

*“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**

October - December 2005

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

Vol. 82

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Published on the World-Wide Web at: www.muslim.org

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.

ISSN: 1060-4596

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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	

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.

An “Ever Recurring Happiness”: Eid-ul-Fitr Khutba 2005

By Dr. Noman Malik

[This article comprises the Eid-ul-Fitr khutba delivered in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A. by Dr. Noman Malik. Dr. Malik explains the significance of religious festivals in Islam by examining the true meaning of ‘Id’ or an ‘ever recurring happiness.’ He further distinguishes the temporary nature of material benefits with the permanency of spiritual progress, thereby concluding that it is the spiritual food and not the material food that provides man with true happiness].

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil (2:183).

Today is the festival of *Id ul fitr* which marks the end of *Ramadan*, the month of fasting.

Significance of Religious Festivals in Islam

The two great festivals in Islam are known as *Id ul fitr* and *Id ul Adhza*. In other religions, festivals are commemorative, marking important events such as the birth or death of some divine personage or a significant historical occurrence. Examples of such are Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus; or the Jewish festivals Passover, Yom Kippur and Hanukah marking historical events.

Although, there is no dearth of religious personalities or events in Islam, no such festivals are celebrated by Muslims. Perhaps no religious personage is more revered and loved by his followers than the Holy Prophet Muhammad by Muslims, but neither the birth nor the death of the Holy Prophet is celebrated in Islam. Furthermore, miraculous instances in the early history of Islam, when God’s help against tremendous odds is clearly demonstrated, like victory in the battle of *Badr*, the *Hijrah* (migration of the Holy Prophet from Mecca to Madina), the conquest of Mecca etc., are not celebrated by Muslims with festivals.

Instead Islam attaches a totally new significance to religious festivals. Rather than celebrating personages or events, it celebrates the completion of a duty which is necessary for spiritual development. Thus the completion of fasting in the month of *Ramadan* becomes a cause for celebration.

As *Id* literally means *ever-recurring happiness*, one may ask how completing one month of fasting becomes a source of *ever-recurring happiness*. The benefits of such a source should be ever-lasting; they should not deteriorate, decay or cease. Thus, although worldly life

may be a source of happiness and gain, these benefits are transitory. Ultimately, every source of worldly happiness, be it good health, wealth or political power, must come to an end. At times misfortunes occur during a person’s lifetime and these worldly sources of happiness are lost sooner, and at times they eventually end with death.

In contrast to material happiness, however, spiritual happiness lasts for ever and is not destroyed by death. The most valuable and precious gift that Almighty Allah has granted human beings is not any material benefit; rather, it is the immortal divine soul. God breathed His own spirit or *ruh* into every human being

This soul survives death, and depending upon the life it has led in this world may become fit for an eternal life of happiness with God. This eternal life is the ultimate true success, and is the *ever recurring happiness* which God Almighty, in His infinite love and mercy has bestowed on man as stated in the following Quranic verses:

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).

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)!

And as for those who are made happy, they will be in the Garden abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord please — a gift never to be cut off (11:108).

In order to reach the spiritual state mentioned in the verses above, one must develop ones soul. All that is necessary for man’s spiritual development and journey to God are found in the verses of the Holy Quran relating to *Ramadan*, the month of fasting. These elements are: 1) belief in a living God, 2) guidance provided by the Holy Quran, and 3) practical demonstration of that guidance in one’s life and prayer.

Belief in a Living God

The one absolutely essential and fundamental requirement for spiritual development is belief in the reality of God. Unless God becomes a *living reality* in a person’s life, spiritual progress is impossible. The verses relating to fasting themselves explain how fasting brings about this belief in a living God.

The first verse states:

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil (*tattaqun*) (2:183).

To understand this verse completely, one must understand the full meaning of the word *muttaqin* or *those who guard against evil* or *are careful of their duty*. An excellent explanation of this word is given in the incomparable footnotes of the English Translation of the Holy Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali as follows:

...translators generally render [the word ‘*muttaqin*’] into *God-fearing* or *pious*. The root is *waqa*, and conveys the sense of *saving, guarding, or preserving* (LL). According to R, *wiqaayahh* signifies the *guarding of a thing from that which harms or injures it*. The verb, of which *muttaqui* is the nominative form, is *ittaqa*, which means, *he preserved or guarded himself exceedingly*. “In the conventional language of the law”, according to LL, “*he preserved or guarded himself exceedingly from sin or what would harm him in the world to come.*” Hence the word *muttaqi* may properly be translated only as *one who guards himself against evil*, or *one who is careful of*, or *has regard for*, or *keeps his duty*. The Quran is here described as affording guidance to those who keep their duty, because the sense of keeping his duty is innate in man, and everyone who has regard for duty is true to nature and true to himself. No guidance would benefit a man who has no regard for his duty. Adopting the alternative meaning, *those who guard against evil*, the significance is that guarding against evil or being saved from sin is the first stage in man’s spiritual advancement, and the Quran lays down the principles by following which the higher stages of that advancement are attained (footnote to 2:2).

Furthermore, a person will only be a *muttaqui* (one who is *careful of his duty to God* and one who *guards against evil*) if he has a firm belief in God. This is the first requirement in the road to spiritual success as stated in the verse:

This Book (i.e. the Holy Quran), there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty,

Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them, and of the hereafter they are sure (2:2,3).

Belief in the Unseen here stands for belief in God, and it is the first requirement of being a *muttaqui*. This principle is emphasized every week in the Jummah Khutbah in the words, “...the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (force for refraining from evil and the greatest impetus for doing good).” Thus, the importance of belief in a living God is made clear.

In Islam, fasting is the practical means to bring the abstract faith in God to the forefront as a tangible reality. In contrast with most religions where fasting is usually practiced as an act of expiation to appease an angry

deity or for self mortification, Islam utilizes the abstinence from food, drink and sexual relations from dawn to dusk in an ingenious way to make God a reality.

The physical desires of hunger, thirst and sex are universal and are common to all human beings. By virtue of this fact, all human beings, regardless of the degree of their spiritual inclination, become participants in this spiritual exercise when they fast. During the fast, there is no worldly law which can prevent a person from satisfying these physical needs. It would be very easy for a person to eat and drink in secret, but it is the thought that God exists and is watching that prevents a person from satisfying these very legitimate desires. In this way God becomes a living reality. Furthermore, as hunger and thirst, once felt, only increase with the passage of time, the struggle to resist satisfying them for the sake of God strengthens the belief in God proportionately. In addition, as fasting is incumbent on every eligible adult Muslim, a large part of the population fasts, and this community effort by itself, is a strong factor in strengthening the individual’s feeling that God exists as everyone appears to obey His command to refrain from food and drink. Furthermore this spiritual exercise lasts not for just a few days, but rather for a whole month. Consequently, God’s presence and existence become a continuous reality for ordinary people, who otherwise tend to forget God easily, as they become absorbed in their daily worldly affairs. Fasting therefore enables ordinary people to experience the continuous presence of God as is felt by His chosen ones all the time.

This sense of awareness of God enables a man to subdue and control his physical desires so that he exercises them at the appropriate times and occasions as taught by God in His holy scriptures. In this way, physical desires serve a beneficial purpose and become a means of furthering spiritual progress, rather than of running riot, and destroying the soul of a person.

Also, by causing pangs of hunger and thirst, fasting increases empathy for the poor and serves as an impetus to give charity, an essential practical act necessary for man’s spiritual progress as stated in the following verse:

You cannot attain to righteousness unless you spend out of what you love. And what you spend, Allah surely knows it (3:92).

Revelation of the Holy Quran

With the belief in the existence and reality of God as the basis for all actions, a person needs guidance on how to conduct himself so that he may draw closer to God. Thus, in the second verse relating to fasting the Holy Quran states:

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur’an was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion (2:185).

A spiritual journey is analogous to physical journey. To successfully complete a physical journey, a person needs to know what his destination is, and requires a map or directions to get to it. Likewise for successful spiritual development, a man needs to know who God is, what His attributes are, what his relationship to man is and what man must do in order to reach him. The answers to these questions are provided in the revelations that God Almighty out of his mercy or *Rahma* (defined as his attribute of having so much love for his creatures that He must do good to them) has been sending down through his messengers from the beginning of man's creation. This message, in its final, incorruptible and complete form applicable to all situations and ages, is the Holy Quran. Not only did the final and perfect revelation for mankind commence in the blessed month of *Ramadan*, but, with the revelation of the Quran, also commenced the prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The Holy Prophet, by his moral and spiritual excellence, reached the closest position to God that is possible for a human being to attain. For this reason he is called the *perfect model* in the Holy Quran as his life practically demonstrates the guidance offered in the Holy Quran:

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Latter day, and remembers Allah much (33:21).

When asked about the Holy Prophet's morals, Hazrat Ayesha very aptly characterizes this in her succinct reply, "his morals are the Quran". Therefore by modeling ones character on that of the Holy Prophet's, a person can also rise to great spiritual heights as promised in the Holy Quran:

Say: If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you, and grant you protection from your sins. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (3:31).

Prayer

And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way (2:186).

Whereas fasting instills the conviction of a living God by physical means, *salat*, or the Islamic prayer, does so on a higher conscious level. Five times a day, a person must leave his comfortable bed or worldly affairs, often at a time when, in the latter case, it may mean losing money to stand in prayer before God. Thus this very act of attending prayers makes God a living reality. Although fasting is a discipline that instills the sense of a living God, it cannot be practiced year round. On the other hand, prayer can be maintained at all times. Hence, great stress is laid on establishing prayer, especially the *tahajjud* prayer so that prayer becomes a habit

which can be practiced on a regular basis:

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). And Allah knows what you do (29:45).

The Islamic prayer, *salat*, is unique in instilling the conviction of God on a large scale. Standing like brothers or sisters, shoulder to shoulder in straight lines like a spiritual army, in an atmosphere of perfect equality, facing in the same direction towards the *Kaaba* (the house of God symbolizing the unity of the spiritual goal) Muslims repeat the *sura fatiha*, the center piece of the *salat*. These seven short verses capsule all the spiritually purifying teachings of the Holy Quran. The prayer is an earnest desire to be guided on the right path, the path of the righteous, the most perfect example of whom is the holy prophet Muhammad.

This path requires imbibing those divine attributes of God stated in the first three verses. Just as God is the *Rabb*, the *Nourisher unto perfection*, who out of his infinite mercy (*Rahma*) provides for mankind's physical and spiritual development, so should humans help their fellow human beings develop in all fields by doing good to them out of love for them; just as God is forgiving in dealing with humans and punishes them only to effect reform, so should a person be just and forgiving in his/her dealing with human beings. This is the *right way*, the example set by *those upon whom God has bestowed favors*, the path which leads to God.

The heightened consciousness of the Divine during *Ramadan* affords an ideal opportunity for establishing regularity in prayer which keeps a person on this path of spiritual progress.

Spiritual Transformation

The Holy Quran fittingly ends the references to fasting with the following verse:

And swallow not up your property among yourselves by false means, nor seek to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may swallow up a part of the property of men wrongfully while you know (2:188).

Spiritual endeavors are useless if they are not backed with good deeds, for good deeds are the trees of paradise which bear fruit:

Seest thou not how Allah sets forth a parable of a good word as a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are high,

Yielding its fruit in every season by the permission of its Lord? And Allah sets forth parables for men that they may be mindful (14:24-25).

Without good deeds, religion deteriorates into hypocrisy. The Holy Quran emphasizes the point that if one abstains from lawful activity such as eating and drinking during a fast because one considers it a command from a living God, how much more important it is to refrain from illegally usurping the property and rights of one's fellow man? This is the *keeping one's duty* to God (*taqwa*) and forms the basis for all good deeds. Thus lying, cheating, stealing, abusing, intentionally losing one's temper or any other spiritual misdeeds which harms another or violates another's rights breaks the fast.

Ever Recurring Happiness

Thus, *Id ul fitr* celebrates the development of the conviction of a living God through fasting and prayer, the beginning of the final revelation. (The Holy Quran) and the advent of the perfect spiritual model, which the *Rahman*, the *infinitely merciful God*, has sent for the spiritual perfection of man. This is what we celebrate and what we give *thanks* for as stated in the following verse of the Holy Quran:

...Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you and that you may give thanks (2:185).

This is *food from heaven* which Almighty God promised in response to Jesus' prayer as related in the Holy Quran in the following verses:

When the disciples said: O Jesus, son of Mary, is thy Lord able to send down food to us from heaven? He said: Keep your duty to Allah if you are believers.

They said: We desire to eat of it, and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that thou hast indeed spoken truth to us, and that we may be witnesses thereof.

Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Allah, our Lord, send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an *ever-recurring happiness (Id)* to the first of us and the last of us, and a sign from Thee, and give us sustenance and Thou art the Best of the sustainers (5:112-114).

The food promised in these verses is spiritual food, that is, the advent of Islam and the revelation of the Holy Quran and the appearance of Holy Prophet Muhammad. In these verses besides the advent of Islam, there is also a prophecy about how Islam will spread among the Christians which is relevant for our times and our movement.

During the initial spread of Islam, it was the great Christian communities of the Middle East who accepted the message of Islam. The "first of us" would refer to

these communities in the above verse. The "last of us" refers to the Christians of the latter days, that is, of the present time, the time of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It would be through the Ahmadiyya Movement founded by him that the true peaceful and spiritually uplifting teachings of Islam, specifically through the translation and commentary of the Holy Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali, that Islam would once again be presented to the Christian West and win them over. It is a great honor and blessing that God Almighty has conferred on us that as Lahori Ahmadi we have been given this tremendous opportunity to participate in this spiritual jihad. May Almighty Allah have Mercy on us and strengthen us so that we may remain faithful to the conditions of our Bait to "hold the cause of Religion above worldly attractions" and deliver this spiritual food which is a cause for an ever recurring happiness to all mankind. Ameen! ■

Treatment of Women in Islam

By Barry White (Muhammad Sadiq)

[This article comprises a *Jumma Khutba (Sermon)* delivered by Br. Muhammad Sadiq. Br. Sadiq is an American Muslim, of Danish descent, who converted to Islam in the early 1950's. He was initially associated with the Qadian section of the Ahmadiyya Movement. After approximately 30 years of being a member of the Qadiani Jamaat, Br. Sadiq left Qadianiyyat and upon reading an issue of the 'Islamic Review' in a mainstream Islamic Center in Quincy, Massachusetts in 1985, contacted the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, studied its beliefs, joined the Movement and has ever since been actively and devotedly working for the cause of the propagation of Islam.]

In chapter 4 of the Holy Quran, *Al-Nisa* or "The Women", Allah tells the Muslims that they cannot treat women like slaves; they must act justly toward them. The verse enjoins Muslims to treat women kindly and warns them that they may hate a woman when Allah has "placed abundant good" in her. Muslims are to be just, kind to women and they must be careful not to underestimate the worth of women because any imperfections may be made up for by traits that are much greater in goodness. Muslims are not to exploit women, be cruel to them, nor take them for granted. These are the commands of Allah to "you who believe" (Quran 4:19).

The relationship between men and women is described in 9:71: "And the believers, men and women are friends of one another." We do not abuse, neglect or hurt friends, do we? Neither should we treat women in such a manner! We are kind and helpful to our friends,

are we not? Women deserve similar treatment from their fathers, husbands, brothers, sons and other male relatives. That goes for the government and society also, if it is a believing government or society.

Paul Findley, a member of Congress for twenty-two years, writes in his recent book, Silent No More:

A report released in January 2000, by the John Hopkins School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland, offers the startling conclusion that one of every three women worldwide has been beaten, raped or somehow mistreated. Americans seem to cite severe discrimination in some Muslim countries as evidence that Islam condones mistreatment of women . . . Most discrimination arises from brutish customs and male chauvinism, not from the Qur'an or the Sunnah. (p.127).

He goes so far as to suggest, very much against the conventional wisdom, that, "Islam may be the single most liberating influence in recorded history, greater than Christianity and Judaism." Mr. Findley explains,

Thomas W. Lippman, a Jewish journalist who served for three years as the *Washington Post*, bureau chief in Cairo, writes, "In a society in which women were possessions, taken and put aside like trinkets, often held in conditions approaching bondage, the Qur'an imposed rules and prohibitions that curbed the worst abuses, ensured women's property rights, and encouraged men to treat women with kindness and generosity ... (128)"

The Holy Qur'an gives women a legal status that is much more advanced to the western legal codes for women. William Baker, Christian leader writes: "When we consider the status of women in pre-Islamic societies, we learn that two-thirds were in some form of slavery . . . women were nearly invisible in a male-dominated world in nearly every religion and every culture of the world."

It is clear that the women in the seventh century were nearly invisible in a male dominated world, in nearly every religion and every culture. Two thirds of the women throughout this world were in some kind of slavery. Then along comes Islam, as if out of the blue, completely revolutionizing women's rights; even giving them some rights that the west has yet to grant to women. These rights were given to the Muslim women of the seventh century. They did not have to fight for their rights, did not have to participate in demonstrations, nor go on hunger strikes, as did their western sisters. They did not have to even lift a finger. These rights were given to them by this new religion of Islam. No one had to force the Holy Prophet of Islam to grant these rights to women. These rights were their due as human beings and Islam was the fulfillment of all religions, so they were liberated from the centuries of oppression.

Not only does Islam require justice for women, it insists on kindness to them and cooperation between them. Mr. Findley quotes a Muslim, Nour Naciri, who comments on the Hadith. "The husband and the wife are as equal as two teeth in a comb." It means that men and women married or single are equal in the rights their Creator gives them as human beings and in the obligations He entrusts them to discharge as His vicegerents on earth. Male and female must cooperate, each in his or her full capacity, just as the teeth of a comb, so to speak, must cooperate for any combing to be done. They must cooperate within the family unit and within society as a whole.

Other than the verse of the Holy Qur'an commanding kind treatment towards women, there are also several Hadith on the subject matter as follow:

The most perfect of the believers in faith is the best of them in moral excellence, and the best of you are the kindest of you to their wives (TR. 10:11).

Accept my advice in the matter of doing good to women (BU. 67:81).

O my people! You have certain rights over your wives and so have your wives over you—they are the trust of Allah in your hands, so you must treat them with all kindness (Muslim 15:19).

A person who ill-treats his wife during the day and loves her at night, acts in complete contradiction of the beauty of human nature (Precious Gems 801).

Admonish your wife with kindness (Precious Gems 709).

The more civil and the kinder is a Muslim to his wife, the more perfect of faith he has; fear God with reverence to two meek beings, woman and orphan (Precious Gems 790).

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, stressed kindness and good treatment of wives. This is an echo of the Holy Qur'an, in the verse mentioned in the beginning, as well as the following:

. . . keep them in good fellowship, or let them go in kindness (2:229).

Retain them in kindness, or set them free in kindness, and retain them not for injury (2:231).

Overwhelmingly, the Holy Qur'an and authentic Hadith command kind treatment of women; yet there is one verse in the Holy Qur'an that has been mistaken to advocate the mistreatment of women, especially by Non-Muslim critics. The Holy Qur'an states:

And those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the beds

and chastise them. So if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely, Allah is ever Exalted, Great.

If you fear a breach between the two, appoint an arbiter from his people and an arbiter from her people (4:34)

Obviously all the measures from admonishment to marriage counseling mentioned here are attempts to save a marriage that is in danger of dissolution. If the chastisement in this verse means beating ones wife to an inch of her life, it is hard to see how that would contribute to rejuvenating the marriage. On the contrary, it probably would destroy the marriage, by making the wife hate her husband. It could end the husband as well as the marriage; more than one abused wife has killed her husband, or mutilated him. Taken this way, the verse is very bad advice and the Holy Qur'an does not give bad advice.

The actual meaning is elucidated in the book Believing Women In Islam. The word, *daraba*, chastise, does not suggest repetitive or intense beating. The word, *daraba*, translated as "chastise", is in the singular, so only one strike is allowed. If two r's rather than one—*Darraba*— had been used, it would have meant to strike repeatedly or intensely. That word was not used in this verse. *Daraba* can also mean, "to set an example" (Barlas 106,188)

Amina Wadud states that this verse "should be read as prohibiting unchecked violence against females. Thus this is not a permission, but a severe restriction of existing practices." The chastising mentioned in the verse apparently was symbolic, a way for the husband to express his displeasure for serious misconduct on the part of the wife.

Barlas writes that, "Tradition holds that the gesture should not cause pain. Hence some exegetes favor using a folded handkerchief." She notes that *daraba* also means to prevent further gross misbehavior by making clear the husband's unhappiness with his wife's behavior (Barlas 188).

Ibn Abbas, a companion of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that the chastisement could be with a toothbrush, or something similar. The Holy Prophet, according to Tirmidhi said, "You have a right in the matter of your wives that you do not allow anyone whom you do not like to come in to your houses. If they do this, chastise them in such a manner that it should not leave an impression" (10:11).

When some women complained of their husbands ill-treating them, the Prophet, said, "You will not find these men as the best among you" (Abu Daud 12:42). The subject is summarized by John Esposito in What every-one needs to Know about Islam:

Muhammad's wife Aisha narrated that, 'Muhammad never physically struck anyone with his own hand.' Neither the Qur'an nor the Hadith record Muhammad as ever mistreating or losing his temper with any of his wives, even when he was unhappy or dissatisfied. In the major Hadith collections, Hadith about striking, all emphasize that striking should be done in such a way as not to cause pain or harm. The founder of the Shafi Law School maintained that it is preferable to avoid striking altogether. Despite the fact that domestic violence continued to exist in male dominated cultures and to be legitimated in the name of religion, neither the majority of Quranic verses, nor the Hadith support or permit it (106,107).

Clearly, Islam commands justice and kindness towards women. Equality between the sexes has never been as expressly dictated as set forth in the Holy Quran and as illustrated in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. ■

The Need for the Holy Quran

By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

[This article examines the need for the Holy Quran, the scripture that has as its paramount purpose the establishment of the Unity of God, when other faiths also accepted the doctrine of the Unity of God at the time of the revelation of the Quran. In doing so, Hazrat Mirza sheds light on the unique concept of Unity of God in Islam and reveals that only in Islam can one find a true 'monotheistic' faith. This article was originally published in a 1913 issue of the "Review of Religions".]

Introduction

As the great objective of Islam is to teach the doctrine of the Unity of God, the question has often been asked: what was the need for the Holy Quran when the doctrine of Unity had already been revealed to the world in the *Taurat* (the book of the Law of Moses). In answer to this question it should be borne in mind that Judaism no doubt originally taught the doctrine of Unity, but Judaism at the time of the revelation of the Quran had become corrupt, both in practice and doctrine. The pure religion of the Unity of God departed from by the Jews, and the doctrine of Unity contained in their books had no practical effect upon their lives. The grand aim for which man is created and the Word of God revealed had been utterly lost sight of. The recognition of the Divine Unity consists in a firm belief in the existence of God and His oneness, attended with obedience to Him, complete submission to His will and losing one's self in His love. The Jewish books taught Unity indeed, but the

inner life of the Jews was not governed by the noble principle of conduct which underlies the doctrine of the Unity of God and their hearts were totally devoid of the deep impression of the grandeur and glory of God. Outwardly and formally they recognized Unity but their hearts were turned away from purity. Their lives were characterized by iniquity, worldliness, impure thoughts and affections, deceit and falsehood. The honor and greatness due to God was given to priests and hermits, while disgraceful deeds were done. Hypocrisy and deceit were predominant in the hearts of those who elected to be the teachers and reformers of the people.

Subtleties of Unity

Moreover, a mere formal recognition of the Unity of God is of no benefit if the heart bows down in submission before a thousand different idols. The person who assigns the glory and greatness which is due solely of God, to the means, plans and stratagems which he employs for the realization of an object, or trusts in aught but God, or gives a share of the majesty and power of God to his own self or to any other creature, is also an idol-worshipper though he may outwardly confess the Unity of God. Idols are not only images made of stone, brass, gold, silver or any other substance, but every object of the reverence and passionate devotion which is due to God, is an idol in the sight of God. The Jewish sacred books however did not teach this noble significance of the doctrine of Unity and the Quran was, therefore, needed for its revelation of the world. The doctrine of the absolute Unity of God precluding faith or trust in everything else besides God was not known to the world until the Holy Quran revealed it. The adoration and reverence of senseless images is an act to which none but the most ignorant superstitious would resort, but the most dangerous form of idolatry is that which cannot be easily discovered and which affects and vitiates the whole system like an imperceptible but obstinate disease. This lamentable disease prevailed among the Jews and the Bible did not prove an effectual remedy for it, for the Bible did not teach the great truth underlying the Unity of God. The general prevalence of this disease moreover required a perfect living exemplar whose life being governed by this practical principle of the absolute Unity of God should have been a guidance and a direction to mankind and a powerful remedy for destroying the disease.

True Unity defined

What is the true doctrine of the Unity of God that the Holy Quran requires us to believe in and which is the only way to salvation? It is to believe in God as one and alone in His person, and above every rival or partner whether it is an idol, or a human being, or a heavenly body or one's own-self or one's resources, plans or means, not to regard any one as powerful against Him, not to consider any one as the sustainer, the exalter, the

abaser, the helper or the supporter as against the will of God, to love Him alone, to worship Him alone, to submit to Him alone, to fear Him alone and to centre all one's hopes in Him alone.

There are three requirements for a complete adherence to the doctrine of Unity. Firstly, a man must believe in Unity in the person of God, i.e., he must regard everything as vain and naught before God. Secondly, he must believe in Unity in the attributes of God, consider Divinity and Lordship as the attributes of no one besides God, looking upon all those who seem to have an authority as having it from Him. Thirdly, there must be unity in the love, sincerity and devotion that he bears to God; in other words, nothing else must have a share of his love and devotion towards God and of the other aspects of his adoration, and he must be completely lost in Him. These three aspects of the Divine Unity had not been taught by any book before the Quran, and that which had been taught by Moses and the Israelite prophets was not acted upon by the Jews and the Christians. The iniquity and gross immorality in which these people indulged at the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran is a clear testimony to the truth of the statement that they admitted the existence of God with their lips, but their hearts were utter strangers to this exalting and noble faith. It is for this reason that the Quran condemns both the Jews and the Christians and states that if these people had acted upon the teachings of Moses and Jesus, they would have been granted sustenance both from heaven and from earth. The heavenly sustenance indicates the spiritual blessings which are granted to the righteous and faithful in heart such as heavenly signs, acceptance of prayer, visions and inspiration. Here they are also declared as having been deprived of earthly sustenance, because they did not obtain it by just and righteous means but by bending low upon earth and making use of improper methods.

Deficiency in Unity as taught in Israelite Law

Israelite law, no doubt, taught the Unity of God, but the doctrine of Unity taught by it, fell far short of the sublime Unity revealed by the Holy Quran. This defect of teaching in itself called for a new revelation while the necessity was further enhanced by the spiritual death of those who professed to inculcate this doctrine. The Jewish doctrine of unity, imperfect as it was, was in their books and not in their hearts. They, therefore, needed a heavenly teacher who should have breathed the soul of Unity into their hearts, and a warm devotion in place of the dull and vapid utterance of formal words. The Jews were dead and life had departed from them on account of the hardness of their hearts and their numerous transgressions. No spark of love for God and not the slightest trace of inclination to spirituality was left in them. Their books on account of their defective teachings and the numerous alterations in their letter and spirit could not

inspire a new life into, and furnish a perfect guidance to, their votaries or to the world at large. Therefore, Almighty God sent down His living Word like fresh and timely rain, and to this word which gave life, did He invite them, that they might find life and salvation being purified through it of their former errors and iniquities. The Holy Quran was, therefore, needed in the first place to teach a living Unity to the lifeless Jews; secondly, to inform them of their errors; and thirdly, to throw full light upon all matters relating to eschatology which had been barely alluded to in the Israelite law.

Unity sown earlier, but ripened with Islam

It is true that the seed of truth was sown with the revelation of Moses while that of Jesus gave the glad tidings of a future when that revelation was to be made perfect. As the seed that grows in a healthy condition gives the glad tidings of good fruits and ears, the Gospel of Jesus gave the glad tidings of the revelation of a perfect law and an unerring guide, being fulfilled in the Holy Quran. The seed which Moses had sown, therefore, ripened with the Quran. The Holy Book brought with it the perfect blessing which made a clear distinction between truth and falsehood and perfected the religious truths and spiritual verities. This was the purport of Moses words in Deut. 32:2, "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran." In fact, the different phases of law were made perfect only by the Quran. Its two great divisions, the one treating of the relation of man to God, and the other of that of man to man, found complete and full development only in the Quran. The object of the Quran was to make the savage a man, to teach the man the highest moral qualities and to make him godly last of all. This function of Holy Book performed with such a success that every other law is a total failure in comparison with it.

The Quran, a reconciliator between Christians and Jews

The Holy Quran was also needed to settle the differences between the Jews and the Christians relating to Jesus. This, it has done in various places. A very important point of difference is that in relation to which the following verse occurs in the Holy Quran:

When Allah said: O Jesus, I will cause thee to die and exalt thee in My presence and clear thee of those who disbelieve and make those who follow thee above those who disbelieve to the day of Resurrection. Then to Me is your return, so I shall decide between you concerning that wherein you differ. (3:55).

The Jews asserted as against the Christians that their prophet, i.e., Jesus, had been crucified and that, therefore, according to the law of Moses he was accursed and his soul did not rise to heaven. This argument they

advanced as conclusive proof that Jesus was a false prophet. The Christians admitted the curse but said that he had been cursed for their sake, and that subsequently the curse being removed, he rose to heaven where God seated him on His right hand. The verse quoted above condemns both views as serious errors. It states that Jesus did not suffer either a permanent or a temporary curse but that his soul rose to heaven, the happy abode to which the souls of the righteous rise, immediately after his death, which had not taken place on the cross. The Mosaic Law makes curse the consequence of death upon the cross and not of a mere suspension on it which does not result in death. The Quran plainly negates the death of Jesus upon the cross and, consequently, his subjection to curse and asserts in clear words that his soul, like the souls of the righteous, rose to heaven after death. Therefore, the Holy Quran refutes both the Jewish and Christian doctrines and asserts that he was not accursed as his enemies and erring friends would have him, but died a pure death and was raised to heaven after his death like all other prophets. Thus did the Holy Quran settle the much vexed question of Jesus death, but the Christians still do not admit the need for the Quran. The Quran brought the pure doctrine of the absolute Unity of God, it produced harmony between reason and religion, it carried the doctrine of Unity to its perfection, it furnished clear and conclusive arguments for the Unity and attributes of the Divine Being, it gave reasons based on intellect, history and revelation for the existence of God, it dressed religion, which had up to that time no more value than can be given to a story, in scientific clothing, it clothed every doctrine with true wisdom, it brought to perfection the chain of religious truths which was hitherto imperfect, it took away the curse from Jesus, and it gave evidence of his being a true prophet and of his having risen to heaven to live with the righteous. In the face of these facts, no sensible person would assert that the Quran was not needed.

History bears testimony to the need for the Quran

It should be borne in mind that the Quran has itself clearly proved its need. Thus it says

"Know it that the earth had been dead, and God is now going to restore it to life again." (30:19; 30:50).

History bears evidence to the fact that immediately before the revelation of the Quran every nation had depraved itself and all the people were sunk deep in vice. Pfinder, notwithstanding his determined enmity towards, and blind prejudice against, Islam, also bears testimony to the fact that the Jews and the Christians at the advent of our Holy Prophet were corrupt to the core and led grossly immoral lives, though he explains away the appearance of the Holy Prophet by arguing that the coming of a false prophet at the time of a general corruption was a warning to the Christians and Jews who had gone astray to reform

themselves. Any one having an ordinary share of intelligence will clearly see that this explanation is simply an absurdity. Put in plain words, it means that finding the people of the earth in gross errors and turpitude, God intentionally led them into greater errors and brought about circumstances that led millions of human beings farther away from the right path instead of doing something to bring them back to the truth. Can it be true that when God sees people gone astray, He intentionally leads them to greater destruction, and sends them misleaders and false prophets when they need true guides and reformers? Do the Divine laws, as revealed in external nature, lend support to this conclusion, and is it thus that God visits the people when sufferings and adversities are unbearable? This is the most blasphemous charge against Divine justice and mercy. To what extreme does the love of this world lead! A weak human being is first called God and then an accursed person! The righteous prophet of God who delivered the world when it was plunged in evil and restored it to life when it was dead, is denied!

What stronger evidence for the need of the Quran is required! It came at a time when error raged in the world. It found the world blind and gave it light, it found it in error and gave it guidance, it found it dead and gave it life. The fact that the doctrine of the Unity of God had already been revealed, does not in any way affect the need for the Quran, for as already shown, the doctrine of Unity as taught in previous books was imperfect and did not aim at the high standard revealed by the Holy Quran. Moreover, even in that imperfect condition, it was only upon the lips and not in the hearts of its adherents and the Holy Quran was, therefore, needed to impress it upon the hearts and to make it a living principle for action instead of a formula for repetition. The doctrine of Unity had in fact been quite lost and the Quran brought it afresh to the memory of mankind. The reason why the Holy Quran has been termed or “remembrance” is that it brought back to the memory that which had been forgotten.

The counter-argument examined

The argument against the need for the Quran, moreover, applies, if there is the least weight in it, with equal force to the Mosaic Law itself, because the doctrine of Unity was not unknown before the revelation of the Law of Moses. Do not even the Jews and the Christians admit that this doctrine had been first revealed and taught to Adam, then to Seth, Noah, Abraham and the other prophets that went before Moses? The revelation of Moses is, therefore, open to the same objection, *viz.*, that it was not needed when the doctrine of Unity was revealed and known before it. The same eternal and unchangeable God who revealed Himself to Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, revealed Himself to Moses, and Moses taught the same Unity which the earlier prophets had taught.

The truth is that the doctrine of the unity and existence of God was not originally taught by the law of Moses but is of ancient origin. We must, therefore seek the principle which govern its repeated relation in the world. A cursory glance at the world’s history will show that there have been periods in it when the teaching of Unity has been in its wane and men having left to act upon it, the principle has been held in contempt and disregard. Almighty God has on such occasions raised in prophets and vouchsafed fresh revelation to the world in order to deliver people from the evil and *shirk* into which they have fallen and to bring them back to righteousness and the Unity of God which they have lost. Thousands of times has the doctrine grown rusty and as many times has it been polished and restored to its original purity. With its rustiness, its true worth is hidden from the human eye and, accordingly, for a time it appears to be quite forgotten. A prophet of God, therefore, again appears to manifest its beauty and light and to dispel the darkness from its face. Thus have light and darkness been gaining the supremacy alternately in the world. The most unailing test that can be applied to judge the claims of a prophet is to see the time when he appears and the transformation that he works. This is the safest method that a seeker after truth should adopt. He should consider with an unprejudiced mind the condition, both as to principles and actions, of the people among whom a prophet appears before his appearance and after he has done his work. If he comes in time of need and leaves people when that need is satisfied, this is an irrefutable argument of his truth. A prophet is needed to deliver those who are involved in sin in the same manner as a physician is needed to cure the sick.

A comparative analysis

If any one were to apply this sound test to the claims of our Holy Prophet and compare the pre-Islamic Arabs with the companions of the Holy Prophet, he would be convinced that the Holy Prophet far excelled all other prophets in his sanctifying power. The need for the Quran and the Holy Prophet was far more clear and easy of demonstration than the need of any other prophet or book. What great need did Jesus for instance satisfy and what is the proof that he actually did satisfy any need? Did he work any great transformation in the morals and customs of the Jews? Was he successful in purifying the lives of his chosen apostles? Both questions, we are sorry to note, must be answered in the negative. All that can be proved is that Jesus had gathered about him a number of avaricious men who were guilty of treachery and faithlessness to their master. Was this the effect of teachings that are boasted as unequalled in their sublimity?

It should also be borne in mind that the Gospel teachings have no superiority over the teachings of the earlier prophets. The teaching contained in the Gospels have, on the other hand, been all taken from earlier

sources including the Talmud. The Jews have always forcibly asserted that there is no originality in the Gospel-teachings but that they are only plagiarisms from Jewish sacred books. One Jewish author has traced whole passages of the teachings of Jesus in the words of earlier sages. But the Christian, while admitting this charge of plagiarism, would say that the object of Jesus mission was not to teach morality but to offer his blood as an atonement for the immoralities of the world and to be subjected to curse. This is, however, a serious error into which they have fallen. They think that the Law was consummated in the Mosaic Law and that, therefore, the Law revealed in the Quran was not needed. The truth is that since men are apt to forget and be remiss in acting upon moral injunctions which are revealed to them through a prophet, a new Prophet is required after some time to re-establish the same principles and make men act upon them. Every new age stands in need of a new reformer and a new magnetizer. But the Quran was not needed to only satisfy these two needs; it was also needed to bring the teachings of the earlier books to completion and perfection. To take one instance only, the Mosaic Law laid stress upon vengeance only in all cases while Jesus taught unconditional forbearance and resistance. Both these teaching were required by the special circumstances of the time when they were taught but being one sided they could not furnish rules for all ages. As the teaching of the extreme vengeance of Mosaic Law was abrogated by the Gospel, the Gospel-teaching of extreme forbearance itself required to be modified. Hence the need of the Holy Quran, which teaches the middle path in which the punishment of the offender or forbearance ought to be resorted to as the occasion requires. Thus, both the Mosaic Law and the Gospels take the extreme course while the Quran teaches the golden mean in all cases. The essence of the teaching in all three books is the same, but the first two laid stress only upon one side of the question owing to the peculiar requirements of the time and the circumstances when and under which they were revealed, and the third, meant as it was for the whole future, led men into the mean path to which they could for ever stick. The Mosaic Law takes one extreme and the Gospel the opposite, the one requiring vengeance in all cases and the other unconditional forbearance, but the Holy Quran reveals the wise path of acting according to the occasion. The teachings of the Mosaic Law and the Gospel are thus clothed with true wisdom in the Holy Quran. If the Holy Quran had not come, the law revealed in the Mosaic Law and the Gospel would have been like the arrow shot by a blind man which, if it hits the mark once by chance, goes wide a thousand times. In short, the Pentateuch contained law in the form of stories, and the Gospel taught it in the form of parables, while the Holy Quran presented it to seekers after truth clothed in true wisdom.

The magnificence of the Holy Quran

The excellent teachings revealed in the Holy Quran are, thus, far above those contained in the Bible. Nay, the whole of the Bible cannot stand against a single short chapter of the Holy Quran, entitled the *Fatiha*, which contains only seven verses and which discloses such vast treasures of spiritual wisdom, excellent religious truths and the highest and most precious verities arranged in natural order and methodical succession of parts as are not to be met with in the books of Moses and Jesus though one should waste his whole life in turning over their pages. The word of God shows its Divine origin by the Divine power which lies hidden in it just as His handiwork shows His wonderful skill. It should be further remembered that the Holy Quran contains all the directions which are necessary for the perfection of man. The Bible is like an inn which once afforded lodging and rest to wayfarers but after a time heavy storms and violent earthquakes leveled it with the ground. The great building which had once separate apartments for different functions, lay in such waste and total disorganization that the whole was nothing but a heap of bricks. The Lord of this inn took pity on the travelers, and, therefore, prepared a new inn, more spacious than the first and providing every sort of accommodation and all necessaries for the comfort of the travelers. In its preparation the Lord of the house while making use of some of the bricks of the old building that lay in ruins, added a great deal of fresh material, in order to provide for every requirement of the travelers. This second inn is the Holy Quran: let every one who has eyes behold!

Previous laws, mere temporary instructions for a limited period

In connection with the perfection of the teachings revealed in the Holy Quran and the imperfection of those revealed to Moses and Jesus, it is necessary to remove an objection. The incompleteness of the earlier teaching is due not to any defect in the Divine revelation, but to a defect in the capability and capacity of those for whom these teachings were meant. The Israelites, to whom the mission of Moses was directed, had passed about four hundred years in the slavery of the Pharaohs of Egypt, and under this long subjection to the cruelty and tyranny of their masters, they had become as it were utter strangers to principles of justice and equity. As a general rule, the principles to which the masters of a country adhere, find their way into the subject people. People who are in subjection to a tyrant must after a time grow tyrants in private, while those who are under a just ruler, must grow just in private. The King is as it were a teacher of his people. The Israelites had for many generations been in the bondage of foreign tyrants and their constant subjection to the tyranny and cruelty of their masters fostered in them a spirit which was quite inconsistent with principles of justice

and equality. It was, therefore, the first and primary duty of Moses to indoctrinate them in the principles of justice and hence his teachings laid great stress upon this point. The Pentateuch of Moses is not wholly devoid of the teachings of forbearance and mercy but the vein of justice runs through its pages, and its object is also to put a restraint upon undue cruelty and vindictiveness. Such is not the object of the Gospel. It lays stress upon forgiveness and forbearance. The reason of this is not far to seek. The Jews had carried to excess the doctrine of retaliation taught by the Mosaic Law, and instead of kindness and fellow-feeling, rancor and spite had grown up in their hearts. The teaching of Jesus in the Gospels is evidently addressed to a people whom the speaker knows to be men of a rancorous and vindictive nature and whom he wishes to instruct in the high moral qualities of kindness, patience, forbearance and forgiveness to which they are utter strangers. Hence the propriety of the teachings of Moses and Jesus is unquestionable though it cannot be denied that both doctrines were like special or local laws, and from their very nature unsuitable for permanent and universal adoption.

The true and universal law was revealed in the Holy Quran which abrogated all previous laws. Any one who enters into the spirit of the Holy Book and goes to the depth of its true significance, will clearly see that the Quran has neither laid stress upon strict vengeance as the Mosaic Law did in its doctrine of retaliation and its battles, nor has it gone to the opposite extreme by establishing absolute and unqualified forgiveness of all injuries, but adopts the middle path by enjoining that which is right and forbidding that which is wrong. It requires us to do that which is right both according to reason and law, and to refrain from doing what reason and law do not permit. The laws and injunctions of the Quran do not, therefore, relate to particular actions but lay down general rules for a right course of conduct. It does not for instance tell us to take an eye for an eye in every case or to forgive every injury however evil its consequences may be, but tells us to apply our reason and judgment to the circumstances of every case and act in a manner which is likely to produce the greatest good. By enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, the Holy Quran has given us general laws for our guidance and thus introduced scientific principles in religious injunctions. Before proceeding to take any step, we are required to consider what will actually be the right way? Whether it is right to forgive or punish, or to give in charity or not to give, is a question of circumstances in each case. According to the Quranic teachings therefore, our primary consideration in every case should be the propriety of the occasion.

No compulsion in accepting the Quran

We have so far discussed every side of the question relating to the need for the Quran. One point only

remains to be considered. Did Islam wage war with the Jews and the Christians to compel them to accept its doctrines? Such an assertion has no basis at all. Islam never took the initiative in the battles which it had to fight. It was, in fact, compelled to take up the sword against those who had either aggressed on it or assisted the aggressors. The jealousy of God was, therefore, moved to punish the offenders. But His mercy still saved from the deserved punishment those as accepted Islam or paid the *jizya*. This favor was also in accordance with the Divine laws, for whenever there is a visitation of God such as a famine or a plague, the hearts of men are naturally turned to humbleness, repentance, prayers and charitable deeds to avert the Divine punishment. This shows clearly that God Himself inspires into the hearts of men a remedy for averting the evil. The ardent prayers of Moses averted many a time the punishment of the Israelites. In short, the Islamic fights were a punishment from God to the aggressors, in which the way was still open for repentance and obtaining the mercy of God.

It cannot be denied that the early Muslim wars were not undertaken to compel the Jews and Christians to accept the doctrine of Unity preached by Islam. Wars were resorted to at the express command of the Almighty as a punishment for the offenders who either took up arms against the holy faith for its extirpation or assisted the aggressors or laid obstructions in the way of Islam intending to hinder its progress. These three causes necessitated a severe chastisement of the offenders and Almighty God willed that it should be effected by means of the sword. Another unjust and unwarranted charge against Islam is that it preached peace during the first thirteen years under the most cruel tortures and persecutions of its enemies because it lacked force at that time, but that as soon as it had sufficient force to make its appearance in the field of battle it declared war. Such a charge would have had some foundation if the opponents of the Holy Prophet had not committed the heinous deeds of cruelty and innocent bloodshed or plotted to take away his life as they did at Mecca, and the prophet had left Mecca of his own accord and not on account of their evil designs. The slightest acquaintance with the circumstances of the Prophet's life at Mecca, would convince every sensible person of the unreasonableness of such a supposition. Even the enemies of Islam cannot deny-nay they have borne testimony to the fact- that the Holy Prophet met the rejection and persecutions of his enemies with great fortitude and strictly enjoined forbearance and non-resistance of evil upon his companions. There was no end to the severe persecutions of his enemies. They shed the blood of many an innocent person and inflicted wounds and injuries upon whomsoever they could lay their hands on. An attack upon the Prophet himself was at last plotted to bring the whole movement to an end. At this critical moment, Almighty God let His messenger out of all danger to

Medina and gave him the glad tidings that those who had taken up the sword against Islam would perish by the sword. Do these circumstances lend the least support to the cruel charge that the Prophet was from the very commencement bent upon war and that this cherished idea took a practical shape when he found himself at the head of an army at Medina? Is it not true that when the Meccans advanced towards Medina, and were met by the Muslims at the famous field of *Badr*, the ranks of the Muslims contained no more than 313 men of whom very few had any experience of war and the majority were young men who had never fought a battle before? Nay among these three hundred and thirteen were also boys who had not yet grown to manhood. Could this small number of raw young men be relied upon as a sufficient force to meet the sturdy warriors and Bedouin hordes of the whole idolatrous Arabia and the thousands of Jews and Christians who were bent upon extirpating the new faith? Could a general ever make his appearance in the field with such scanty material to deal destruction to innumerable foes? Does it not clearly prove that the Prophet was obliged to take the sword in obedience to the commandment of God and not to fulfill any plan which he had concerted? Had it been his plan, would he not have first collected a force of thirty or forty thousand strong and then made his appearance into the field of battle? ■

The Purpose for the Existence of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement (in the words of Maulana Muhammad Ali)

Compiled by Fazeel S. Khan, Esq.

[This article comprises quotations from the writings and speeches of Maulana Muhammad Ali in which he clarifies the purpose for the existence of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. In the selected quotations, Maulana Muhammad Ali explains what the true objective of the Movement is and, further, outlines particular means required to achieve it. In doing so, Maulana Muhammad Ali, with such passion and desire, reminds members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Jamaat of the spiritual basis of the Movement, the preservation of which must be forefront in all tasks in order for the grand objective of the propagation of Islam to be achieved.]

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 (3:103).

The Holy Quran (3:103) declares that there should be a group among the Muslims whose sole objective is to

present the religion of Islam to the world. It is to fulfill this grand task that *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*, the *Mujadid* of the 14th century *hijra*, created “The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.” Accordingly, the followers of *Hazrat Mirza* understand that it is to this end that they are to strive. Maulana Muhammad Ali, the founder of the “Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement” (*Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam*), who continued the original teachings and objectives of *Hazrat Mirza* after a split occurred within the Movement, has very clearly and ever so eloquently, clarified exactly how members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement are to satisfy the objectives of the Movement, thereby fulfilling the purpose for its existence. This article, therefore, consists of the words of Maulana Muhammad Ali in which he provides guidance in this matter for those who have resolved to be amongst the “party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong”.

Objective of the Movement

Maulana Muhammad Ali repeatedly defines what, exactly, the **objective** of the Movement is:

The **real objective** of our Movement, as the Promised Messiah has stated repeatedly, is the propagation of Islam. Therefore, however much effort we devote to it, and however much of our own possessions and lives we give for this work, it will still be insufficient. My friends, Islam is in greatly troubled waters and its propagation is such a grand and mighty task that whatever you have done so far in this way is really only the first step. If you are firm in your belief of giving preference to the cause of religion over worldly ambitions, then come and support this cause with all your strength ... Worry not that you are small in numbers. It is determination that matters and not numbers: ‘How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah’s permission!’ (2:249). Allah’s permission will arrive when you spare no effort on your part ... Make all practical efforts and also spiritual efforts, in other words by prayer. ‘Our Lord, accept our prayer. You are the Hearer and the Knower’.” (*Paighan Sulh*, April 2, 1914, Appendix).

The **great aim** of our *Jamaat* is to spread the divine teachings and the religion of Islam in the world. So we must pay the fullest attention towards it ... The **real purpose** of the coming of the Promised Messiah was to spread the Holy Quran in the world, to propagate it and to publish its translations ... If our *Jamaat* has taken upon itself this responsibility, then we must not forget it under any circumstances and always continue to try to fulfill it. What is meant by spreading the Holy Quran is that its meanings should be made available to people and they should be provided

with the translation of the Holy Quran in their own languages ... At every opportunity and at every campaign that is put before you, you must keep your objective in view all the time as to how you can spread the glory of the Holy Quran. All other work that you do is in support of this objective. (*Friday Khutba*, February 18, 1938).

It is clear that it is only the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement that has maintained this as its principle objective. Aside from the issues of *nubuwaat* (prophethood), *takfir* (declaring others as non-Muslims) and *khi-lafaat* (successorship), this is also a material distinction between the Qadian and Lahore sections of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The Qadian section has, for all practical purposes, become another “sect” in Islam, having as its principle objective the spreading of its distinct, theoretical concepts and, thereby, attempting to bring into its particular community as many persons as possible. It is only the Lahore *Jamaat* that has continued the true mission of Hazrat Mirza by devoting all its efforts solely to presenting Islam to the world, without the ulterior motive of bringing people into its particular fold. In fact, the separation of the Ahmadiyya Movement into two groups, based on the objectives of each party, has been indicated by Hazrat Mirza himself. In a letter written to Maulana Muhammad Ali, Hazrat Mirza explains his “intention” to divide his community in two, as he writes:

It has long been my intention to divide my community into two groups. One group consists of those who are partly for this world and partly for religion, and are not able to withstand great trials, nor can they render important services to religion. The other group consists of those who enter through this door with full sincerity and faithfulness and in reality sell themselves in this path. I wish that God would include you in the latter group. (Letter dated 8 May 1899, copy of which is available in *Mujahid-i-Kabir*).

Thus, the split in the Ahmadiyya Movement, and the subsequent creation of the Lahore Ahmadiyya *Jamaat*, was presaged by Hazrat Mirza and was, accordingly, a fulfillment of his intention to further the goal of propagation of Islam to the world.¹

Importance of this Task

As per the Quranic verse quoted above, Almighty Allah has decreed that a missionary group should exist among the Muslims, whose very existence is based on the objective of spreading Islam to the world. Moreover, the **importance** of this task is also indicated in the Quran. Maulana Muhammad Ali, in his *Friday Khutba* on May 12, 1944, while mentioning the Promised Messiah’s passion for spreading the Quran in the world, explained:

Praising the Holy Quran and its scribes and those who spread it, Allah says: ‘Nay, surely it is a Reminder. So let him, who will, mind it. In honored books, exalted, purified, in the hands of scribes, noble, virtuous’ [80:11-16]. That is, the Holy Quran is a means of eminence, whoever wishes let him remember it; it is in honored scriptures, in the hands of scribes (*safara*) who are noble and virtuous. The word *safara* is plural of *musafir*, derived from *safr*, which has both the meanings of spreading and opening. It bears both the significances of writing the Quran and spreading it. Who are the safara?: Those who spread the Quran with translation and commentary.

Furthermore, in his *Friday Khutba* on December 17, 1937, published in *Paigham Sulh* on December 22, 1937, Maulana Muhammad Ali writes:

How many of us are working for our cause? A part of the *Jamaat* is idle, not realizing that there is so much work yet to be done. How many of us realize the importance of this work, and the greatness of our goal, that we have to spread Islam in the world. To spread Islam is no easy task. It is to continue the work of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as his successors. When you join this *Jamaat*, do not keep on thinking of worldly allure, thinking of how you could have achieved much success in the world if you had not come here, because there is no way here of achieving worldly gains.

The magnitude of the work that the Lahore Ahmadiyya *Jamaat* has resolved to achieve is not always easily comprehended. The greatness of this work is only truly appreciated, as explained by Maulana Muhammad Ali, when understood as essentially being a continuation of the very task that was undertaken by the Holy Prophet.

Difficultness of this Task

Another issue pertaining to the objective of spreading Islam in the world, aside from its importance, is its **difficultness**. To devote all of one’s efforts in life for this cause is no simple task. Maulana Muhammad Ali explains:

What a great and glorious objective is facing you. It is as if a gigantic mountain is standing in your way and you have to remove it to clear the way. It is easy to move a mountain but the mission that our Imam has entrusted to us is of even greater importance. It is to spread Islam in the world. Is it a small and easy task? What encourages us is that God Himself has promised that He will make Islam prevail through this community. So there is no reason to panic or lose heart. Hazrat Mirza Sahib has himself written: ‘I do not know which impossible paths I will have to tread, which

thorn-filled wildernesses and deserted jungles I will have to traverse, so if anyone has delicate feet he should take leave of me now'. Friends! That time has now come and those difficult to cross ravines, thorny jungles and frightful wildernesses are to come before us which we must cross to reach the destination pointed out by our pious Imam and true guide. Earlier we had a man among us who was taking care of our affairs splendidly with great skill. To tell you the truth, we used to sleep without a care while that pure hearted man, the chosen one of God, comforted us like a loving mother and protected us from every difficulty like a shield. We were untroubled and carefree ... That era has now passed. That holy man who carried our loads on his own head, having done his work, has gone to meet his Creator in accordance with the divine promises. Now you have to shoulder all the burden, and you are the people who have to accomplish that work and bring it to completion ... (Speech at University Hall, Lahore, on June 21, 1908, approximately 3 weeks after the death of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad).

Maulana Muhammad Ali further explained in his *Friday Khutba* on September 23, 1949:

Every human being has a mission, and I have now completed my mission to an extent. Man has only a limited capacity, but due to the grace of God such Islamic literature has been produced which is needed by the world today, by both Muslims and non-Muslims. Allah the Most High, by providing me the opportunity of sitting at the feet of Hazrat Mirza sahib, enabled me to render this service to Islam. If we now keep this prepared literature locked up at home, then there is no difference between us and the other Muslims. The real work is to make this literature reach the world. There is a very large English-speaking world, and then there are other languages to be considered as well.

We have not yet built up the determination to spread this literature in the world. Even one individual's resolve has great power, so if the whole *Jamaat* shows the determination to do it, then nothing can stand in its way. But we are not yet fully resolute. This literature in fact constitutes the weapons given to us by God the Most High. The literature in English was not produced in one day. It took forty years. Literature even in hundreds of languages is still not enough, but it needs immense effort and hard labor.

Thus, complete resolve, dedication and perseverance is required in order to achieve this *Jamaat's* goal. Mere "belief" in certain doctrines is not what constitutes being a member of the *Jamaat* that is to bring about the

dominance of Islam in the world; as Maulana Muhammad Ali states above: "if we now keep this prepared literature locked up at home, then there is no difference between us and the other Muslims". Therefore, it is the *act* of performing difficult work and the *enduring* of many sacrifices for the cause of making this *Jamaat's* literature available to all that only truly qualifies one as being amongst a "*party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong*".²

Means to Fulfill the Objective

Not only has Maulana Muhammad Ali guided the followers of Hazrat Mirza in terms of clarifying exactly what the objective of the Movement is, he has also outlined the specific means required to fulfill the objective. Along with the obvious practical work, financial contributions, etc, Maulana Muhammad Ali stipulates three other requirements: 1) establishing love of God and developing a close connection to Him, 2) prayer, and 3) creating and sustaining a *Jamaat*.

Establish Love of God and Develop a Close Connection to Him

In his *Friday Khutba* on February 18, 1938, Maulana Muhammad Ali explained:

We require the greatest strength in order to spread the Holy Quran and we cannot find that strength without having love for God and a close connection with Him. When you are overwhelmed by love for something you are attracted towards it unstintingly, sacrificing everything in its way. If you develop love for God then you will go on making sacrifices in His way without hesitation ... A *Jamaat* that is custodian of the Holy Quran must realize this well, as this is the secret of its success. Numbers do not matter. The size of the *Jamaat* is in fact only a means to achieve the end, but to consider the means as the real objective or to rely on it excessively constitutes nothing but *shirk*. It is only in trust in God that *shirk* does not exist. To rely too much on anything else is *shirk*. So you must create so much love for God and closeness to Him as if you are running towards Him. Only this is the means to your success and triumph.

Through Prayer

Maulana Muhammad Ali further explained the importance of prayer and the key role it plays in the grand task of presenting Islam to the world. He stated:

The Holy Prophet has taught by his own example of rising at night and praying to Allah for long in solitude ... What an anxiety there was in the heart of the Holy Prophet that kept him so restless! Develop that same anxiety within your hearts. Rise up in the night, shed tears before God and seek His assistance by praying from the depth of

your heart. Remember it well that ultimately the religion of Islam will succeed. And whose greatness shall remain? It is the greatness of Allah, the Quran and Muhammad the Messenger of Allah. The religion of Islam will most surely be victorious but your hearts should overflow with the urge and deep desire to make it happen.

Remember that no one can find enjoyment in prayer without getting up during the night. There should be such restlessness in your hearts that it wakes you up during the night: ‘They forsake their beds, calling upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and spend out of what We have given them’ [32:16]. Your warm and soft beds should not lull you to such sleep that you cannot wake. If at this time when the religion of Islam is crying for help, your heart is not so moved that you are restless to get up and cry before God, then you have achieved nothing. This is the only way you can be victorious ... Arise and cry for God’s help to bring about the days of the victory and success of religion soon. The day when the condition of the *Jamaat* is that it rises at night and falls before God with the Prayer: O God, You sent this Holy Quran for the spiritual nurture of the world and its reform, and for establishing peace; O God, this world is going astray and moving further off from peace; O God, it was Your promise to make the religion of Islam prevail in the world, so bring that time and establish peace in the world through this Quran – that is the day success will lie at our feet”. (*Friday Khutba*, May 16, 1941).

You have before you the mighty aim of making Islam to prevail in the world. Set yourselves to this work. No doubt you are making financial sacrifices, but still one thing is required and that is to develop the same overwhelming urge that was in the Holy Prophet’s heart: ‘Maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they believe not in this announcement [18:6]. This was the pain that would not let him sleep. He would get up at night and fall in prostration before God. It is this type of inner state that leads to a manifestation of the power of God, and it is for such a person that the aid and help of Allah comes. Make your hearts the abode of such feelings. Rise up at night and pray: O God, You Who promised Your Holy Prophet the triumph of the religion to take place in this age, help us to become the means of fulfilling that promise of Yours. Grant us to witness the victory of Islam in the world so that the purpose of the coming of the Promised Messiah, Your appointed one, is achieved ...

As strongly as I believe that no power on earth can shake Hazrat Mirza Sahib, I also believe just as

firmly that no one can destroy this *Jamaat* as long as there are people in it who shed tears at night ... And I want to tell the doubter, whether they are within the *Jamaat* or outside it, that as long as there is a group in this *Jamaat* who cry in prayer at night, as described in the words ‘a party of those with you’ [73:20], this *Jamaat* will go on conquering the world with its spiritual strength”. (*Friday Khutba*, November 28, 1941).

Create and Sustain a Jamaat

Maulana Muhammad Ali also explained that creating and sustaining a *Jamaat* is required in order to carry out the task of propagation of Islam. In his *Friday Khutba* on January 21, 1949, he stated:

We are also the holders of a trust. As a *Jamaat*, we have been made responsible for a trust assigned to us by the *Mujaddid* of the time. And what is that? His first book after claiming to be the Promised Messiah was *Fath-i-Islam*, and in it he explained that the purpose of his advent was to spread the word of Allah and the light of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the world and to come to the aid of the Muslims. After this, he writes that for the attainment of this purpose, his work is divided into five kinds. Out of the five kinds that he enumerated, the fundamental ones are the first one and the last one. The first is the writing and producing of literature and the last is forming a *Jamaat*. These two encompass the ones in between, so that booklets and notices come under the production of literature, and maintaining the guest-house is connected with the formation of the *Jamaat*.

In reality, therefore, he has given us two main tasks: one is to spread the divine religion by means of writings and literature, and the other one is to form a *Jamaat*. The *Jamaat* is like an army and the literature is its weapon. These are the two means whose real purpose is the revival of the faith”.

Therefore, in order for the grand task of producing and distributing literature throughout the world to be achieved, a *Jammat* must be formed to nourish, sustain and reinforce this objective. The organization of the *Jamaat*, as explained by Maulana Muhammad Ali, and unlike the *Khilafat*-system practiced by the Qadian Section, is only a means to achieve the ultimate goal. Maulana Muhammad Ali illustrates this point by stating:

These days there is much clamor about organization, it being said that the *Jamaat* should be well organized and large as this is the way to uphold the reputation of the Movement. But if the honor of the *Jamaat* is to be maintained, it would only be through the service and propagation of the Quran.

There is no doubt that organization is commendable, but it is not the real means of the honor of this Movement (*Jummah Khutba*, October 11, 1940).

And:

No doubt you must expand, organize and strengthen the *Jamaat*, but for God's sake don't make organization an object or worship. If instead of relying on God you place your reliance on the *Jamaat* and its strength, then you can never succeed in spreading the name of God. Rectify the weaknesses of the *Jamaat*, but let not that task hinder the work of propagation (*Jummah Khutba*, April 5, 1940).

Conclusion

Maulana Muhammad Ali has provided, in very clear terms, the purpose for the existence of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, its primary objectives and the means required to achieve it. As he explains, the task entrusted to the Lahore *Jamaat* is of such great importance, it is the very task that has been entrusted to the righteous prophets of God in the past. Thus, the small numbers of persons in this *Jamaat*, compared to other Muslim groups, is insignificant; the fact that this *Jamaat* is much larger in numbers and has much more resources at its disposal (*masha Allah*) than the individual prophets who were sent to fulfill the very same mission is only of any importance. The day that we strive for the delivering of God's message in a manner that is consistent with the loyalty, devotion and sacrifices exhibited by the holy personages of the past, is the day success will be at hand for this *Jamaat*. As a source of encouragement for every Ahmadi, Maulana Muhammad Ali relates:

Some people tell me that this *Jamaat* is small and will not survive after me. I consider myself powerless and unworthy of being accorded such a status, as God knows best. The desire repeatedly comes in my heart that people who are more worthy should arise from the *Jamaat* and bear this responsibility. Along with that, I also firmly believe that, no matter what happens, if there is even one person in this *Jamaat* who truly loves God and has an overpowering urge to propagate the name of God then this *Jamaat* will remain alive.

Compiler's Notes

1. Another prophetic incident relating to the "split" in the Ahmadiyya Movement is a well-known vision of Hazrat Mirza (recorded in *Izala Auham*) in which he finds himself standing in front of a house that has a person sitting on the bottom level and another person sitting at the top. He called out to both: "I need an army of one-hundred thousand". The person sitting on the bottom level remained silent whereas the person sitting on the top replied: "I cannot provide one-hundred thousand, but five-thousand can be supplied". By Hazrat Mirza making such an appeal,

and by the fact that both persons were from the same "house", indicates that both were followers of Hazrat Mirza. Furthermore, the responses by both clearly evidence two distinct "types" of followers: one that is part of a larger group but cannot provide the services Hazrat Mirza requires and the other that is part of a smaller group and is willing to strive to achieve Hazrat Mirza's mission. This vision clearly foretells a division, based on two apparent objectives, within Hazrat Mirza's community of followers. Similarly, it is recorded in the Quran (3:52) that Hazrat Isa (the first Messiah) also called out to his people: "Who will be my helpers in Allah's way?" The Quran states that "his disciples," or literally the "pure ones," responded to his call and replied "We will be your helpers." If there is a resemblance between the two calls for assistance made by the first and second Messiah, it, accordingly, follows that the group of followers of Hazrat Mirza responding to his call are also the "pure ones", as in the case of those responding to Hazrat Isa's appeal. The answer to the question of who this pure party among Hazrat Mirza's followers appears to be found in the revelation Hazrat Mirza received: "My pure followers are in Lahore".

2. Relating back to Hazrat Mirza's vision mentioned in note #1, the fact that the one person in the house was sitting on the ground floor and the other on the top near the sky, appears to also be of significance. It seems that the positioning of the two persons imply that the follower on the top and his group will not enjoy the comforts and protections that the other group of followers will maintain. The follower on the top and his group, by remaining steadfast to the true objectives of Hazrat Mirza's mission, will be "exposed" to many difficulties, hardships and trials, similar to a person who remains at the top level of a structure when severe weather conditions strike and unlike the persons who run for safety to the more secure bottom level. Thus, the difficultness of the task of furthering Hazrat Mirza's mission to propagate Islam to the world appears to be indicated in this vision as well.

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