

“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

July – September 2012

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

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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

◆ Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A. ◆

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

*The Light* was founded in 1921 as the organ of the AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT ISLAM (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Islamic Review* was published in England from 1913 for over 50 years, and in the U.S.A. from 1980 to 1991. The present periodical represents the beliefs of the worldwide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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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.

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**Rational:** In all matters, it urges use of human reason and knowledge. Blind following is condemned and independence of thought is granted.

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**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
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**Achievements:**

The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, including French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic. The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world, including the first ever in Western Europe.

**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.

## Introduction to the Sharia Debate

By Fazeel S. Khan, Esq.

*[This article is a transcript of a presentation given at the Symposium titled “Sharia: A Discussion on the Concept of Divine Guidance in Islam” held in conjunction with the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society’s annual convention in Columbus, Ohio in June, 2012. This presentation served as an introduction to the Keynote Address titled “The Essence of Sharia” delivered by Dr. Noman Malik. As explained in the article, the word “sharia” has in recent times become a term with a very negative connotation for many in the West. This negative perception of the word and what it signifies has led to widespread misunderstanding about the religion of Islam and the moral code that it presents as a guide by which Muslims are to live their lives. The Symposium addressed this controversy by first confronting the hysteria that seems to have been created about a supposed “sharia-threat” to the nation, and then by explaining that the true essence of the concept of sharia is based on values accepted by all civilized societies.]*

In recent years, there has been a movement towards identifying “sharia” as a growing threat to the United States. It is believed that sharia is a system of governance mandated by Islam, that Muslims are required to implement everywhere. And that this system of governance is totalitarian in nature, inherently incompatible with the civil and democratic ideals accepted by the modern, civilized world.

Unlike the “Quran-Burning” campaign by Florida’s Pastor Jones, this invocation of the specter of sharia cannot be brushed aside as the mere rants of crack pots who are simply seeking their 15 minutes of fame. To the contrary, a number of influential political leaders have openly endorsed the “threat of sharia” notion.

Former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, stated:

*I believe Sharia is a mortal threat to the survival of freedom in the United States and in the world as we know it.*

Republican Presidential Candidate hopeful Michelle Bachmann declared that Sharia:

*... must be resisted across the United States*

...

Similarly, Herman Cain reviled the:

*... attempt to gradually ease Sharia law and the Muslim faith into our government”.*

Nor can these views be dismissed as mere political

grandstanding to rally a constituent base. This view about Muslims conspiring to overthrow the government of the United States of America by having sharia creep into the courthouses of the nation, in such disguise as to fool even the most alert of judges, and silently annex the laws of the land, including that little known document, called the Constitution, has actually caused about 20 state legislatures now around the country to push for laws that would forbid the consideration of sharia in their courts. Arizona, Tennessee, Louisiana and Oklahoma have already passed these bans.

### Unwarranted Fears

These recent laws are based on fears and suspicions that are not only unwarranted, but in some cases, downright fraudulent. And there are several simple facts which make this clear.

### Constitutional Protections

First, in the United States, religious laws have no legally binding effect on citizens. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ...*

As you are all aware, these clauses are commonly referred to as the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. Pursuant to the Establishment Clause, the government (including the judicial branch) is restricted from taking actions that would benefit one religion or religion generally. So the thought of courts in this country supplanting American (secular) law with sharia is an idea that is, frankly, absurd, since it is clearly prohibited by the Constitution.

Now, having said that, there are certainly instances in which there is an *intersection* between matters brought before U.S. courts and the application or enforcement of a foreign law, including a law based on a religious code (whether it be sharia, Jewish Halakha or Haggadah law, or Catholic Canon law). For instance, if disputing parties *voluntarily* agree to submit their dispute to a private arbitration forum that applies religious law, a court is required to enforce the decision of the arbitration forum, as it would any arbitration decision (holding it to the same standards). Similarly, if parties *voluntarily* agree to have contracts based on certain religious principles (or have terms incorporated in contracts stating any dispute arising therefrom will be resolved based on certain religious principles), a court is required to enforce such contracts as it would the terms of any contract (holding it to the same standards). The same would go for effectuating the intent of a testator when construing the provisions of a will – if a person *voluntarily* creates a legal

will that requires the distribution of his or her assets in accordance with certain religious guidelines, a court should enforce such wills as it would the terms of any will (holding it to the same standards).

The key, therefore, is that people must *voluntarily* subject themselves to be governed by certain religious principles in order for a court of law to even consider applying such principles to the facts of any given case. To restrict persons from *voluntarily* choosing to make the decision to have certain religious principles apply to their private agreements (whether it be contracts, wills, marriage agreements, divorce decrees, etc.), would be a violation of the Free Exercise Clause. Moreover, to single out one type of religious law, as we have seen done for sharia, is clearly a violation of the Establishment Clause. And this is exactly what resulted when the anti-sharia legislation from Oklahoma was challenged – a federal court struck down the law as being unconstitutional.

Now, in an attempt to circumvent the inevitability of sharia-banning laws from being deemed unconstitutional, as was done in Oklahoma, subsequent legislations proposed broader bans of all religious law or foreign law in general. These legislations are packaged as being facially neutral, not singling out sharia, and presented as a furthering the legitimate government interest to ensure that US law remains the controlling law in US courts. One of these modified types of legislations was recently enacted in Kansas just this past May. The obvious problem with these modified anti-sharia laws is that it cannot be said to serve any legitimate purpose, because the Supremacy Clause of the US Constitution already provides this guarantee. In Article VI, clause 2 of the Constitution, we read:

*This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all the Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby ...*

So, there is no need (at least no genuine or legitimate need) for states to pass such laws; as one commentator put it, “it is like passing legislation to say the sun is hot”.

Clearly, the anti-sharia movement is not about careful consideration of constitutional principles. In fact, in a New York Times profile of attorney David Yerushalmi – who is referred to in the title of the article as “The Man Behind the Anti-Shariah Movement” – Mr. Yerushalmi openly admitted that the anti-sharia campaign had an ulterior motive. He said:

*If this thing passed in every state without any friction, it would have not served its*

*purpose ... The purpose was heuristic—to get people asking this question, ‘What is Shariah’?*

Getting people to ask the question ‘What is Shariah’ also translates for many as meaning targeting Muslims and making them appear suspect among the broader American citizenry.

### Significance of “Sharia”

Today, we would like to take the opportunity to oblige Mr. Yerushalmi and answer the question, “What is Shariah”. Aside from the unconstitutional nature of the anti-sharia legislations, the illegitimacy of this entire effort is revealed by the fact that none of the legislators or others advocating for this cause appear to have a clue as to what *sharia* actually entails or, even worse, have a completely distorted understanding of what it implies.

The Arabic word sharia simply means “the path to water”. And it signifies the path or the way to live a righteous life. It is not a Code, like the Ohio Revised Code, in which specific laws are codified. Rather, sharia is represented by general principles from two primary sources: the Quran (the holy scripture of Islam), and the Sunnah (the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad). And it is through these two foundational sources that Muslims engage in understanding sharia, or the divine guidance that leads to living a righteous life. Through this methodology of understanding and interpreting this divine guidance, six general categories of sharia principles emerged. To the dismay of many, these categories are not about killing infidels, dismembering of limbs, subjugating women or stoning adulterers. Rather, they are as follows:

- The right to protection of life and self-determination.
- The right to protection of family and community.
- The right to protection of education and knowledge.
- The right to protection of religion and belief.
- The right to protection of property and free, private enterprise.
- The right to protection of human dignity and equality.

Now, based on these principles, most Muslims try to incorporate into their daily lives lessons on prayer, hygiene, dress, charity, diet, etc. Some seek directives from these general principles on how to engage in commercial transactions (that is, rules that make buying and selling fair), on how to make financial investments (that is, ensuring that usury is not being committed), and

some on how marriages or divorces should be conducted. Because sharia is based on general principles from two primary sources, there are different understandings and interpretations on various issues. Muslims of different schools of thought in essence follow different sharia (or paths or ways) in dealing with certain topics. And these varying interpretations of sharia, called *fiqh* (basically, jurisprudence), are commonly misunderstood as the divine will or divine guidance itself. It is the interpretation of the application of principles on “punishments” for certain crimes found in books of *fiqh*, that, unfortunately, the anti-sharia law proponents fixate on, despite these principles of punishment comprising a miniscule part of any *fiqh* text and being irrelevant to the significance of sharia in a Muslim’s daily life choices, especially those living in the West.

In the wake of the Arab Spring, when we saw pro-Western autocrats and dictators ousted from their positions of power, polls conducted in these countries showed that the people favored Islamic law and, at the same time, believed democracy to be the best form of government. In a New York Times Magazine article, Noah Feldman explained that the incorporation of Islamic law in government is viewed as creating:

*... a path to just and legitimate government in much of the Muslim world.*

And Feldman goes on to explain:

*For many Muslims today, living in corrupt autocracies, the call for sharia is not a call for sexism, obscurantism or savage punishment but for an Islamic version of what the West considers its most prized principle of political justice: the rule of law.*

Hence, even in Muslim-majority countries that are being provided the opportunity of a fresh start, where choices are being made as we gather here today as to what form of government will be instituted, the people understand that Islam is not irreconcilable with democratic forms of government; rather, it is understood that the best features of western-styled democracies are related principles from authentic Islamic sources that have failed to be implemented under autocratic regimes. And most significantly, they understand that Islam, or sharia, is not something that is to be imposed on anyone, but symbolizes a system of justice, equality and fairness.

This is the real essence of sharia – a path to peaceful coexistence in society and a means for spiritual development of individuals. And this will be the focus of the Keynote Address by Dr. Noman Malik later in the Program. ■

## Id-ul-Fitr Khutba (2012)

by Dr. Zahid Aziz

*[This article is the Id-ul-Fitr Khutba delivered by Dr. Zahid Aziz at the Lahore Ahmadiyya U.K. Center in London. In this khutba, Dr. Zahid Aziz discusses the true significance of fasting, quoting from the bible and the Quran. In doing so, he relates how the Holy Quran serves as the “spiritual food” for mankind and how the lives of those who devote their lives to the Quran, such as that of Maulana Muhammad Ali, are in essence one long Ramadan.]*

“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

Let us take a look at the teachings of the Biblical prophets about fasting.

After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, he explained the purpose of fasting to the devil, in a vision, as follows:

“It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew, 4:4).

Here Jesus was quoting Moses who had taught the same principle when declaring the commandments of God to his people, the Israelites (Deuteronomy, 8:3).

Again, immediately after teaching his followers the famous Lord’s prayer, Jesus instructed them as follows:

“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. ... But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father...” (Matthew, 6:16–18)

This shows that fasting was a *fundamental practice* taught in the Bible, and also that the purpose and spirit of fasting is mentioned in it: That fasting should make us realize the importance of obeying “every word”, i.e. every commandment of God, because that is what gives us spiritual life, and that fasting is to be done sincerely, to attain nearness to God and not to impress any person.

God also reminded the followers of the Bible of the real purpose of fasting through a prophet of the Israelites, known as Isaiah, who is also accepted by Muslims as a prophet. In this revelation to Isaiah, God first mentions a complaint by people who had fasted:

“ ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you (O Lord) have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’”

God answers their complaint as follows:

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.

“ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

“ Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter — when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. ” — Isaiah, 58:3–10

The closing words are similar to this verse of the Holy Quran about fasting:

“And when My servants ask you concerning Me, surely I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant 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

An important point made in the Quran in connection with Ramadan is this:

“The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to people [or mankind] and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion.” — 2:185

The month of Ramadan was chosen by Allah for fasting because the revelation of the Quran began in that month, and as stated in the Bible as quoted above, man needs more than food to live, he needs the words that come from the mouth of God. So in this month a Muslim neglects physical food and concentrates on the

spiritual food provided by the Quran. This verse explains to us what are the functions of the Quran, from which we are meant to derive benefit. It shows us that the lesson we must learn from fasting is to treat the Quran as “a guidance to mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion”.

**A guidance for mankind:** The Quran is called here a guidance for mankind rather than just a guidance for believers or Muslims. This makes it our duty to present this guidance to the entire world. The man in modern times who was most anxious to do this was the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Just when he was founding this Movement, and had very few followers or resources, he wrote the following in reference to Europe and America in 1891:

“If my people help me heart and soul [by people he means the general Muslim community] I wish to prepare a commentary of the Holy Quran which should be sent to them [Europe and America] after it has been rendered into the English language. I cannot refrain from stating clearly that this is my work, and that no one else can do it as well as I, or he who is an offshoot of mine and thus is included in me.” (*Izala Auham*, p. 773)

Despite the fact that he had no means at that time of producing a translation, he is prophesying that this work has been specially assigned to him, and no one else shall do it as well as he, or one who is his own offshoot or branch. That prophecy could only have come from God the Most High.

Some years after he wrote this, he was granted this offshoot when Maulana Muhammad Ali joined his Movement. Even so, the thought of starting this translation did not occur till shortly after Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad passed away, and the Maulana began the work in 1909. He had not yet completed it, when he was faced with a devastating event that could have put an end to the whole project. This was the split in the Ahmadiyya Movement in 1914. Without going into details here, what it meant was that Maulana Muhammad Ali had to bid farewell to an established and functioning organisation and come to Lahore to build a new body from scratch, starting with no finances, staff, building or organisation. Despite this adversity, the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman was founded and Maulana Muhammad Ali completed his translation and commentary, and it was published from here in England in 1917. It could only have been accomplished through Divine help.

And it is a sign of Divine acceptance that even now, after so many English translations of the Quran have

appeared over the years, the greatness and uniqueness of the Maulana's translation is still acknowledged. Recently a well-known American Muslim, and spiritual leader, Hamza Yusuf, recorded a talk actually to refute and attack certain beliefs which are wrongly associated with the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The Founder did not hold those beliefs but Hamza Yusuf innocently does not know this. Anyhow, despite the topic of his talk, he began it with some introductory comments, from which I quote below:

- Maulana Muhammad Ali was a solid scholar of Islam.
- His English translation of the Quran is the best in my estimation.
- He did some of the best work of refuting Christian attacks on Islam that I have seen.
- Many Muslims "borrowed heavily" from his original work, without acknowledgement, "even though it is very clear where they took it from".
- Pickthall's translation was "highly influenced by Maulana Muhammad Ali's." Pickthall then influenced later translators.
- Therefore Maulana Muhammad Ali has "definitely made his impact on the English speaking Muslim community whether they realise it or not".
- "I wish the best for him. He seemed like a very devout Muslim."

Despite the stern opposition to the Ahmadiyya Movement, and despite the strong bias against this translation due to having been done by an Ahmadi, it has earned tributes such as the above, that it is the best translation, and it influenced all later translators. Hazrat Mirza sahib's words: "I cannot refrain from stating clearly that this is my work, and that no one else can do it as well as I, or he who is an offshoot of mine and thus is included in me" proved true.

A community insignificant in size and resources, under attack from all directions, produced and published a translation and commentary that could not be equalled by the scholars of hundreds of millions of Muslims possessing vast resources, so vast that their organisations can afford to distribute their translations free of charge in any number. *This, by the grace of Allah, is your community.*

What was the main quality of this work which made it so successful and renowned in the world? Leaving aside the great dedication, devotion and nightly prayers of the translator, it was due to the two factors about the Quran mentioned in the verse above — that the Quran, "a guidance to people [or mankind]", is "clear proofs of

the guidance and the Criterion (*furqan*)". In his commentary, Maulana Muhammad Ali sought proofs of the truth of the Quran from within the Quran and he treated the Quran as the criterion or differentiator between right and wrong beliefs.

Regarding the first point, it was Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who laid down the principle that the arguments, reasons and evidence for any doctrine which is taught in the Quran are also to be found in the Quran. Following this principle, Maulana Muhammad Ali in his commentary has treated the Quran as a complete, self-contained and consistent book. He has given prominence to what the Quran itself says and how it explains itself. In the classical commentaries of the Quran, the commentators had filled them with elaborate stories brought in from external sources to explain certain references in the Quran, and in explaining most verses they related them to the occasion of their revelation and thus limited their application. It is as if the Quran itself was thrown in the background.

Of course, we need information from external sources in understanding many passages in the Quran, and these sources are primarily Hadith books, reports from the life of the Holy Prophet, and explanations given by his companions and scholars of the early generations. However, these sources can only be used to fill in details, to complete the picture, and to provide illustrations of what the Quran is teaching. Such material cannot be used to contradict the Quran and to give interpretations which violate the principles laid down in it.

Secondly, the Quran contains the criteria or standard for distinguishing between right and wrong beliefs. So in many controversial issues which arise as to what are the correct teachings of Islam, for example, issues relating to Islam's attitude towards other religions, jihad, tolerance, freedom of religion, rights of women, the Quran is the determining factor. Once we have found the right teachings from the Quran, they cannot be overturned or superseded by anything outside it, including Hadith reports and classical commentaries.

Ramadan is a commemoration, not only of the start of the revelation of the Quran to the world, but also of its three qualities mentioned above: "a guidance to mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion". The lives of the servants of the Quran, such as Maulana Muhammad Ali, were thus in themselves one long Ramadan and one long *lailat-ul-qadr*.

The third point to which I want to draw your attention is in this verse, which is the last verse about fasting in Ramadan:

"And do not swallow 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 people wrongfully while you know.” — 2:188

What is meant by swallowing up “your property among yourselves” (*amwala-kum baina-kum*) falsely? How can you swallow up your own property falsely? Please note that Muslims here are addressed as a community. By “your property” is meant the entire property of a nation, just as people say about their country: “this is our land”. If you misappropriate someone else’s property or money, or in particular if you misappropriate something from the national or government funds, you are taking your own money, i.e. your own country’s property, falsely. The words “among yourselves” indicate that the verse is referring to people colluding with each other in the use of false means, and that it is being done on a large scale. This refers to situations where such activity becomes a way of life in a society, for example as bribery is in many countries, so that money is circulating, going from one person to the next, as a bribe or ill-gotten gain at every step.

By “your property” could also be meant the property in your charge. So if a group of people, such as a government or other institution, holds wealth on other people’s behalf, they should not “swallow it up among themselves by false means”.

Another example is gambling. The wealth of all the gamblers, which might well be lawfully possessed by each one before he gambles, is then, by means of their gambling, redistributed among the same people, some of them winning and others losing. That is swallowing up your property among yourselves by false means.

Then the verse mentions the malpractice of bribing the authorities to induce and influence them to hand over other people’s property to you unjustly.

During the fast, a person gives up and avoids, for a period of time, the use of his own food and drink, which belongs to him legally and morally, and which he has every legal and moral right to consume. Thus he learns, or should learn, that in real life he must refrain from wrongfully taking anything which belongs to someone else. In fact, far from doing this, he should learn to voluntarily give up some of what he possesses and some of his rights for the benefit of others and of society in general. And that is the basis of human civilization.

Eid Mubarak to you all! ■

## The Essence of Prayer in Islam

Compiled by Ebrahim Muhamed

*[This article comprises excerpts from the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, as found in the compilation by Moulana Kalamazad Mohammed entitled ‘The Soul of Salah and Du’a in Islam’. In this article, Ebrahim Muhamed (President of the South Africa branch of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement) selects excerpts from Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s writings dealing with the spiritual significance of prayer in Islam. As with similar spiritual subjects dealt with in the vast corpus of writings by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the true essence of the institution of prayer — as a means of communication with God, as nourishment for one’s soul, and as a necessary condition to spiritual development — is beautifully expounded upon in these short excerpts.]*

While it is true that Islam gives minute details on how to perform salah (that is, the formal prayer in Islam), the emphasis in this compilation is placed on the state of mind or attitude of our soul when we pray. The writings of the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement, the Mujaddid (Reformer) of the Age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, contain such insightful and spiritually enlightening words of wisdom in this regard. Compiled below are excerpts from his writings in which the true essence of prayer in Islam is explained.

### Salah is in fact Dua at the highest level

“You should make supplication (du’a) during salah in your own language because to make petition (to Almighty Allah) in your own language produces genuine fervor and enthusiasm. Sura-ul Fatiha is the word of Allah. You must read it in the original Arabic language and the portion of the Holy Quran that is recited after it should also be recited in Arabic. After that, the prescribed du’as and the glorification of Allah (tasbih) must also be done in Arabic, but you must learn the translation of all of them and, in addition to this, you should then make supplication (du’a) in your own tongue in order to create deep concentration, for that salah in which there is no concentration cannot be called ‘salah’. Nowadays, it is the habit of people to perform salah perfunctorily (that is, in a quick way without interest). They rush down the prayer as if they are under compulsion, then they immediately begin to make very lengthy du’as. This is an innovation. Nowhere is it recorded in the Hadith that after making salams (greetings that closes the formal prayer — compiler) at the end of the salah, one should then make du’a. Foolish



people make salah as a tax and make du'a separately from it. Salah itself is du'a. On account of any religious or secular misfortune and at the time of any calamity man should make du'a within the salah.

Du'a can be made in the salah at any point- in ruku' (the bowing down posture in prayer) after the tasbih (the Glorification of Allah), in sajdah (the prostration posture in prayer) after tasbih, after the at-tahiyyat (the second sitting posture after prostration), in standing after ruku'. Make abundant supplications so that you may prosper. In du'a, it is necessary that the soul should flow like water. That kind of du'a cleanses and purifies the heart. If you can achieve that kind of du'a you may continue in it for hours (because of the pleasure you experience — compiler). To be saved from the clutches of sin, one ought to make petition to Allah.

Du'a is a healing by means of which the poison of sin is expelled. Many ignorant people think that to make du'a in their own language makes prayer void. This is a wrong belief. Such people's own prayers are void." (Malfuzat, vol. 9, pp 54-55)

### **One should not be preoccupied with worldly thoughts during Salah**

"What kind of 'salah' is it that the tongue says: Guide us on the right path but the heart is preoccupied with thoughts like, the business must done in this way; or, if this happens, then do it in such and such a way? This is only a waste of one's time. Unless man gives preference to the Book of Allah and acts according to it, his salah is a mere waste of time." (Malfuzat, vol. 10, p.62)

### **God does not stand in need of our prayers; prayers are for our sustenance and delight**

"What is salah? It is a unique du'a, but it is sad that people consider it a tax owed to a king. The foolish ones do not know that Allah has no need of these matters. Why should He, Who is Self-sufficient, want man to engage himself in supplicating, praising and glorifying Him? The truth is that it is to the benefit of man that he should achieve his goal in this manner.

I feel very unhappy when I see that nowadays people have no love for worship, piety and virtue. Ritualism is the cause of this pervasive poisonous influence, and so the love of Allah grows cold in us and we do not experience, in worship, the type of pleasure that we ought to.

There is nothing in the world in which Allah, Most High, has placed, not only a pleasure, but a distinctive delight, as well. Just as a sick person can derive no enjoyment from the most delightfully palatable dish and considers it bitter or insipid, in the same way, those people who find no pleasure in their worship should ponder over their illness. For, as I have just said, there is nothing

in this world in which Allah, Most High, has not placed some enjoyment or other. So, if Allah has created man to worship Him, then what reason is there to doubt that He has placed for him joy and ecstasy in this worship of His? Pleasure and delight there are indeed, but there must be someone to enjoy it. Allah, Most High, has said:

"And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me." (51:56)

Now, since man was created in order to serve Allah, it is necessary that a high degree of pleasure and delight be also be vested in worship. This point we can very easily assimilate through our daily observation and experience. For example, look at the grain and all the things that have been created for man to eat and drink. Does he not derive pleasure and delight from them? Does he not have a tongue in his mouth to enable him to enjoy the feeling of their taste and relish? Does he not derive pleasure from seeing all those beautiful things, whether they may be vegetables or minerals, animals or humans? Is his ear not intoxicated by charming and melodious voices? Should we then seek any further evidence to support the fact that there is ecstasy in worship?

Thus, I wish to say that you should beseech Allah with great feeling and fervor, that, just as He has bestowed all kinds of delights in fruits and other things, in the same way He should make us taste even once, that sweetness that comes through salah and Divine service." (Malfuzat, vol. 9 pp. 3-7)

### **True prayer brings about success and a good transformation**

"It is clearly stated in the Glorious Quran:

"Successful are the believers who are humble in their prayers" (23:1-2)

That is, when man is deeply engrossed in frequent supplications his heart melts and flows like water at the threshold of the Holy One and he is so absorbed in Allah and all stray thoughts are extinguished and he seeks Allah's help and grace, he achieves such a single-mindedness of purpose that a kind of ecstasy and tenderness of heart arises, and the door of success is opened for him. Through this, the love of this world grows cold because two loves cannot occupy the same place simultaneously.

So, after, the above verses, Allah continues:

"And those who shun what is vain" (23:3)

That is, when man begins to acquire humility and submissiveness in salah, then one of the consequences is that the love of the world is extinguished from his heart. This does not mean that he then forsakes

occupations like agriculture, trade and commerce, services etc., but he begins to turn away from those worldly pursuits which involve deceit and which makes a person heedless of Allah.

The weeping and lamentation, the humility and sincerity, and the subservience to Allah of such a person produce this result, that such an individual's love for the faith takes precedence over everything — the love of this world, desires, luxury and comfort etc., for it is a well-known truism that one good deed attracts another good deed just as one bad deed induces another.

When these people fall in humility and submissiveness in their salah, then the inevitable result is that they turn away naturally from vanity and they obtain deliverance from this impure world; the love of this world grows cold and the love of Allah is born in them. The result of all this is that: They spend in the way of Allah, and this is a natural part of shunning what is vain."

### **The philosophy underlying acceptance or rejection of Du'a**

"You must bear in mind that it is du'a that initiates the fervor of Allah. However, do not for one moment think du'a is mere verbal prattling for, indeed, du'a connotes the undergoing of a kind of a kind of death and only after this can one gain life.

Du'a possesses a magnetic property which attracts to itself grace or favor." (Malfuzat, vol. 10 p. 62)

"Behold a child, through hunger, becomes restless and anxious and begins to scream and cry for milk and automatically milk surges in the breasts of the mother. Although the child does not even know the name du'a, yet his screams are the means by which milk is attracted. This experience is a universal one. Many times it has been observed that mothers do not even feel the presence of milk in their breasts and often there is not any; yet, immediately upon the desperate scream of the child reaching their ears, milk instantly begins to flow as if there is a powerful connection between the cries and generation of milk.

I say with all sincerity that if we display a similar helplessness before Allah, then it will stimulate and draw His grace and mercy; and I affirm on the basis of my own experience that Allah's grace and mercy, which come through the acceptance of du'a, I have felt being drawn towards me, and even more, I have seen it also. It is true that modern-day obscure-minded philosophers can neither feel nor see this; but this truth cannot be abolished from the world, especially as I am always ready to demonstrate the certainty of the acceptance of du'a." (Malfuzat, vol. 1 p. 198)

### **Why are prayers sometimes rejected?**

"... Look how much a mother loves her child and does not wish any kind of afflictions to befall him. But if the child should foolishly persist and obstinately cry for a sharp knife or a burning piece of charcoal in his hand, do you think that the mother, in spite of her true love and genuine tenderness, will ever allow her child to burn his hand with the lighted coal or to cut his hand by passing it over the sharp edge of the knife? Certainly not! From this point, one can appreciate the fundamental principle of the acceptance of du'a. It is my experience in this matter that if a du'a contains something harmful, it is never granted" (Malfuzat vol. 1 p 107)

### **The secret underlying the acceptance of Du'a**

"This is the secret behind the acceptance of du'a — unless a man forsakes his own wishes, desires and knowledge and annihilates himself in Allah, and unless he has complete trust and perfect confidence in the total and absolute power of Allah, that Allah is the Hearer and Acceptor of supplications, then his du'a is without substance. The reason why philosophers do not believe in the acceptance of prayer is that they do not fully believe in Allah's All-encompassing power and His being the Originator of the minutest of provisions, and they consider His power to be limited, and they rely on their own experience and knowledge.

As compared to their own experiences, the idea never crosses their minds that God exists and that He has power to act. That is why, when some very deadly disease attacks a person, those people pronounce with certainty and finality that the afflicted one cannot be saved, or that he will die after a certain period of time, or will die in such and such a way. But I, myself, have witnessed a score of examples and many others I know about, in which, notwithstanding their conclusive and decisive verdict, Allah has created for the well-being of those afflicted ones such conditions, that in the end they were finally rescued.

Many a time, too, it so happens that many of those on whom those people had passed an irrevocable sentence of death remained alive and got well, and on meeting them on some other occasion the doctors were embarrassed, and their knowledge and claims were put to shame.

The Hadith tells us, "There is no illness but there is a remedy for it." I remember the words of a famous doctor who said that there is no illness that is not susceptible to healing, but it is because of a deficiency in our understanding, intellect and learning that our knowledge has not yet advanced to that point.

It is possible that Allah, Most High, may create for this disease such conditions by means of which that

persons, whom we consider beyond cure, will respond to treatment and regain his health and strength. So we should never give a final decision, but if we have to express an opinion, we should say that we suspect this, but it is possible that Allah may bring about such conditions through which this impediment may be removed and the patient may become well again.

Du'a is such a potent weapon which Allah has created that a seemingly impossible matter which man considers impossible can actually take place because nothing is impossible with Allah." (Malfuzat, vol.10, pp 195-197)

### **The True Du'a**

"There are two kinds of du'a. Firstly, the habitual kind, and secondly, the one which man takes to the utmost limit, and this is what is called du'a in the true sense of the word.

Man ought to be constantly engaged in making du'a even when he is not beset by difficulty, for what knowledge does he have of the intentions of Allah or what may happen on the morrow? He should make du'a in advance in order to be saved. Many a time a calamity strikes so suddenly that man has no time to supplicate, so that if he were making du'a beforehand, it would return to his benefit when this awry time descends." (Malfuzat, vol.10, p 122.)

### **Whose Du'a is not accepted?**

"Unless your heart is clean, your du'a will not be accepted. If in some worldly affair you harbor malice in your heart against another person, your du'a cannot be answered. You ought to impress this in your mind that you must never bear ill-will against anyone ever in a secular matter. What is the value of this world and its provisions that for its sake you should entertain hostility against another? (Malfuzat, vol. 9 pp. 217 — 218) ■

## **Preface to Maulana Muhammad Ali's Revised English Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran**

*Renewed interest generated in India due to information about its impact on Gandhi,  
"The Father of the Nation"*

### **By the Editor**

We reproduce below the Preface written in 1951 by Maulana Muhammad Ali to the revised edition of his monumental English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran. As is related in the Preface, Maulana Muhammad Ali's English Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran received praises and honors from all quarters and directly influenced a renewed understanding and appreciation for the religion of Islam. In the realm of Western scholarship, its impact can be witnessed from the changed tone of literature about Islam since its appearance. Similarly, later Muslim translators of the Holy Quran adopted many of the key and unique features of this work, using it as a template for presentation style as well as in the matter of interpretation.

It is well known that famous leaders of orthodox Muslim opinion in India at the time – such as Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, etc. – paid tribute to Maulana Muhammad Ali's English Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran, some of which are included in the Preface. What is lesser known though is the love and admiration that

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the preeminent peace-activist **Mohandas Gandhi** had for this work. Recently, it was reported in the July 16, 2011 issue of *Sahafat* (Delhi) that:

*Gandhiji's daily routine included readings from the Gita, the Quran, and the Bible. Every morning he would read from the English translation of the Quran done by Mohammad Ali Ahmadi (sic) ... Despite the fact that the English translations by Marmaduke Pickthall, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Abdul Majid Dariyabadi had come out in 1930, 1934, and 1941, respectively, Gandhiji used to read only the translation by Mohammad Ali Ahmadi. This gave much publicity to his translation. Other public figures close to Gandhiji also started reading that book.*

Among the “other public figures close to Gandhiji [who] started reading that book” was the widely-respected **Dr. Radhakrishnan**, the second President of India. He too, it appears, intensely studied Maulana Muhammad Ali’s English Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran. In the same issue of *Sahafat* it is related that in February 1962 Dr. Radhakrishnan made the following specific request:

*Please get me a copy of Muhammad Ali Ahmadi's translation of the Quran as the copy I have has become very old.*

Gandhi is universally respected as a model for establishing peace and justice through non-violent means and by respecting and appreciating all faith traditions. Emphasis on these concepts from an Islamic perspective is a defining characteristic of Maulana Muhammad Ali’s work. It is humbling to think of the influence the daily readings of Maulana Muhammad Ali’s English Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran may have had in shaping Gandhi’s understanding and philosophy of peace.

As the publishers of this classic work in Islamic literature, we pray that it continues to be a source of spirituality for all, that it serves a means for creating peace and justice in society, and that it contributes to foster another generation of *Mahatmas* (Great Souls) from which the entire world may derive benefit.

### Preface to the Revised Edition

There has been a demand for a revised edition of my English Translation and Commentary of the Holy Qur’ān since the end of the Second World War. Conditions have changed so rapidly since I first took

this work in hand in 1909 that I myself felt the need for a revised edition. In fact, it is not only the change of circumstances that called for a revision; by own knowledge of the Holy Book has since increased to a very large extent owing to the fact that I have been engaged day and night in further research in this line, studying the Holy Qur’ān, the Ḥadīth and other religious literature of Islām. During this interval of about 33 years — the first edition was published in 1917 — I made substantial contribution to the religious literature of Islām both in English and in Urdu. After the English Translation I wrote a voluminous Urdu Commentary, the *Bayān al-Qur’ān*, in three volumes, and this kept me occupied for another seven years. It extends to over 2,500 pages and is much more explanatory than the notes in the English Translation. During the same period I also wrote a life of the Holy Prophet in Urdu, which was later translated into English under the name of *Muḥammad the Prophet*. A little later was issued a history of the Early Caliphate both in Urdu and in English. About the year 1928 a smaller edition of the English Translation without Arabic Text and with briefer notes was published. Then came the translation and commentary in Urdu of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, the well-known Ḥadīth collection. In 1936 was published another voluminous work in English, *The Religion of Islām*, which contains full information on almost all Islamic questions of modern days. *The New World Order, A Manual of Ḥadīth* and *The Living Thoughts of the Prophet Muḥammad* were added after 1940.

Owing to the extensive study which I had to make for these writings I myself felt that I had received more light and was bound to give the English-reading public, which extends over a vast part of the world, a deeper insight into the Holy Qur’ān than I had given in my younger days. I began the work of revising the translation and commentary of the Holy Qur’ān some time late in 1946, but the year 1947 was a critical year for the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and, on 29th August, 1947, I myself had to flee for my life from Dalhousie, where I used to work in the summer months. The literary work that I was doing there suffered considerably but I took it up later at Quetta, where I passed the summer of 1948. Before making much progress, however, I fell seriously ill and the work had again to be put off for more than six months. The manuscript was ready by the middle of 1950, but another serious illness overtook me at Karachi, where I was then carrying on this work. I was spared, however, by God’s grace, to see the work through the press, and to give it the finishing touches; perhaps also to render some further service to the cause of Truth. Though still on my sick-bed I am able to go through the proofs and revise the Introduction.

Before stating what changes I have made in the

Revised Edition I quote a few paragraphs from the old preface relating to the chief features of this Translation:

“As regards the translation I need not say much. That a need was felt for a translation of the Holy Book of Islām with full explanatory notes from the pen of a Muslim in spite of the existing translations is universally admitted. Whether this translation satisfies that need, only time will decide. I may, however, say that I have tried to be more faithful to the Arabic Text than all existing English translations. It will be noticed that additional words as explaining the sense of the original have generally been avoided, and where necessary — and these cases are very few — they are given within brackets. Wherever a departure has been made from the ordinary or primary significance of a word, reason for this departure has been given in a footnote and authorities have been amply quoted.

“There are some novel features in this translation. The Arabic Text has been inserted, the translation and the text occupying opposite columns. Each verse begins with a new line in both the Text and the translation, and verses are numbered to facilitate reference. Necessary explanations are given in footnotes, and generally either authorities are quoted or reasons given for the opinion expressed. This made the work very laborious, but I have undertaken this labour to make the work a real source of satisfaction to those who might otherwise be inclined to be sceptical regarding many statements which will appear new to the ordinary reader. I have tried to avoid repetition in the explanatory footnotes by giving a reference where repetition was necessary, but I must confess that these references are far from being exhaustive. When the significance of a word has been explained in one place it has been thought unnecessary, except in rare cases, to make a reference to it. For the reader’s facility I have, however, added a list of the Arabic words explained, and the reader may refer to it when necessary.

“Besides the footnotes, ample introductory notes have been given at the commencement of each chapter. These introductory notes give the abstract of each chapter in sections, at the same time showing the connection of the sections and also explaining that of the different chapters with each other. This feature of the translation is altogether new, and will, I hope, in course of time, prove of immense service in eradicating the idea which is so prevalent now that there is no arrangement in the verses and chapters of the Holy Qur’ān. It is quite true that the Qur’ān does not classify the different subjects and treat them separately in each section or chapter. The reason for this is that the Holy Qur’ān is not a book of laws, but essentially a book meant for the spiritual and moral advancement of man, and therefore the power,

greatness, grandeur and glory of God is its chief theme, the principles of social laws enunciated therein being also meant to promote the moral and spiritual advancement of man. But that there exists an arrangement will be clear even to the most superficial reader of the introductory notes on these chapters. It will be further noted that the Makkān and Madīnan revelations are beautifully welded together, and there are groups of chapters belonging to about one time and relating to one subject. The introductory notes also show whether a particular chapter was revealed at Makkah or Madīnah, and also the probable period to which it belongs. Exact dates and specified order of the revelation of different chapters are often mere conjectures, and therefore I have avoided this useless task.

“The references to the authorities quoted in the notes are explained in the Key to References. Among the commentators, I have made the greatest use of the voluminous commentaries of Ibn Jarīr, Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, Imām Athīr al-Dīn Abū Ḥayyān and the shorter but by no means less valuable commentaries of *Zamakhsharī*, *Baiḍāwī* and *Jāmi’ al-Bayān* of Ibn Kathīr. Among the lexicons, *Tāj al-‘Arūs* and the *Lisān al-‘Arab* are voluminous standard works and have been freely consulted, but the smaller work of Imām Rāghib Iṣfahānī, known as *Mufradāt fī Ghārīb al-Qur’ān*, has afforded immense help, and it undoubtedly occupies the first place among the standard works in Arabic Lexicology so far as the Qur’ān is concerned. The valuable dictionaries of Ḥadīth, the *Nihāyah*, of Ibn Athīr and the *Majma’ al-Bihār* have also proved very serviceable in explaining many a moot point. It will, however, be noted that I have more often referred to Lane’s *Arabic-English Lexicon*, a work the value of which for the English student of Arabic can hardly be overestimated; this has been done purposely so that the reader of this volume may have the facility to refer to an easily accessible work. It is a pity that the great author was not spared to complete his work, but up to the letter *fā*, Lane has placed the world under the greatest obligation. Besides commentaries and lexicons, historical and other works have also been consulted. Among the collections of Ḥadīth, *Bukhārī*, *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, or chapter on the commentary of the Holy Qur’ān, has been before me throughout, but the whole of *Bukhārī* and other reliable Ḥadīth collections have also been consulted. And lastly, the greatest religious leader of the present time, Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān, has inspired me with all that is best in this work. I have drunk deep at the fountain of knowledge which this great Reformer — *Mujaddid* of the present century and founder of the Aḥmadiyyah Movement — has made to flow. There is one more person whose name I must mention in this connection, the late Maulawī Ḥakīm Nūr al-Dīn, who in his last long

illness patiently went through much the greater part of the explanatory notes and made many valuable suggestions. To him, indeed, the Muslim world owes a deep debt of gratitude as the leader of the new turn given to the exposition of the Holy Qur'ān. He has done his work and passed away silently, but it is a fact that he spent the whole of his life in studying the Holy Qur'ān, and must be ranked with the greatest expositors of the Holy Book.

“The principle of the greatest importance to which I have adhered in interpreting the Holy Qur'ān is that no word of the Holy Book should be interpreted in such a manner as to contradict the plainer teachings of the Holy Qur'ān, a principle to which the Holy Word has itself called the attention of its reader in 3:7; see 3:7a. This rule forms the basis of my interpretation of the Qur'ān, and this is a very sound basis, if we remember that the Holy Qur'ān contains metaphors, parables, and allegories side by side with plain teachings. The Practice (*Sunnah*) and Sayings of the Holy Prophet, when contained in reliable reports, are the best commentary of the Holy Word, and I have therefore attached the greatest importance to them. Earlier authorities have also been respected, but reports and comments contradicting the Qur'ān itself cannot but be rejected. I have also kept before me the rule that the meaning to be adopted in any case should be that which suits the context best, and the only other limitation to which I have subjected myself is that the use of that word in that sense is allowed by the lexicons or by Arabic literature. Existing translations have rendered me great help, but I have adopted an interpretation only after fully satisfying myself and having recourse to original authorities. Many of the stories generally accepted by the commentators find no place in my commentary, except in cases where there is either sufficient historical evidence or the corroborative testimony of some reliable Saying of the Holy Prophet. Many of these stories were, I believe, incorporated into Islamic literature by the flow of converts from Judaism and Christianity into Islām. I must add that the present tendency of Muslim theologians to regard the commentaries of the Middle Ages as the final word on the interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān is very injurious and practically shuts out the great treasures of knowledge which an exposition of the Holy Book in the new light reveals. A study of the old commentators, to ignore whose great labour would indeed be a sin, also shows how freely they commented upon the Holy Book. The great service which they have done to the cause of Truth would indeed have been lost to the world if they had looked upon their predecessors as uttering the final word on the exposition of the Holy Qur'ān, as most theologians do today.”

It is a matter of no small pleasure to me that many of the special features of my Translation as noted above have been adopted by later Muslim translators of the Holy Qur'ān, the introductory notes to the chapters, giving the abstract of each chapter and showing its connection with what has gone before, have been specially appreciated. Even in the matter of interpretation, most of the views adopted by me have found acceptance with them. The following quotations from *The Moslem World*, July 1931, Revd. Zwemer's quarterly, would furnish interesting reading in this connection:

“A careful comparison of Mr. Pickthall's translation with that of the Ahmadiyya translator, Maulvi Muhammad Ali, shows conclusively, that Mr. Pickthall's work is not very much more than a revision of the Ahmadiyya version” (p. 289).

“We have made a thorough examination of about forty verses in the second chapter, sixty verses in the third, forty verses in the nineteenth, and all of the last fifteen chapters, comparing his renderings with those of Sale, Rodwell, Palmer and Muhammad Ali; as well as with the Arabic. From this careful investigation we have come to the conclusion that Mr. Pickthall's translation, in all that part of his work which we have examined, resembles very closely the version of Muhammad Ali, the difference between the two versions in many passages being merely verbal” (p. 290).

“Now if we compare the above passage (3:57–63) with the versions of S, R and P, we shall see that Mr. Pickthall is very much nearer to MA than he is to any of the three previous translators, so that one gets the impression that although he may have taken a word here and there from R and P, yet he has not followed them so closely as he obviously followed MA” (p. 292).

“The dependence of Mr. Pickthall upon the work of MA is also indicated in an occasional footnote, and those who will compare these footnotes with the notes in the 1920 edition of MA, which contains his commentary, will find that throughout chapter 2 almost every footnote is based on the Ahmadiyya Commentary” (p. 293).

“We think it will now be evident to the reader how much Mr. Pickthall is indebted to the version of Maulvi Muhammad Ali, not only for his footnotes but also for the translation itself” (p. 293).

“By comparing these two passages with Mr. Sarwar's rendering given on page 133 of the last issue of this journal, it will be seen that both Mr. Sarwar and Mr. Pickthall have followed MA very closely” (p. 294).

“In the passages which we have examined carefully, namely the verses at the beginning of the second, third and nineteenth suras, and the last fifteen, the translation of Pickthall follows MA so closely that one finds very few evidences of original work” (p. 297).

Similar views have been expressed by other writers. Thus the author of *Islām in its True Light* calls this Translation “a leading star for subsequent similar Muslim works” (p. 69) and mentions both Mr. Sarwar and Mr. Pickthall as following closely this Translation. The reason is not far to seek. My work was a work of labour. For every rendering or explanation I had to search Ḥadīth collections, Lexicologies, Commentaries and other important works, and every opinion expressed was substantiated by quoting authorities. Differences there have been in the past, and in future too there will be differences, but wherever I have differed I have given my authority for the difference. Moreover the principle I have kept in view in this Translation and Commentary, i.e., seeking the explanation of a problematic point first of all from the Holy Qur’ān itself, has kept me nearest to the truth, and those who study the Qur’ān closely will find very few occasions to differ with me. The Christian writer of the article in *The Moslem World*, from which I have quoted above, concludes with the following words:

“One cannot read far in the translation of Maulvi Muhammad Ali or in his notes without being convinced that before he began his work on the Koran he was already widely read in the Arabic Authorities listed on page lx, to which frequent reference is made in his notes; also his quotations from Lane’s Lexicon indicate that he was not altogether oblivious to the results of European scholarship” (p. 303).

And then it is added:

“It is a pity that his work is so saturated with the peculiar doctrines of the Ahmadiyya sect and with bitter denunciation of Christian teachings that the results of his Oriental scholarship have been seriously vitiated.”

I may here add that it is not only in having recourse to Lane’s Lexicon that I have taken advantage of European scholarship. For full nine years before taking up this translation I was engaged in studying every aspect of the European criticism of Islām as well as of Christianity and religion in general, as I had specially to deal with these subjects in *The Review of Religions*, of which I was the first editor. I had thus an occasion to go through both the higher criticism of religion by advanced thinkers and what I may call the narrower

criticism of Islām by the Christian missionaries who had no eye for the broader principles of Islām and its cosmopolitan teachings, and the unparalleled transformation wrought by Islām. The talk of Aḥmadiyyah doctrines is, however, nothing but false propaganda. The faith of Islām is one and all sects of Islām are one so far as the essential doctrines of Islām are concerned. There are differences in interpretation but they all relate to minor and secondary points. The Christian reviewer’s combining together “the peculiar doctrines of the Ahmadiyya sect” and “bitter denunciation of the Christian teachings” lets the cat out of the bag. So far as the criticism of the false church doctrines of Trinity, Sonship and Atonement is concerned, the doctrines are so emphatically denounced in plain words in the Qur’ān itself that no commentator need be bitter. What offends the Christian missionary and what he calls the peculiar doctrines of the Aḥmadiyyah sect is no more than an expression of opinion that Jesus Christ did not bodily ascend to heaven and is not alive there and that he died a natural death like other prophets. There is not a single *doctrine* of the religion of Islām in which this Translation differs from orthodox views. I hope to be excused for clearing up this point by a quotation from Mr. Pickthall’s review of my book *The Religion of Islām* in the *Islamic Culture* for October 1936:

“Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore. ... In our opinion the present volume is his finest work ... It is a description of Al-Islām by one well-versed in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah who has on his mind the shame of the Muslim decadence of the past five centuries and in his heart the hope of the revival, of which signs can now be seen on every side. Without moving a hair’s breadth from the Traditional position with regard to worship and religious duties, the author shows a wide field in which changes are lawful and may be desirable because here the rules and practices are not based on an ordinance of the Quran or an edict of the Prophet.” (p. 659)

Mr. Pickthall was an orthodox Muslim, and what he has said of *The Religion of Islām* is true of this Translation. There is not a hair’s breadth departure from the essentials of Islām, and this Translation does not contain anything contrary to the views of the great Imāms and learned *Ahl Sunnah* that have gone before. That there have been differences in the interpretation of the Holy Qur’ān among the greatest commentators, among even the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the great Imāms, cannot be denied. But these differences do not relate to the essentials of the faith of Islām on which all Muslims are agreed; they relate to minor or

secondary points. All Muslims believe in the Unity of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad. They believe in all the prophets of God and in His Books. They believe that Divine revelation came to perfection with the Prophet Muḥammad who is thus the last of the prophets — *Khātām al-Nabiyyīn* — after whom no prophet will come, and the Holy Qur’ān is the last Divine message to the whole of humanity. All these doctrines find clear expression in my translation and the explanatory footnotes.

The only important matter wherein I may be said to have differed with the majority relates to the death of Jesus Christ. But in the first place the belief that Jesus is alive somewhere in the heavens has never been included among the essentials of Islām. It has never been included among the religious doctrines of the faith of Islām. There are Muslims who still believe that four prophets are alive, *Khidr*, Idrīs, Elias and Jesus Christ, but that is not an article of faith with any Muslim. Many learned Muslims have held such belief regarding the first three to be based on Israelite stories and as having nothing to support it in the Holy Qur’ān and authentic *Ḥadīth*. They are not looked upon as unorthodox for that reason. Why should this Translation be looked upon as unorthodox for saying the same thing about a belief in Jesus Christ being alive? I may call the reader’s attention to another fact as well. Most learned Muslims all over the world, if not all, are today convinced that Jesus Christ died like other prophets and many of them have given expression to such views, among them being the famous Mufti Muḥammad ‘Abdu-hū and Sayyid *Rashīd Raḍā*’ of Egypt.

I may be excused for quoting two other orthodox views about this Translation. Maulānā ‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī, editor, *Such*, Lucknow, who is a recognized leader of orthodox Muslim opinion, wrote on 25th June 1943:

“To deny the excellence of Maulvī Muḥammad ‘Alī’s translation, the influence it has exercised and its proselytizing utility, would be to deny the light of the sun. The translation certainly helped in bringing thousands of non-Muslims to the Muslim fold and hundreds of thousands of unbelievers much nearer Islām. Speaking of my own self, I gladly admit that this translation was one of the few books which brought me towards Islām fifteen or sixteen years ago when I was groping in darkness, atheism and scepticism. Even Maulānā Muḥammad ‘Alī of the *Comrade* was greatly enthralled by this translation and had nothing but praise for it.”

Here we have the view of not one but two great orthodox leaders of Islām. I would add only one more orthodox leader’s view to show that there is not the least ground for the false propaganda that this Translation is

saturated with any unorthodox or heretical views. It is the Urdu paper *Wakīl*, which was published from Amritsar and of which both the editor and the proprietor were orthodox Muslims. Its review of this Translation when it was first issued was in the following words:

“We have seen the translation critically and have no hesitation in remarking that the simplicity of its language and the correctness of the version are all enviable. The writer has kept his annotations altogether free from sectarian influence with wonderful impartiality, and has gathered together the wealth of authentic Muslim theology. He has also displayed great skill and wisdom in using the new weapons of defence in refuting the objections of the opponents of Islām.”

As I have already stated, I have throughout this Translation quoted authorities wherever I have differed with previous translators or commentators or with certain views generally held by Muslims but which are not supported by the Holy Qur’ān or by authentic *Ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet. In the revised edition I have laid even greater emphasis on this point. In the case of *Ḥadīth* collections I have now given exact references, to book and chapter, which were wanting in the first edition, and have moreover made greater use of reliable *ḥadīth* when they explain the Qur’ān, giving the greatest importance to *Bukhārī* — *‘Aṣaḥḥ al-Kutub ba’da Kitāb Allāh* — the most correct of the books after the Book of God. Lexicons have also been resorted to on a vaster scale, and a complete index of the Arabic words and phrases explained has been added. The general index has been amplified, and headings have been added bearing on important subjects dealt with in the Qur’ān.

Changes have been made in many footnotes and a large number of new notes has been added. As regards the Translation itself, I have tried to make it simpler, though still adhering to the principle adopted in the first edition of being faithful to the Arabic text.

Changes have also been made in the subjects discussed in the Introduction. The subject of the Purity of the Quranic Text was very important as throwing light on the collection and arrangement of the Holy Book and it has been retained with some changes. But the summary of the teachings of Islām and details of the Islamic Institution of prayer are now obtainable separately and have been omitted from the Introduction. In the place of these, new and important subjects have been inserted to afford facility to the reader in understanding the Holy Qur’ān itself.

MUḤAMMAD ‘ALĪ.

Muslim Town,  
Lahore (Pakistan).  
18th January 1951. ■



## “Khatam an-nabiyyin” means “Last of the Prophets”

From the words of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Compiled by the Editor

[The following quotations are from the writings and lectures of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. These quotations deal with his belief in and interpretation of the term “khatam an-nabiyyin” and his rejection of the allegation that he claims to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. These quotations (and others) were presented as evidence in the South Africa court case, in which members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement prevailed against the bigotry of extremist Muslims who were intent on trying to exclude them from the fold of Islam on the basis of completely unfounded perceptions. The entire compilation of evidence submitted in the South Africa court case can be viewed online at: <http://www.muslim.org/sa-case/evidence/contents.htm> and a Special Issue of the Light and Islamic Review commemorating the 25th year anniversary of the South Africa Case was published in Oct-Dec 2010 and can be viewed online at: <http://www.muslim.org/light/light104.pdf>.]

### Belief in “Khatam an-nabiyyin”

“I believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the *Khatam* of the Prophets.” (*Ainah Kamalat Islam*, p. 21)

“I believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, being the *Khatam an-nabiyyin*, and I know with perfect certainty and I firmly believe that our Holy Prophet is the *Khatam al-anbiya*.” (*Nishan Asmani*, p. 28)

“I hold that our Messenger Muhammad *mustafa*, peace be upon him, is the most excellent of messengers and the *Khatam an-nabiyyin*.” (*Hamamat al-Bushra*, p. 8; new edition p. 36)

“I believe in God and His Messenger, and I also believe that the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, is the *Khatam an-nabiyyin*.” (ibid., p. 81; new edition p. 290)

“My belief is that our Leader and Master Hazrat Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the *Khatam al-anbiya*.” (*Kitab al-Barriyya*, p. 182, footnote)

“We believe that there is none worthy of worship except Allah Almighty, and our Leader Muhammad *mustafa*, peace be upon him, is His Messenger and the *Khatam al-anbiya*.” (*Ayyam as-Sulh*, pp. 86 – 87)

“As for belief, what God wants from you is that God

is One, and Muhammad, peace be upon him, is His Prophet and the *Khatam al-anbiya*, and the greatest.” (*Kishti-i Nuh*, p. 15)

“The finality of prophethood with the Holy Prophet is not only due to his being the last in time, but also because all the accomplishments of prophethood were completed with him.” (Lecture on Islam at Sialkot, p. 6)

“The age of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, extends till the Day of Judgment, and he is the *Khatam al-anbiya*.” (*Chashma-i Ma‘rifat*, p. 82)

“I have written again and again that it is a real and actual fact that our Leader and Master, peace be upon him, is the *Khatam al-anbiya*.” (ibid., p. 324, footnote)

“I swear by Almighty God that I am not a *kafir*. My belief is: *There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*. And regarding the Holy Prophet, I believe [the verse of the Quran]: *He is the Messenger of Allah and the Khatam an-nabiyyin*. I swear to the truth of this statement of mine as many times as there are holy names of God, and as many times as there are letters in the Holy Quran, and as many times as there are virtues of the Holy Prophet in the sight of God. None of my beliefs is opposed to the commands of God and the Apostle.” (*Karamat as-Sadiqeen*, p. 25)

### Defining “Khatam an-nabiyyin”

“That is to say: Muhammad is not the father of any man from among you, but he is the Messenger of God and the one to end the prophets. This verse, too, clearly argues that after our Prophet, peace be upon him, no messenger (*rasul*) shall come into the world.” (*Izala Auham*, p. 614)

“The Holy Quran does not permit the coming of any messenger (*rasul*) after the *Khatam an-nabiyyin*, whether a new one or an old one.” (ibid., p. 761)

“Our Holy Prophet being the *Khatam an-nabiyyin* is a bar to the coming of any other prophet.” (ibid., p. 575)

“‘*Muhammad is not the father of any man from among you, but he is the Messenger of God and the Khatam an-nabiyyin*.’ Do you not know that the Merciful God has declared our Holy Prophet unconditionally to be the *Khatam al-anbiya*, and in explanation of this verse, our Prophet has said: ‘*There is to be no prophet after me*.’” (*Hamamat al-Bushra*, p. 20; new edition pp. 81 – 82)

“The Holy Prophet had repeatedly said that no prophet would come after him, and the hadith ‘*There is to be no prophet after me*’ was so well-known that no one had any doubt about its authenticity. And the Holy

Quran, every word of which is absolute, in its verse ‘*he is the messenger of God and the Khatam an-nabiyyin*’, confirmed that prophethood has, in fact, ended with our Holy Prophet.” (*Kitab al-Barriyya*, p. 184, footnote)

“In the same way, by saying ‘*There is to be no prophet after me*’, he [the Holy Prophet] closed the door absolutely to any new prophet or a returning prophet.” (*Ayyam as-Sulh*, p. 152)

“After the finality of prophethood, no further prophet can come in Islam.” (*Raz Haqiqat*, p. 16)

“I firmly believe that our Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the *Khatam al-anbiya*, and after him no prophet shall come for this nation (*umma*), neither new nor old.” (*Nishan Asmani*, p. 28)

“The actual fact, to which I testify with the highest testimony, is that our Prophet, peace be upon him, is the *Khatam al-anbiya*, and after him there shall not come any prophet, neither old or new.” (*Anjam Atham*, p. 27, footnote)

“This news was given only by God Who sent our Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, after all the prophets, in order to gather all the nations under his banner.” (*Haqiqat al-Wahy*, Appendix, p. 44)

“It does not befit God that He should send a prophet after the *Khatam an-nabiyyin*, or that He should re-start the system of prophethood after having terminated it.” (*Ainah Kamalat Islam*, p. 377)

“In brief, God by naming the Holy Prophet Muhammad as *Khatam an-nabiyyin* in the Quran, and the Holy Prophet himself by saying ‘*There is to be no prophet after me*’ in Hadith, had settled the point that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet, in terms of the real meaning of prophethood.” (*Kitab al-Barriyya*, p. 185)

“God says: ‘*He is the Messenger of God and the Khatam an-nabiyyin*.’ And it is in the Hadith: ‘*There is to be no prophet after me*.’ ... If another prophet were to come, whether new or old, how could our Holy Prophet be the *Khatam al-anbiya*.” (*Ayyam as-Sulh*, p. 74)

“The Holy Quran, in the verses ‘*This day I have perfected for you your religion*’, and ‘*he is the Messenger of God and the Khatam an-nabiyyin*’, has ended prophethood with the Holy Prophet Muhammad. And it has said in plain words that the Holy Prophet is *Khatam al-anbiya*.” (*Tuhfa Golarwiya*, p. 83)

“Allah is the Being Who ... made Adam and sent messengers and scriptures, and last of all sent Muhammad — may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him — who is the *Khatam al-anbiya* and the best

of messengers.” (*Haqiqat al-Wahy*, p. 141)

“It should be believed from the bottom of the heart that prophethood has terminated with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as God Almighty says: ‘*He is the Messenger of God and the Khatam an-nabiyyin*’. To deny this verse, or to belittle it, is in fact to separate oneself from Islam.” (Letter dated 17 August 1899, published in *Al-Hakam*, August 1899, vol. iii, no. 29)

### Denial of any claim to Prophethood

“Those people have fabricated a lie against me who say that this man claims to be a prophet.” (*Hamamat al-Bushra*, p. 8; new edition p. 36)

“People did not understand my saying and said that this man claims prophethood. But God knows that this saying of theirs is clear falsehood. There is not a grain of truth in it, nor any basis for it.” (*ibid.*, p. 81; new edition p. 289)

“By way of a fabrication, they slander me by saying that I have made a claim to prophethood. ... But it should be remembered that all this is a fabrication. Our belief is that our leader and master, Muhammad *mustafa*, peace be upon him, is the *Khatam al-anbiya*.” (*Kitab al-Barriyya*, p. 182, footnote)

“I make no claim to prophethood. This is your mistake, or you have some motive in mind. Is it necessary that the person who lays claim to revelation should also be a prophet?” (*Jang Muqaddas*, p. 67)

“Ignorant opponents allege against me that this person claims to be a prophet or apostle. I make no such claim.” (Pamphlet *Ayk Ghalati Ka Izala*)

“Can a wretched imposter who claims apostleship and prophethood for himself have any belief in the Holy Quran? And can a man who believes in the Holy Quran, and believes the verse ‘*He is the Messenger of God and the Khatam an-nabiyyin*’ to be the word of God, say that he is a messenger and a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad?” (*Anjam Atham*, p. 27, footnote)

“Another stupidity is that, in order to provoke the ignorant people, they say that this person has claimed prophethood. This is a complete fabrication on their part.” (*Haqiqat al-Wahy*, p. 390)

“What ignorance, stupidity, and departure from truth, to say that prophethood has been claimed.” (*ibid.*, Appendix, p. 68)

“In confronting the present Ulama, this humble servant has ... sworn many times by God that I am not a claimant to any prophethood. But these people still do not desist from declaring me as *kafir*.” (Letter to Maulavi Ahmad-ullah of Amritsar, 27 January 1904) ■

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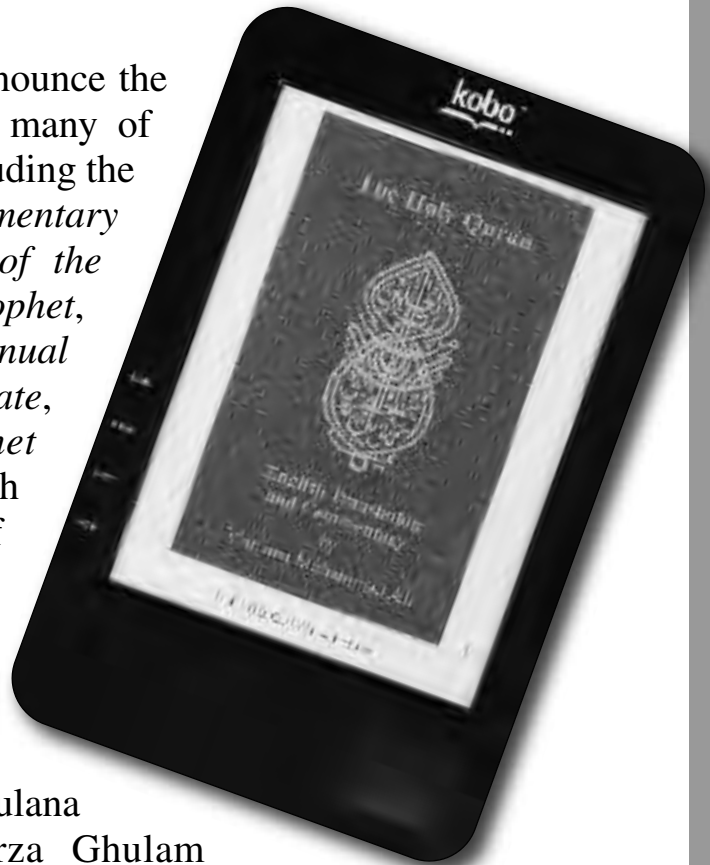
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