

Just as God is *The Beneficent (Rahman)* conferring benefits on man and showing him love without his having done anything to deserve it, the man who seeks to attain to perfection must do good even to those of his fellow-men from whom he has not himself received, and does not expect to receive, any benefit. And just as God is *Rahim (Merciful)*, making every good deed bear fruit, man too must do good in return of any good that he receives from another.

And lastly, just as God is *Master (Maalik)*, requiting evil, not in a spirit of vengeance or even of unbending justice, but in a spirit of forgiveness, in the spirit of a master dealing with his servant, in the spirit of bringing about reform, so must man be forgiving in his dealings with others, if he will attain to perfection.”

In the fourth verse, which states “*Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help*”, the love, sublimity and beauty of the Divine attributes in the preceding

three verses evoke in a person a strong desire to become closer to this Loving God and please Him by following His Guidance, just as a child would seek the affection of a loving parent by eagerly obeying the parent, and finding comfort and peace in the closeness of a parent’s embrace. However, at the same time, the person is acutely conscious of his/her weakness in comparison with the Divine attributes and seeks help in all humility from God because he/she knows that only the Divine Being with the above mentioned attributes has the power to help him/her develop those attributes within himself/herself. The help that the person seeks is to be guided on the right path to God – as mentioned in the fifth verse: “*Guide us on the right path*” – to help him shun evil and perform good deeds which would bring him closer to God, as had been done by all virtuous men (the best example of which is the Holy prophet Muhammad) as related in the next verse: *The path on whom thou hast bestowed favours*. Our aim in life is then not to amass wealth or power or blindly serve a nation state, but rather to lead a life patterned on the lives of the great spiritual personalities such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, a life in which we try our best to exercise and develop the divine virtues of beneficence, mercy and forgiveness towards mankind which make us objects of God’s forgiveness, so that in His Mercy He admits us for eternity to paradise in His Presence.

This transformation of man’s character from animal behavior to a high spiritual state is masterfully explained by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in his book *The Teachings of Islam*.

As outlined therein, in the beginning, man struggles to control his lower nature, called in the Holy Quran “*the spirit prone to evil*” (or *Nafs al Ammaara*). As he progresses, he begins to master his lower desires and develop his morality, but he may occasionally falter, which brings about repentance and remorse. At this stage, the spirit is approvingly called the “*self-accusing soul*” (or *Nafs al Lawwaama*). When finally he completely perfects his soul, it is called the “*soul at rest*” (or *Nafs al Mutmainna*), which is described in the *Holy Quran* as follows:

“O soul that art at rest, return to thy Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing, so enter among My servants, and enter My Garden!” (89:27–30).

At this stage of *the soul at rest* he attains the objective for his creation. The love that the people at this stage have for humanity is best illustrated by the following Quranic verse:

“Surely Allah enjoins justice and the doing of good (to others) [*ihsan*] and the giving to the kindred...” (16:90).

The doing of justice is the lowest form of good; for example, one returns an act of kindness with kindness. In *ihsan*, the next stage of goodness, one does good without expecting anything in return. In one of his sayings, the Holy Prophet Muhammad has described *Ihsan* as the act of “*Doing good as if you see God*”. However, the highest state of doing good is that of “*doing good to the kindred;*” in other words caring for all humanity as one would care for one’s children, parents or other close relations. This was the state of mind of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as described in the Holy Quran:

“Then maybe thou wilt kill thyself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they believe not in this announcement” (18:6).

Prophet Muhammad grieved for humanity on account of its fallen state as a mother would grieve for her sick or dying child, and like that mother he earnestly prayed to God to cure people of their spiritual ills. This God-centered spiritual transformation is the only force which can resist and overcome our uncontrolled destructive base desires, desires which will overwhelm even the most well-meaning intentions in times of scarcity or temptation. It is only when we have a considerable number of such individuals in every nation, for whom God is a living reality, and who do good without accepting anything in return and who care for humanity as they would for a close relation, that we will have true peace and friendship. The spiritual bonding among saintly people of this spiritual stage is the only force which can transcend national and racial barriers and which can withstand those divisive impulses which cause rivalry, enmity and hatred.

With the foundations for international peace and friendship firmly laid by transforming the animal nature of man into a godly nature, the Holy Quran emphasizes certain international principles which are essential for peaceful international relations. These principles include the unity of mankind, maintenance of justice, faithfulness to treaties and promises, conflict resolution, representative government and religious tolerance.

Unity of Mankind

The most important and basic of these principles is perhaps the unity of the human race.

The fact that the souls of all human beings are the same, and are God’s own spirit which He has blown into them, has certain very important implications. The souls of all human beings, regardless of their race or religion, are equally endowed with the divine attributes and are closely related and equal in their very essence. No person or nation is intrinsically superior or inferior because of their ethnic origin or religious affiliation. Secondly, as all human beings possess the divine within them-

elves, they should command our respect. This basic unity and worth of human beings provides a strong and enduring foundation for peaceful coexistence and friendship among peoples.

In order to emphasize the *unity of humanity*, the Holy Quran addresses this subject directly in the following verses:

“And people are naught but a single nation” (10:19).

“All people are a single nation” (2:213).

“And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours; surely there are signs in this for the learned” (30:22).

“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 God is the most dutiful of you. Surely God is Knowing, Aware” (49:13).

This concept of the whole of humanity being descended from a single male and female has now been verified by studies on the Y chromosome and mitochondrial DNA. So not only do people have a common spiritual origin with the same spirit of God being blown into every human being, but they also have a common physical ancestry and are actually one big family. It is also emphasized in verse 49:13 that people are superior to others only to the degree that they refrain from harming their fellow human beings and in terms of doing good to them. Therefore, “good” people of different nationalities are closer to each other than to evil doers within their own group. This will serve as a powerful check on the ambitions of people who will inflame hatreds for their personal gain.

This concept of the complete unity of mankind, both spiritual and physical, cuts across all ethnic, national and religious differences, and it completely demolishes the concept of the “other”. This makes it easier for people to do good to other people across ethnic and religious lines.

Maintenance of Justice

Justice among nations is absolutely essential for peaceful co-existence. The Holy Quran strictly enjoins just dealings among individuals, societies and nations. Even if there is enmity between nations, justice must be maintained. This is stated in the following verses:

“O you who believe, be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for, God’s sake even though it be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives- whether he be rich or poor, God has

a better right over them both. So follow not (your) low desires, lest you deviate. And if you distort or turn away from (truth), surely God ever Aware of what you do.” (4:135).

“O you who believe, be upright for God, bearers of witness with justice; and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just; that is nearer to observance of duty. And keep your duty to God. Surely God is Aware of what you do.” (5:8).

One illustration, out of the many instances where the Holy Prophet Muhammad upheld the cause of justice without regard to the consequences of his decisions, is an incident in Medina in which a Muslim stole a saddle and just before he was apprehended he threw it into the compound of a Jewish man and accused the Jew of the theft. On investigation of the case by the Holy Prophet, the Jew was found to be innocent and the thief was duly punished for the crime. This was a tribal society where any action taken against an individual was considered an action against the whole tribe. The thief belonged to an important tribe in Medina, and the danger existed that if he was punished, the whole tribe would be alienated. The Muslims at that time were numerically weak and hemmed in by powerful enemies; the loss of support from the tribe would have placed them in a very precarious situation. The Prophet, however, did not hesitate to exonerate the Jew and punish the thief, and the tribe accepted his judgment without demurring. This not only showed the Holy Prophet’s love for justice, but also demonstrated the change produced by Islam among these people so that now they regarded justice as more important than tribal affiliation.

Faithfulness to Treaties and Promises

Faithfulness to treaties, covenants, pacts, truces and promises is a natural consequence of maintaining justice. Great stress is laid on fulfilling one’s promises in the Holy Quran:

“And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant...” (23:8).

“And fulfil the promise, for every promise shall be called in question” (17:34).

“O you who believe! Fulfill the obligations” (5:1).

“And fulfill the covenant of Allah, when you have made a covenant, and break not the oaths after making them fast, and you have indeed made Allah your surety, Surely Allah knows what you do” (16:91).

“And be not be like her who unravels her yarn, disintegrating it into pieces after she has spun it

strongly. You make your oaths to be means of deceit between you because one nation is more numerous than another nation?” (16:92).

True to the spirit of these teachings, the Prophet and his followers stood firmly by their agreements, under the most trying circumstances. There is not a single instance on record in which they broke their agreement with any opponent. A critical situation arose at the *Truce of Hudaibiya*. The agreement had just been signed, when Abu Jandal, a refugee from Mecca and a convert to Islam who had, on this account, been severely persecuted at Mecca threw himself before the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, and showed them the scars of the tortures inflicted on him by the Meccans and asked for asylum. Under the conditions of the newly concluded agreement, the Muslims could not give him shelter. The Prophet was moved by Abu Jandal’s plight, but since he had given his word, he could not accept Abu Jandal’s pleas. Rather, Abu Jandal was sent back to his persecutors to be dealt with as they liked. Abu Jandal subsequently escaped on the way back to Mecca and became a thorn in the side of the Meccans by independently attacking the trade routes of the Meccans.

Similarly, in the Battle of Badr, the Muslims were outnumbered three to one – one thousand against three hundred and thirteen. Two individuals, who sympathised with the Muslims, decided to help them and proceeded to the battlefield. They were apprehended on their way by the Quraish, who let them free on the condition that they would not join the Muslims. However, the two took another route and approached the Holy Prophet. Upon learning that these men had made a promise to the Quraish not to help the Muslims, the Holy Prophet asked them to leave, as helping the Muslims would entail their breaking their promise to the Quraish. Not only was the Muslim army badly outnumbered, but it included youths as young as 14 and aged men. Two fully equipped fighting men would have been a welcomed addition to the small force, but the Prophet considered being faithful to one’s promise more important.

Likewise, in the time of the Caliph Hazrat ‘Umar, the Muslim general, Abu ‘Ubaida, was obliged to evacuate the occupied territory of Hims, which the enemy was now planning to re-occupy. Before leaving he ordered that the tax received from the people of Hims as a condition for their protection should be paid back to them, because the Muslims could not afford them that protection any longer. Comparable examples of such scrupulous regard for agreements can hardly be met with elsewhere in history. It also shows again the love of justice produced among the Muslims by Islam and clearly disproves the theory that the Muslims went into the Middle East for loot and plunder.

Conflict Resolution

People sometimes disagree with one another, and conflicts occur among individuals, societies and nations. When these disagreements occur, control of anger, patience, forgiveness and civil discourse are essential for resolving differences.

The Holy Quran considers these qualities as essential for spiritual advancement:

“Those who spend in ease as well as in adversity and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men. And Allah loves the doers of good (to others)” (3:134).

“And those who shun the great indecencies, and whenever they are angry they forgive” (42:37).

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

“And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! He between whom and thee is enmity would be as if he were a warm friend” (41:34).

“And you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from the polytheists much abuse, and if you are patient and guard against evil, this is one of the affairs which should be determined upon” (3:186).

“Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner. Surely thy Lord knows best him who strays from His path, and He knows best those who go aright” (16: 125).

“And be patient and thy patience is not but by (the help of) God” (16:127).

“Surely Allah is with those who keep their duty and those who do good (to others)” (16:128).

Perhaps the best example of control of anger, patience and forgiveness to achieve peace is that of the Holy Prophet Muhammad after the conquest of Mecca. After the *Truce of Hudabiya*, in which fighting between the Muslims and the Quraish ended, the Quraish broke the truce by attacking and killing members of a tribe allied to the Muslims, and then then refused to pay compensation to the tribe for the men killed. This left Prophet Muhammad with no other option but to march onto Mecca, after which the town surrendered peacefully to his superior forces. The enemy who had mercilessly persecuted the Holy Prophet and killed his family members and dear friends, many of them in extremely barbaric ways, stood helpless and penitent before him.

For an ordinary person the urge to take revenge would have been irresistible, and killing one's enemy and enslaving the conquered would have been the norm in a situation like this, during this time in Arabia. However, Prophet Muhammad, assuring the Quraish that he would treat them the same way as the Prophet Joseph treated his brothers, forgave them all. Wahishi, the slave of Hind, the person who had stalked and killed the Prophet's beloved Uncle Hazrat Hamza so that she could rip out and chew his liver to spite the Muslims, was among them. The man who had thrust the blunt end of his spear into the belly of the Holy prophet's pregnant daughter, causing a miscarriage which killed both the mother and the child, was also among them. Regardless of these provocations, the Holy Prophet forgave them all. Not only did Prophet Muhammad forgive, but his companions forgave the Quraish as well. They too could identify the men who had persecuted and killed their own dear ones. They were a purely volunteer army, and if they wished to take revenge, the Holy Prophet would not have been able to stop them. They forgave their enemies because prayer, the Quranic teachings, and the example of the Holy Prophet, had made God a living reality for them. This helped them control their lower desires of revenge and plunder and replace them with love and forgiveness for their now penitent former enemies. The effect of this treatment was such that the Meccans willingly converted to Islam and turned their backs to their old cruel and evil ways. The same remedy of the awareness of God as a living reality in our own strife-ridden times can also bring about the same love and peace among nations as it did at the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

Representative Government

As among individuals, so too among nations, the first step towards peace and harmony is for nations to control their competitive desires for wealth and power so they do not commit injustice against any other nation; instead, they should help other nations in need in a spirit of generosity. This attitude will foster goodwill and peace among nations. It is national leaders who make decisions in governments. Therefore, if the populace ascribes to high moral and spiritual values generated by the awareness of a Living God as stated previously, then there should be a system by which they are able to place people in charge of Government who have the same values as themselves. For this to occur representative government is necessary, as this is the only way they can choose leaders who will take decisions based on moral grounds.

The Muslims voluntarily chose the Holy Prophet Muhammad as their leader by pledging allegiance to him on more than one occasion. The Holy Quran gives the people the right to choose their leaders, and also advises that the choice should be made in a responsible

way after full investigation of a candidate's character and his ability to properly discharge the duties of that particular office:

“God commands you to make over trusts to those worthy of them, and that when you judge between people, you judge with justice” (4:58);

“Those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer and their government is by counsel among themselves” (42:38).

The righteous caliphs – Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Uthman and Hazrat Ali – were all *elected* to the position of head of State. Hazrat Abu Bakr by popular vote, and the rest by a committee of believers. If any of the elected leaders' actions were deemed inappropriate, then the people had a right to remove them from office, as stated by Hazrat Abu Bakr in his address to the nation after his election.

And for maintaining a democratic government and preventing dictatorship, free speech is essential. An inspiring instance of free speech occurred during the caliphate of Hazrat Umar. A woman citing the Holy Quran contradicted Hazrat Umar during his speech in a public forum. Being the highly spiritual person he was, he accepted her point and humbly replied: “The women of Madina have a greater understanding of the Quran than Umar.”

Religious Tolerance

Religion arouses very strong emotions in people, and people are willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of religion. Unfortunately, they are also quick to kill and persecute people who hold beliefs different than those held by them. Changing or stopping this type of behavior is difficult, in that divine sanction is claimed for the most heinous acts. The underlying basis for this misbehavior is the belief that only their Religion and its founder are from God, and other Religions and their founders are false. So it almost becomes a duty for them to oppress and eliminate faiths other than their own.

Islam has done a great favor to humanity in that it has removed all these differences by declaring in the Holy Quran that all religions, their founders and scriptures from God, and that they preach essentially the same message (i.e. to worship and obey the One true God, and to do good to humanity). The only difference between the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Quran and the previous prophets and scriptures is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the last in this long line of Prophets and has been sent for all mankind, in contrast to the previous prophets who were sent to a particular nation or tribe and he therefore brings prophethood to perfection. Similarly, the Holy Quran includes within itself the essential teachings of previous books in a final complete form, contain-

ing all that is necessary for spiritual development and which will remain relevant for all times.

The following verse from the Holy Quran illustrates the point that all Prophets or founders of religions are from God:

“... And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them” (35:24).

Furthermore, they are not limited to those mentioned by name in the *Holy Quran*:

“And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee [in the *Holy Quran*]” (4:164).

And all revealed scriptures are from God and should be respected:

“And who believe in that which has been revealed to thee (the *Holy Quran*) and that which was revealed before thee (the previous scriptures) (2:4).

Likewise, the basic teachings of all religions are the same:

“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allāh 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).

Wisely, the Quran prohibits abusive behavior in religious discussions:

“And abuse not those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest, exceeding the limits, they abuse Allah through ignorance” (6:108).

“Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner” (16:125).

Additionally, it specifically prohibits religious intolerance in very clear words:

“There is no compulsion in religion— the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error...” (18:29).

“And say: The Truth is from your Lord; so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve” (2:256).

If all religions would agree and act upon the principles stated above – based on belief in a single, loving God, Who is the Author of all religions - then the current inter-religious hostility would be replaced by mutual respect, and friendship.

Conclusion

Concerted efforts to achieve this goal of international peace have been attempted, but have been unsuccessful so far. The reason is that this current modern civilization considers material success as the goal of man's existence. The result is that nations will employ any means whether fair or foul to further their selfish interests to achieve this goal. Lasting peace and harmony among nations can only exist if nations can control the lower desires of the love of wealth and power which are the source of ruthless strife among them, and develop feelings of mutual love, friendship and respect towards each other on the basis of their common origin from the Spirit of God. In this manner, instead of fighting or competing ruthlessly, nations would strive to benefit and help each other. This goal was achieved in Arabia fifteen hundred years ago by the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the teachings of the Holy Quran, by producing in the hearts of warring tribes the conviction of a living God whose very essence is that of Love, Goodness and Justice.

This is the new paradigm on which civilization needs to be based if humanity is to survive. Islam provides the answer because of the universal concept of a single God whose spirit is present in all human beings, which establishes the unity of mankind. It clearly and emphatically states that the goal for our existence is to do good to humanity in this world so that we may achieve an eternal life with God in the next. Through the daily congregational prayers which are performed at fixed times and the *Sura Fatihah* (which is recited in these prayers), it establishes the conviction of a Merciful Living God in our hearts which keeps us focused on doing good to His creation. The example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad provides us with a model to practically attain to this ideal. Only when we are convinced of God as a living reality will we be able to control our lower self and develop the divine within us, so that we can live at peace with each other.

It is said that if one had three hours to cut down a tree, one should spend two hours sharpening the axe. Likewise, if we can create the consciousness of a Living God among nations on a large scale, then it would not take long for the strokes of the principles of the unity of mankind, justice, faithfulness to promises, democracy and religious tolerance, to accomplish the aim of international peace and harmony. ■

Examples of the Believer and the Disbeliever

The Quran's use of particular women as illustrations of stages of spiritual development

By Maulana Muhammad Ali
(translated by Dr. Mohammed Ahmad)

[This article is a translation of a *Jumma Khutba* (sermon) delivered on January 21, 1921 by Maulana Muhammad Ali, with minor amendments. In this *Khutba*, Maulana Muhammad Ali points to how the Holy Quran uniquely identifies particular women as examples of believers and disbelievers, and, as an incidental point, how simple familial relations to a righteous person does not in and of itself determine one's sense of virtue. Maulana Muhammad Ali further explains how references to some key persons in the Quran are not limited to their historical context but rather provides insight into spiritual concepts, using Pharaoh, the wife of Pharaoh, Mary and Jesus as examples.]

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah. After this I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

Allah sets forth an example for those who disbelieve — the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were both under two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them, so they availed them naught against Allah, and it was said: Enter the Fire with those who enter.

And Allah sets forth an example for those who believe — the wife of Pharaoh, when she said: My Lord, build for me a house with Thee in the Garden. And deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from the iniquitous people.

And Mary, the daughter of Amran, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into him of Our inspiration, and she accepted the truth of the words of her Lord and His Books, and she was of the obedient ones. (66:10,11,12)

Chapter 66 (*Al-Tahrim*) of the Holy Quran begins with the following words:

“O Prophet, why dost thou forbid (thyself) that which Allah has made lawful for thee? Seekest thou to please thy wives? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

A lengthy story is narrated in reference to this verse as to how the Holy Prophet promised not to use a certain kind of honey in deference to the wishes of one of

his wives. This verse informs us that whatever Allah has declared lawful cannot be forbidden by any person. The beginning and mid section of this chapter mentions the Holy Prophet's wives. Towards the end three examples are given for the guidance of the believer to illustrate two different levels of spirituality. Amazingly all three examples relate to women.

These are wonderful illustrations of the eloquence of the Quranic word. Upon depth analysis, verses of the Holy Quran which apparently seem to be disconnected are found to have a link and coherence. I do not intend to further discuss this linkage, but want to focus your attention on these three verses in which women have been put forth as examples for the believer and the disbeliever.

Example of Disbelievers

The wives of Prophets Noah and Lot are presented as examples to show the conduct of the disbeliever. The Holy Quran states that both these women were under the patronage of two of our righteous servants but both of them violated their trust. What was the violation of trust in these cases? The Holy Quran has called keeping of duty and righteous conduct as fulfillment of the Trust. Disobeying the teachings of these prophets and not keeping their duty is referred as "treacherous" conduct on their part.

The Holy Prophet was called *Al-Amin*, not only because he was honest in his financial transactions, but also because he followed the path of rectitude in the performance of all his deeds. These two women, although they were married to prophets, did not benefit from their tutelage. Their matrimonial relationship with two righteous servants of Allah did not benefit them. They were therefore informed by Allah: "Enter the Fire with those who enter." This is because each individual has to be accountable for his/her actions before God.

Being the wife or child of a prophet is not in itself a matter of distinction and pride, nor should anybody consider it to be. There cannot be a more intimate relationship than that of a wife or a child. It is not Allah's intent to inform us about the strength of these bonds. The message that is being given is: "so they availed them naught against Allah." They would be judged only by their actions and not upon basis of their kinship with the prophets."

This question is frequently raised by supporters of Mirza Mehmood Ahmad¹, asking that we inform them of the name of any reformer (in this case Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) all of whose sons were mistaken about his claim. They have set this stipulation ("of all"), despite only three of his sons follow the same path. In fact they forget the remaining two sons while presenting

this argument. They do not think about this that if one son could be wrong, the other one could also certainly follow him in error. There does not have to be a reason for this, therefore setting the limitation of one or two or three is redundant. Eleven sons of Prophet Joseph were in error. They forget that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had two sons from his first marriage, both of whom did not pledge allegiance to him. We can therefore argue that they should name for us a "prophet", whose claim was rejected by two of his sons. How would our friends respond to this argument? These are discussions which only bring joy to the hearts of the ignorant. The fact to which the Holy Quran draws our attention is that being the wife or the son of a prophet cannot be to one's benefit if their actions are unrighteous. Even those with such a close bond can be wrong. Therefore, do not delve into the ties of kinship but consider the deeds. Every individual whether he is the offspring of the righteous or not will be recompensed for his deeds.

By giving the example of these disbelieving women, the Holy Quran warns us against following their example and thereby breaking the trust of our Holy Prophet. The Holy Quran tells us:

"O you who believe, be not unfaithful to Allah and the Messenger, nor be unfaithful to your trusts, while you know."(8:27)

Example of One Class of Believers

One class amongst the believers has been likened to the wife of the Pharaoh, as the Quran relates:

"when she (Pharaoh's wife) said: My Lord, build for me a house with Thee in the Garden ..." (66:11)

In spite of being the wife of a disbelieving king, this righteous woman prays that she has no desire for the palaces and other fineries of life and supplicates before the Lord, seeking abode in His garden. She desires freedom not only from the yoke of Pharaoh but from all the iniquitous, as related in the following words:

"... and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from the iniquitous people." (66:11)

Similarly a believer who is in bondage of an oppressor supplicates in these very same words: "and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from the iniquitous people." And: "My Lord, build for me a house with Thee in the Garden."

By Pharaoh is not necessarily meant the same Pharaoh who was the contemporary of Prophet Moses. The word Pharaoh can also be used to refer to anybody who rejects the truth. The example of Pharaoh is cited to illustrate his dominant characteristic. This can also

refer to the “animal self” (*nafs-i- ammarah*) or “the soul wont to command evil within all of us”. A believer who is still subject to the command of his animal spirit supplicates before his Lord to seek release from its subjugation. He is to some extent resentful of its control, and the “self-accusing spirit” (*nafs-i-lawwamah*), which upbraids him over his evil actions, develops within him. Sometimes, however, the person’s inherent “pharaoh” (i.e., the *nafs-i-ammarah*) overwhelms him though he is much desirous of freedom from its bondage. The one who does not seek freedom from his animal spirit and chooses to remain its slave is described in the Holy Quran as: “He loses this world and the Hereafter” (22:11). The one who strives to get out of this bondage is eventually successful. The comparison of the animal soul with the Pharaoh is quite succinct. Some poet has expressed this very well:

Our rebellious spirit is no less powerful than the Pharaoh.

The only difference is that he was powerful while we are powerless.

Example of a Second Class of Believers

The second class of believers has been compared to Mary (mother of Jesus) when she is described as the one: “who guarded her chastity (*farjaha*).” The Arabic word *farj* refers to a portal or opening. Thus, guarding or securing of all portals or paths through which evil can manifest is included in this category. The believers who guard all these portals against the insinuations of the devil and form an impenetrable fortress against him receive inspiration of the Divine word. This is described by the Holy Quran thus: “So We breathed into him of Our inspiration.” Although some have interpreted this as referring to Prophet Jesus or have given other interpretations, the use of the male gender in this verse clearly points out that this is an example referring to the believer in general. The believer who reaches this advanced spiritual status is the one who has safeguarded his chastity and protected it from the assault of the devil.

Metaphors for Stages of Spiritual Development

These verses refer to the lower and the higher levels of spiritual development amongst the believers; one being compared to the wife of Pharaoh, and the other with Mary (the daughter of Amran and mother of Jesus). A hadith of Bukhari related by Abu Hurairah explains the concept described in these verses. It states: “No child is born (*hena u-lada*) but the devil touches him when he is born, so he raises a cry (*fa yastahilu sarikhun*) for help on account of his touching him, except Mary and her son” (Bu.60:44).

Unfortunately, this hadith has been misunderstood because of the misunderstanding of the Arabic words

“*hena u-lada*” which have been incorrectly understood to mean when the child comes out of the mother’s womb. This meaning cannot be correct because it is followed by the words “*fa yastahilu sarikhun*” which means to cry out loud for help. The words “*istihlal*” and “*ihlal*” mean crying out loud. The term “*hila*” is used for a new moon also because people cry out loud on witnessing the new moon. Also, in the Holy Quran it is stated: “on which any other name than that of Allah is called out (*ou hila*)” (2:173). So all these terms mean “calling out in a loud voice”, and in Arabic idiom this word is not used for the noise made by a child when crying. The word used following this is “*sarikhun*”. Experts in Arabic lexicology agree that “*sarkha hu*” or “*sarikhun*” is used for the complainant or plaintiff (i.e. someone who is asking for help or seeking relief). Neither of these terms “*yastahil*” and “*sarikhun*” are used in the Arabic language for the crying of a child. The Hadith further states that he cries out loud because of the touch of the devil. Doctors can tell us that the newborn child cries out because he is exposed to a new environment different from that of the mother’s womb. Its crying out is a sign of life. In fact doubts are raised about the viability of a child that does not cry out. If Jesus did not in fact cry out at birth, it was perhaps because of physical weakness.

The truth is that the reference here is not to the physical but the spiritual birth of a person. The touching of the devil is related to this spiritual condition. Before the age of maturity, the touching of the devil has no significance. It is only when a person is able to distinguish between right and wrong that this spiritual birth takes place. Therefore, the time of physical and intellectual maturity, when distinction can be made between good and evil, is also the time of this spiritual birth. At this juncture there are two types of individuals: those who by their very nature since birth are inclined towards goodness, and those who can find the right course after searching for it. To one class belong the prophets and the righteous servants who do not provide the devil any opportunity to influence them. To the other class belong those on whom he can exert some influence but upon perceiving it they immediately cry out: “deliver me from Pharaoh and his work!” This is also the meaning of “but the devil touches him when he is born, so he raises a cry on account of his touching him.” This crying out and supplicating on account of the touch of the devil occurs at the time of the spiritual birth, which is allegorically referred to in the words of the hadith.

The believer at a lower level of spirituality has been compared to the wife of pharaoh who is subject to his influence. The devil has some effect upon them but they immediately cry out for help from the Lord upon perceiving his touch. The other class of believers is those

with the attributes of Mary, those who never come under the influence of the devil and have firmly safeguarded all portals of entry wherefrom the devil can seek entrance. The words “who guarded her chastity” refer to this action. Mary, therefore, according to the Quran, typifies the person whom the devil cannot mislead or, in the words of the tradition, whom “the devil does not touch”. And her son is described in the same verse as one into whom “We breathed of Our inspiration.” The tradition therefore tells us that two kinds of men are not tempted by Satan (or “touched by him”): some are not prophets, like Mary, who guard themselves and are perfectly obedient, and some are prophets, like Jesus, who are recipients of Divine revelation.

There is another tradition (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*) which also states: “There is no man (“*abd*”) but he will meet Allah in a state of being sinful, except John (*Yahya*)”. In this tradition both these types of believers are called *Yahya*, which literally means “*he is alive*” (*i.e.* people in whom the spiritual life is awakened).

The truth is that exoneration is needed only for those subjected to calumny. Regarding Hazrat Umar, the Holy Prophet stated:

“There used to be among those who were before you persons who were spoken to (by God) though they were not prophets; if there is such a one among my people, it is Umar” (Bu. 62: 6).

This was to exonerate Hazrat Umar from calumny against him by a certain sect of Muslims. Similarly, Mary and her child are mentioned because a group from amongst the followers of the Book spread calumny against them. They accused Mary of fornication and called her son the accursed one. It is to exonerate these holy personages that the Holy Quran and hadith mention them, although the description is in reality of believers in general who possess the attributes of Mary and her son. ■

Footnote:

1. Son of the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah movement, who was responsible for the split in the Ahmadiyyah movement (in 1914) due to claiming Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet and that all those Muslims who did not accept him as such were no longer Muslims.

Lessons on the Quran

Sura Al-Imran Section 18

By Lubna Ahmad

[Lahore Ahmadiyya members in various cities in the USA gather each week for a Quran study group via skype. The study group commenced with lessons from Sura Al-Fatihah and continued with a subsequent section of the Quran every week. Members take turns presenting on a particular section, and discussion from all participants follow. This article is based on a lesson presented to the study group by Mrs. Lubna Ahmad. It deals with Section 18 of Sura Al-Imran.]

The preceding three verses – verses 169 thru 171 in Section 17 of Sura *Al-Imran* - are relevant to the subject matter contained in Section 18, which will be discussed today. In those verses, Muslims are made aware of the two groups of people who defend themselves in Allah’s way (*Fi-Sabil lillah*). The ones who physically die in fulfilling this goal as well as the ones who are left behind are delighted and feel fortunate for being spiritually alive. Those who die are known as *shuhada*, or witnesses to the truth, of which they have laid down their lives. They are not to be considered dead. Their blessing of spiritual sustenance is never eradicated, and they earn a high place in paradise. Those who survive in pursuing their goal earn a spiritual paradise of contentment and hope in this world and in the Hereafter. They only fear Allah and yearn for His Love and Mercy. They are not despondent and do not dread a loss of life or property. Both groups rejoice in being rewarded with the blessings of Allah’s Mercy and Grace.

Now, Section 18 of *Surah Al-Imran* proves that the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud turned out to be a victory for the Muslims (even though the Muslims sustained some loss of life and property). For, the enemy’s aggression brought them no material or spiritual gain. This aggression only added more fear to the hearts of the enemy and more security in the hearts of the believers.

Chapter 3, verse 172

Those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger after the misfortune had befallen them — for such among them who do good and keep their duty is a great reward. (3:172)

In the latter part of Section 17, Muslims were given the good news of the spiritual condition of the martyrs and survivors of the Battle of Uhud. It served as a reminder and consolation for the believers to be ready for commitments and undertakings that were immediately to follow the Battle. They are told that they too

will be rewarded for keeping their duty, especially after the misfortune that took place in the Battle of Uhud. Answering to the call of the Holy Prophet Muhammad meant obedience to the command of Allah. In the 3rd year of Hijri, the Muslim army and the Makkan army met at the foot of Uhud, three miles from the city of Medina. This battle had come to an end, when the enemy retreated, but there still lay ahead the chance of their return for aggression and persecution of the Muslims. Recent misfortune at Uhud required the reinforcement of the physical, mental and spiritual strength of the believers to carry on the pursuit of the enemy, so that they would not return to attack them again. More sacrifices of lives and wealth would be needed to respond to the call of Allah and His Messenger.

Special reference is made to a place known as *Hamra' al Asad*, eight miles from Medina. The Makkan army, led by their leader Abu Sufyan, fled from the Battle of Uhud, and arrived at a place by the name of *Rauha*. Over here the idolaters blamed each other for not only being unsuccessful in killing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, but also returning without taking any prisoners of war. To uphold their honor, the Makkan army decided to return to the battlefield and vanquish the Muslim army. While they were making these plans they were informed that the Muslim army had already initiated their pursuit. The Makkan army out of fear of more loss of life and property immediately decided to retreat. The Muslims came as far as *Hamra' al Asad*, and got this good news, and they too decided to return to their homes, with success. This proved that the intent of the Muslims was to fight only in self-defense, and they obeyed the orders given to them from the Messenger of Allah, even after the misfortune that had struck them in the Battle of Uhud.

What were the misfortunes that befell the Muslim army? The fully equipped enemy forces led by Abu Sufyan had a strength of 3000 skilled men, of which 700 were mail-clad veterans and 200 cavalry. The Muslims had a small, ill equipped and mostly unskilled army of 1000 men, led by Prophet Muhammad. Their number was immediately reduced to 700, when 300 men deserted the Muslims, at the leadership of the hypocrite, Abd Allah ibn Ubayy. This desertion, however, did not dampen the morale of the Muslim army. Another setback that befell the Muslim army was due to the disregard of a group of fifty Muslim archers, which decided to leave their strategic position at the top of the hill, in pursuit of the booty and the fleeing enemy. The Muslim archers were specifically instructed not to leave their positions under any circumstance. Only ten of the archers with their leader, Abd Allah Ibn Jubair, maintained their position, and stood firm to the orders of their General, the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Khalid

Bin Walid, took advantage of this situation and attacked the small group of Muslims from the back with his 200 cavalry. To avert the danger to the Muslim army, and to re build their strength, the Holy Prophet Muhammad shouted at the top of his voice, "Rally to me, I am the Messenger of Allah." The Muslims quickly responded to his call, and gathered around him like a shield. The enemy forces came to know about the Prophet's position and tried to attack him. In this process Mus 'ab Ibn Umair, who resembled the Prophet was slain. Rumour spread that the Holy Prophet had been killed. They were encouraged to continue fighting, even if the Prophet was not with them, as they were fighting for the cause that he fought for.

The desertion of the hypocrites, resulting in reduction of the Muslim army; the disregard of duty of a group of Muslim archers; the wounds that the Holy Prophet Muhammad sustained; the Muslim casualties in self-defense and the defense of the Prophet, all added up were enough to create fear and disillusionment in the hearts of the believers. The Muslims were far from being misled by such incidents. Without any reservations, they maintained their original enthusiasm and readiness to take orders of action again, from the Messenger of Allah.

Chapter 3, Verse 173

Those to whom men said: Surely people have gathered against you, so fear them; but this increased their faith, and they said: Allah is sufficient for us and He is an excellent Guardian. (3:173)

Verses 173 thru 175 refer to the events preceding and following at *Badr al-Sughra* or the Small Badr. It is also known as *Badr al-Akhira* or Second Badr. Upon leaving the battlefield of Uhud, Abu Sufyan had challenged the Muslim army to meet at *Badr al-Sughra*, the following year, in 4th Hijri. He came with his army as far as *Mehr al Zuhraan*, and became intimidated and wanted to return to Mecca. Abu Sufyan knew that by not meeting with the Muslims as promised would make his army look weak and give more momentum to the Muslim army. He rewarded Nu'aim Ibn Masud with ten camels, to be his representative to the Muslims. Nu'aim was to convey the message that the Makkan army was returning back to Makkah, due to drought that year, and also to discourage the Muslims from advancing towards *Badr al-Sughra*. Nu'aim upon seeing the Muslims in Medina, getting ready for battle, tried to create fear in them. He reminded them of the previous misfortune that had befallen them at the hands of the Makkans. He also gave them the impression that the Makkan army was advancing with even better preparations than before. This warning only strengthened the hearts of the

Muslims and they re-affirmed their faith, in these words: “Allah is sufficient for us and He is an excellent Guardian.” The word *hasb*, means sufficient—such as *hasbu nallah* (Allah is sufficient for us) or *hasbuhum jahannum* [*Jahannum* (Hell) is sufficient for them].

The Muslims upon arrival at *Badr al-Sughra* saw no trace of the Makkan army. Instead, they got an opportunity to carry out business and benefitted from the trade fair setup by the tribe of Banu Qunanah.

Chapter 3, Verse 174

So they returned with favor from Allah and (His) grace; no evil touched them, and they followed the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Lord of mighty grace. (3:174)

The Muslims returned to Medina with spiritual and material blessings from Allah. Due to the absence of the Makkan army, the Muslims did not have to face any suffering of life and property, and it turned out to be a victory, for them, by the name of *Ghazwa Badr al-Sughra*. They willingly yielded to the Call and Pleasure of Allah, over fear of onslaught of a heavily armed army. Indeed Allah’s Protection is the greatest and he is the Most Powerful in Giving.

Chapter 3, Verse 175

It is the devil who only frightens his friends, but fear them not, and fear Me, if you are believers. (3:175)

The function of the devil or *shaitan* is to create fear by stirring evil suggestions to make one deviate from the right course of action. He takes one further away from the Love of God. In this verse reference is to Nu’aim, the representative of the enemy. It also stands for the devil encouraging his friends or *auliyya*, who did not want to participate in the battle, due to fear of the overwhelming strength of the enemy. The friends of the devil could only be the hypocrites, as a true believer or *mu’min* would not submit to the evil suggestions of the devil. The believers are encouraged to fear Allah alone, and not anyone else.

Chapter 3, Verse 176

And let not those grieve thee who run into disbelief precipitately; surely they can do no harm to Allah. Allah intends not to assign them any portion in the Hereafter; and for them is a grievous chastisement. (3:176)

Hypocrites are described as those who hasten towards, or are intensely attracted to, disbelief. Muslims are given assurance not to despair the grief and misery the hypocrites try to cause, as their plans are of no avail.

The actions of the disbelievers will not be rewarded by Allah in the Life Hereafter, and serious punishment has been allocated for them. They designed plans and did mischief to annihilate the message of Islam. They can never destroy the Truth and harm Allah in any way.

Chapter 3, Verse 177

Those who buy disbelief at the price of faith can do no harm to Allah, and for them is a painful chastisement. (3:177)

For a small price, the hypocrites and other disbelievers are prepared to surrender their faith. These people are not dependable; they will be held accountable for their actions. They may say or do something to conceal the truth with falsehood in order to discredit Allah’s message of Truth. They are warned of their inability to do so and also of their accountability in the Life Hereafter. Chapter 3:94 warns that whoever forges a lie against Allah are the wrongdoers.

Chapter 3, Verse 178

And let not those who disbelieve think that our granting them respite is good for themselves. We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and for them is a humiliating chastisement. (3:178)

The disbelievers seem to believe that they are invincible as they do not immediately face the consequences of their transgressions. Allah gives them relief from misery only to give them more time to either improve their ways, or to accumulate more evil doings. The more wrong they do, the greater and more severe their ultimate accountability will be.

Verses 176,177 and 177 all emphasize and warn the disbelievers of punishment in the Life Hereafter. The terms: grievous chastisement, or *azaabun azeem*, painful chastisement, or *azaabun aleem*, humiliating chastisement, or *azaabum mu’hin*, all signify the intensity, severity, and painful humiliation associated with the punishment.

Chapter 3, Verse 179

Allah will not leave the believers in the condition in which you are until He separates the evil from the good. Nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allah chooses of His messengers whom He pleases. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And if you believe and keep your duty, you will have a great reward. (3:179)

The *Holy Quran* (in 3:4) has been called *Al-Furqan* (the Discrimination) as it separates truth from falsehood. The good, or *khair* or *tayyab*, must be detached from

evil, or *khabith*. This is usually done in the form of demonstration, proof, aid or victory. The sifting of the believers from the disbelievers, or the hypocrites, occurred in the Battle of Uhud. It was important for the believers to undergo trials and tribulations in order to be differentiated from the hypocrites. The motives and actions of the hypocrites became apparent to the Muslims. Some objected to not receiving individual revelation, so that they would have knowledge of the unseen. Only Allah chooses His Messengers and blesses them with Divine Revelation and Guidance. These messengers, in return, purify those who follow them. Believing in Allah and His Messenger, and keeping one's duty through good actions, will entitle the believer to a great reward, in this life and the Hereafter.

Chapter 3, Verse 180

And let not those who are niggardly in spending that which Allah has granted them out of His grace, think that it is good for them. Nay, it is evil for them. They shall have a collar of their niggardliness on their necks on the Resurrection day. And Allah's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Aware of what you do. (3:180)

The believers are reminded of their duty of spending. Being niggardly is the act of holding back in spending, where it is needed. For example, spending should be used for spreading the message of Islam, in self-defense, for the welfare of the poor, widows, needy, and so on. Spending does not necessarily have to be enacted only through material form; it, in fact, entails the using of any God given faculties. For example, one may spend by sharing one's knowledge, by helping with one's hands, and so on. The mention of the collar, or *tauq*, refers to the collar of niggardliness, or stinginess, clinging to one's neck. The believers are reminded that our assets are a result of Allah's blessings, and, as such, it behooves us to spend unreservedly. We will be held accountable for our behavior on the Day of Resurrection. We must remember that everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Allah, and He is fully aware of all our actions, good or bad.

Facts about warfare in Islam

To conclude, as this section dealt with a historical event that required the Muslims to engage in armed conflict with those intent on eradicating them, the following points should be kept in mind whenever considering verses in the Quran dealing with war:

All battles fought during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad were defensive wars to counteract the attack of the enemy. The Muslim were never the aggressors.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad sought counsel in making major decisions. He accepted the decision of the majority to fight on the outskirts of Medina, although he, himself, wanted to stay within the city limits.

Muslims are required to honor decisions; they should not be divided after decisions have been made.

Muslims fought to seek freedom from religious persecution, not only for themselves, but also for other religions.

Muslims were driven out of their homes and were killed because they followed the message of Islam.

Muslims had migrated to Medina to seek refuge from their persecution at Makka, but soon they also faced persecution at Medina. The enemy, upon arriving at the foothills of Uhud, allowed its horses to graze the crops of the inhabitants of Medina, and the animals were let loose to destroy the crops.

Muslims seized battle when their enemy was ready to incline to peace.

All prisoners of war were released after battles, and they were treated humanely by the Muslims.

Muslims never tried to convert anyone to Islam by force.

Having strong faith in Allah and His Messenger, the Muslims were ready to give their lives and property for the preservation of Islam.

The Muslim archers, who disregarded the orders of the Holy Prophet, were forgiven by Allah. Allah is Merciful and Forgiving, indeed! These Muslims showed remorse for their actions, and their leaving the position was not planned nor deliberate.

Ch.3:135 talks about those who wrong their souls and then ask for forgiveness.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad never spoke a harsh word after the Battle of Uhud; rather, he became more forgiving and kind to both friends and foe.

May Almighty Allah help us in understanding His messages and implementing the lessons contained in those messages in the correct manner. Ameen. ■

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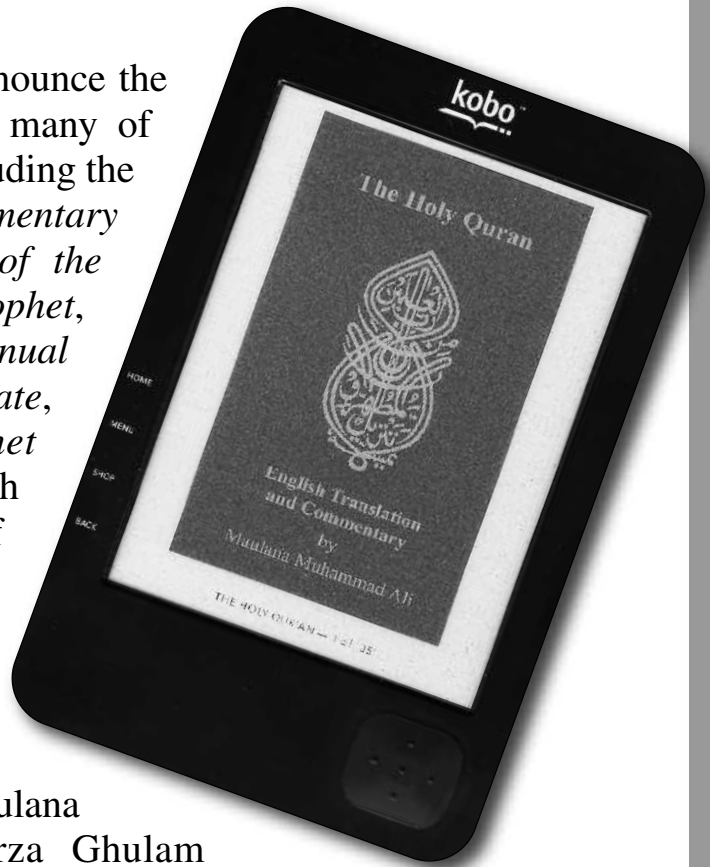
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