

“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**

January – March 2015

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

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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

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

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

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The main objective of the A.A.I.L. is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world — Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by grave misconceptions and wrong popular notions.

Islam seeks to attract the **hearts and minds** of people towards the truth, by means of reasoning and the natural beauty of its principles.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), our Founder, arose to remind the world that Islam is:

International: It recognizes prophets being raised among all nations and requires Muslims to believe in them all. Truth and goodness can be found in all religions. God treats all human beings equally, regardless of race, nationality or religion.

Peaceful: Allows use of force only in unavoidable self-defence. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

Tolerant: Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any creed or religion. Requires us to tolerate differences of belief and opinion.

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

Inspiring: Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a Living God, Who answers prayers and speaks to His righteous servants even today as in the past.

Non-sectarian: Every person professing Islam by the words **La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur rasul-ullah** (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be expelled from Islam by anyone.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad taught that **no** prophet, old or new, is to arise after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. However, **Mujaddids** will be raised by God to revive and rekindle the light of Islam.

About ourselves

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has branches in many countries including:

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

Achievements:

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

History:

1889: **Hazrat** Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founds the Ahmadiyya Movement.

1901: Movement given name **Ahmadiyya** after Holy Prophet Muhammad's other famous name **Ahmad**.

1905: Hazrat Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.

1908: Death of Hazrat Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.

1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam founded at Lahore as continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.

1951: Death of Maulana Muhammad Ali after fifty years of glorious service to the cause of Islam. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (d. 1981) becomes Head.

1981–1996: Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent medical doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution.

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

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

ISIS, and its Impact on American Muslims

By Fazeel S. Khan

[In October 2014, Capital University in Columbus, Ohio hosted an event titled “Why We Choose Violence: ISIS and Us”. The event comprised short presentations by four speakers, followed by questions and answers and discussion. The first speaker, a professor with specialized background in middle-eastern conflict, provided a detailed account of what ISIS is and who their victims are, laying a framework for the other presentations. This was followed by a presentation by an adjunct professor who spoke about violence and its correlation with dignity (the topic of his Ph.D. dissertation), which helped the attendees understand the complex reasons for which people resort to violence. The next presentation was by a professor of psychology who spoke on death and grieving, providing an opportunity to relate to the statistics of numbers of persons killed in this conflict and help process the reality of the devastation that has occurred and is still occurring. This article entails the final presentation of the event, providing perspective on the implications of ISIS’ violence on American Muslims, thereby giving a voice to a community often unheard yet deeply affected by the conflict.]

Good afternoon everyone. It’s a pleasure to be here and I’d like to thank everyone else who helped organize this very important and timely event.

I’d like to start by quoting a passage from a talk by Carly Fiorina. Ms. Fiorina is the former CEO of the technology giant Hewlett Packard and lately has been involved in the political field in California. While giving an address on leadership at a conference during her tenure at Hewlett Packard, she stated the following:

There was once a civilization that was the greatest in the world.

It was able to create a continental super-state that stretched from ocean to ocean, and from northern climes to tropics and deserts. Within its dominion lived hundreds of millions of people, of different creeds and ethnic origins.

One of its languages became the universal language of much of the world, the bridge between the peoples of a hundred lands. Its armies were made up of people of many nationalities, and its military protection allowed a degree of peace and prosperity that had never been known. The reach of this civilization’s commerce extended from Latin America to China, and everywhere in between.

And this civilization was driven more than anything, by invention. Its architects designed buildings that defied gravity. Its mathematicians created the algebra and algorithms that would enable the building of computers, and the creation of encryption. Its doctors examined the human body, and found new cures for disease. Its astronomers looked into the heavens, named the stars, and paved the way for space travel and exploration.

Its writers created thousands of stories. Stories of courage, romance and magic. Its poets wrote of love, when others before them were too steeped in fear to think of such things.

When other nations were afraid of ideas, this civilization thrived on them, and kept them alive. When censors threatened to wipe out knowledge from past civilizations, this civilization kept the knowledge alive, and passed it on to others.

While modern Western civilization shares many of these traits, the civilization I’m talking about was the Islamic world from the year 800 to 1600, which included the Ottoman Empire and the courts of Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, and enlightened rulers like Suleiman the Magnificent.

Although we are often unaware of our indebtedness to this other civilization, its gifts are very much a part of our heritage.

The technology industry would not exist without the contributions of Arab mathematicians. Sufi poet-philosophers like Rumi challenged our notions of self and truth. Leaders like Suleiman contributed to our notions of tolerance and civic leadership.

And perhaps we can learn a lesson from his example: It was leadership based on meritocracy, not inheritance. It was leadership that harnessed the full capabilities of a very diverse population—that included Christian, Islamic, and Jewish traditions.

This kind of enlightened leadership — leadership that nurtured culture, sustainability, diversity and courage — led to 800 years of invention and prosperity.

Disparity in Perceptions Today

Today, far from a religion of peace, progressiveness, and civilization, Islam is viewed as a violent, intolerant faith that is inherently incompatible with the civil and democratic ideals accepted by the modern world. Recent polls (from the Washington Post) show nearly half (49%) of Americans have a negative view of Islam. More than a quarter (26%) admit to being prejudiced against Muslims. The Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission (EEOC)reported that although Muslims made up about 2% of the American workforce, 25% of the charges of discrimination were based on bias towards Muslims. We recently saw two-thirds of Americans (66%) opposing the efforts of Muslims to build a community center (which happened to also include a prayer area) two blocks away from Ground Zero because it was considered too close. And we have seen fringe religious personalities able to attract national and even international media attention by staging “Burn the Quran” days. And despite all this negativity and hysteria, we were still able to get a Muslim elected as President of the United States of [laughter]

A Common Question

Now, in all seriousness, there is obviously some basis to these negative views. Extremists of the Muslim faith have engaged in terrorist attacks in various places, they openly reject western-styled democracies (which they believe diminish the sovereignty of God’s laws on earth), and claim they are engaging in a “jihad” against everyone who does not follow their ways (including other Muslims). ISIS is the latest manifestation of this recent phenomenon. So, the question that is commonly asked is: Why don’t Muslims speak out against these extremists that are hijacking their faith? Although this seems to be a rather straightforward question, for American Muslims it can be quite frustrating.

First, the question presupposes something that is simply not true. American Muslims routinely publicly condemn all forms of terrorism, and all types of extremist ideologies. There is no terrorist incident involving Muslims that takes place that isn’t immediately followed by a host of statements by Muslim organizations here in the U.S. condemning the act, disassociating themselves from the perpetrators and clarifying that such acts have nothing to do with the true teachings of Islam. There are hundreds of such statements and press releases and these are readily available for viewing on various websites. Recently, Muslim organizations around the world, including some from the U.S., supported a campaign which brought together 120 Islamic scholars from to condemn ISIS’ beliefs and practices and provide a detailed rebuttal to the extremist interpretations they promote. So, the real question seems to be: Why are the voices of American Muslims who vigilantly protest terrorism in the name of their faith not being reported? Why is such information not a part of the discussion and the dialogue in popular media?

Second, despite there being no shortage of American Muslims speaking out against Islamic extremism, the other problem with the question “Why don’t Muslims speak out against terrorists” is that inherent in such a

question is the notion of “collective guilt”. That *all* Muslims (1.5 billion of us) are somehow responsible for every act committed by an extremist anywhere in the world. Just think about that. If you happen to be Christian, how would it feel if you were personally held responsible for *all* the actions of *all* Christians, and were asked to personally protest *all* un-Christian-like actions, whether it be against the Westboro Baptist Church, the KKK, or an extremist who shoots a doctor at an abortion clinic. And think about how it would feel just knowing that others perceive you as being a part of such groups or being aligned with them in some way. See, the question “Why don’t Muslims speak out” obviously neglects the very important fact that these terrorist groups – whether it be ISIS, or Al Qaeda, or what have you – have killed many more Muslims than they have people of any other faith. Those who are most vulnerable to Islamic extremist groups are Muslims. So, the “us vs. them” understanding of the problem of Islamic extremism is not only inaccurate, but counter-productive. It promotes a narrative that detracts from an understanding of the real problem and an appreciation of what is required in order to address it.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Now, this does not mean that there isn’t an “ideological” aspect to this problem of Islamic extremism that we see causing chaos in many parts of the world today. And it is essential that Muslims not fail to recognize this. Certainly, extremism breeds in environments of poverty, lack of education and opportunities, and conditions of desperation, where there is no hope for progress. But there is no doubt that a perverted interpretation of Islam is being used by extremists to address these socio-economic and political grievances through violence. And stripping the extremists of the garb of Islam that they wear to achieve their political goals can only be done by Muslims.

And this is what the Islamic society I belong to, the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, has been doing, not since 9-11, but for the past over 100 years. We publish books, and in particular a translation of the Holy Quran with commentary, that addresses and rebuts many of the ideologies extremists promote in support of their criminal actions. Although our literature is available in the largest retail outlets around the world and many universities use them as text books, the primary focus in this venture is have this literature translated into foreign languages and into the hands of native populations that may be susceptible to extremist ideologies. That way, people can learn about their religion for themselves, in their own language, and not have to rely on what is unfortunately sometimes the case, a politically motivated cleric telling them what their religions is all about.

And what is equally important in this effort of countering the ideologies of groups like ISIS is for Western nations to support Muslims groups that are challenging these radical elements. Unfortunately, we see that many of our nation's closest allies (Saudi Arabia, for example) playing a major role in the proliferation of intolerant and fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. These same allies are among the worst abusers of human rights in the world and have little concern for religious liberty. In order to have any legitimacy in this effort, a principled stance against the sources of the problem, whether it is politically expedient or not, is required. And, on a more local level, certainly more forums like this are needed, where respectful dialogue may take place and people can learn so much simply from getting to know one another.

Thank you very much. ■

Closing remarks at the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism

By President Barack Obama

[In February 2015, the White House hosted a Summit on Countering Violent Extremism to highlight domestic and international efforts to prevent violent extremists from radicalizing, recruiting, or inspiring others to commit acts of violence. This article is a transcript of President Obama's closing remarks at the Summit. In his remarks, President Obama provides a detailed assessment of the nature of threats to national security and a balanced prescription as to how to deal with it. Among his insightful thoughts on how to counter violent extremism is the idea that the ideologies upon which extremists base their cause must be rebutted and exposed as being illegitimate. He further points out that in many cases this is a responsibility that falls on the Muslim community. These sentiments resonate with the objective of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement to eradicate extremist and other unfounded beliefs that lead to a misunderstanding of the spiritual foundation of the Islamic faith. In particular, the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society (the U.S. branch of the international Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement) has been engaged in the work of having the Movement's literature translated into Arabic, certified by Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy, and distributed in collaboration with local entities throughout the Arab world specifically for the purpose of countering violent and extremist ideologies that are causing much chaos in the world today.]

For more than 238 years, the United States of America has not just endured, but we have thrived and surmount-

ed challenges that might have broken a lesser nation. After a terrible civil war, we repaired our union. We weathered a Great Depression, became the world's most dynamic economy. We fought fascism, liberated Europe. We faced down communism — and won. American communities have been destroyed by earthquakes and tornadoes and fires and floods — and each time we rebuild.

The bombing that killed 168 people could not break Oklahoma City. On 9/11, terrorists tried to bring us to our knees; today a new tower soars above New York City, and America continues to lead throughout the world. After Americans were killed at Fort Hood and the Boston Marathon, it didn't divide us; we came together as one American family.

In the face of horrific acts of violence — at a Sikh temple near Milwaukee, or at a Jewish community center outside Kansas City — we reaffirmed our commitment to pluralism and to freedom, repulsed by the notion that anyone should ever be targeted because of who they are, or what they look like, or how they worship.

Most recently, with the brutal murders in Chapel Hill of three young Muslim Americans, many Muslim Americans are worried and afraid. And I want to be as clear as I can be: As Americans, all faiths and backgrounds, we stand with you in your grief and we offer our love and we offer our support.

My point is this: As Americans, we are strong and we are resilient. And when tragedy strikes, when we take a hit, we pull together, and we draw on what's best in our character — our optimism, our commitment to each other, our commitment to our values, our respect for one another. We stand up, and we rebuild, and we recover, and we emerge stronger than before. That's who we are. (Applause.)

And I say all this because we face genuine challenges to our security today, just as we have throughout our history. Challenges to our security are not new. They didn't happen yesterday or a week ago or a year ago. We've always faced challenges. One of those challenges is the terrorist threat from groups like al Qaeda and ISIL. But this isn't our challenge alone. It's a challenge for the world. ISIL is terrorizing the people of Syria and Iraq, beheads and burns human beings in unfathomable acts of cruelty. We've seen deadly attacks in Ottawa and Sydney and, Paris, and now Copenhagen.

So, in the face of this challenge, we have marshalled the full force of the United States government, and we're working with allies and partners to dismantle terrorist organizations and protect the American people. Given the complexities of the challenge and the nature

of the enemy — which is not a traditional army — this work takes time, and will require vigilance and resilience and perspective. But I'm confident that, just as we have for more than two centuries, we will ultimately prevail.

And part of what gives me that confidence is the overwhelming response of the world community to the savagery of these terrorists — not just revulsion, but a concrete commitment to work together to vanquish these organizations.

At the United Nations in September, I called on the international community to come together and eradicate this scourge of violent extremism. And I want to thank all of you — from across America and around the world — for answering this call. Tomorrow at the State Department, governments and civil society groups from more than 60 countries will focus on the steps that we can take as governments. And I'll also speak about how our nations have to remain relentless in our fight — our counterterrorism efforts — against groups that are plotting against our countries.

But we are here today because of a very specific challenge - and that's countering violent extremism, something that is not just a matter of military affairs. By "violent extremism," we don't just mean the terrorists who are killing innocent people. We also mean the ideologies, the infrastructure of extremists — the propagandists, the recruiters, the funders who radicalize and recruit or incite people to violence. We all know there is no one profile of a violent extremist or terrorist, so there's no way to predict who will become radicalized. Around the world, and here in the United States, inexcusable acts of violence have been committed against people of different faiths, by people of different faiths — which is, of course, a betrayal of all our faiths. It's not unique to one group, or to one geography, or one period of time.

But we are here at this summit because of the urgent threat from groups like al Qaeda and ISIL. And this week we are focused on prevention — preventing these groups from radicalizing, recruiting or inspiring others to violence in the first place. I've called upon governments to come to the United Nations this fall with concrete steps that we can take together. And today, what I want to do is suggest several areas where I believe we can concentrate our efforts.

First, we have to confront squarely and honestly the twisted ideologies that these terrorist groups use to incite people to violence. Leading up to this summit, there's been a fair amount of debate in the press and among pundits about the words we use to describe and frame this challenge. So I want to be very clear about how I see it.

Al Qaeda and ISIL and groups like it are desperate for legitimacy. They try to portray themselves as religious leaders — holy warriors in defense of Islam. That's why ISIL presumes to declare itself the "Islamic State." And they propagate the notion that America — and the West, generally — is at war with Islam. That's how they recruit. That's how they try to radicalize young people. We must never accept the premise that they put forward, because it is a lie. Nor should we grant these terrorists the religious legitimacy that they seek. They are not religious leaders — they're terrorists. And we are not at war with Islam. We are at war with people who have perverted Islam.

Now, just as those of us outside Muslim communities need to reject the terrorist narrative that the West and Islam are in conflict, or modern life and Islam are in conflict, I also believe that Muslim communities have a responsibility as well. Al Qaeda and ISIL do draw, selectively, from the Islamic texts. They do depend upon the misperception around the world that they speak in some fashion for people of the Muslim faith, that Islam is somehow inherently violent, that there is some sort of clash of civilizations.

Of course, the terrorists do not speak for over a billion Muslims who reject their hateful ideology. They no more represent Islam than any madman who kills innocents in the name of God represents Christianity or Judaism or Buddhism or Hinduism. No religion is responsible for terrorism. People are responsible for violence and terrorism.

And to their credit, there are respected Muslim clerics and scholars not just here in the United States but around the world who push back on this twisted interpretation of their faith. They want to make very clear what Islam stands for. And we're joined by some of these leaders today. These religious leaders and scholars preach that Islam calls for peace and for justice, and tolerance toward others; that terrorism is prohibited; that the Koran says whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind. Those are the voices that represent over a billion people around the world.

But if we are going to effectively isolate terrorists, if we're going to address the challenge of their efforts to recruit our young people, if we're going to lift up the voices of tolerance and pluralism within the Muslim community, then we've got to acknowledge that their job is made harder by a broader narrative that does exist in many Muslim communities around the world that suggests the West is at odds with Islam in some fashion.

The reality — which, again, many Muslim leaders have spoken to — is that there's a strain of thought that doesn't embrace ISIL's tactics, doesn't embrace vio-

lence, but does buy into the notion that the Muslim world has suffered historical grievances — sometimes that’s accurate — does buy into the belief that so many of the ills in the Middle East flow from a history of colonialism or conspiracy; does buy into the idea that Islam is incompatible with modernity or tolerance, or that it’s been polluted by Western values.

So those beliefs exist. In some communities around the world they are widespread. And so it makes individuals — especially young people who already may be disaffected or alienated — more ripe for radicalization. And so we’ve got to be able to talk honestly about those issues. We’ve got to be much more clear about how we’re rejecting certain ideas.

So just as leaders like myself reject the notion that terrorists like ISIL genuinely represent Islam, Muslim leaders need to do more to discredit the notion that our nations are determined to suppress Islam, that there’s an inherent clash in civilizations. Everybody has to speak up very clearly that no matter what the grievance, violence against innocents doesn’t defend Islam or Muslims, it damages Islam and Muslims.

And when all of us, together, are doing our part to reject the narratives of violent extremists, when all of us are doing our part to be very clear about the fact that there are certain universal precepts and values that need to be respected in this interconnected world, that’s the beginnings of a partnership.

As we go forward, we need to find new ways to amplify the voices of peace and tolerance and inclusion — and we especially need to do it online. We also need to lift up the voices of those who know the hypocrisy of groups like ISIL firsthand, including former extremists. Their words speak to us today. And I know in some of the discussions these voices have been raised: “I witnessed horrible crimes committed by ISIS.” “It’s not a revolution or jihad...it’s a slaughter...I was shocked by what I did.” “This isn’t what we came for, to kill other Muslims.” “I’m 28 — is this the only future I’m able to imagine?” That’s the voice of so many who were temporarily radicalized and then saw the truth. And they’ve warned other young people not to make the same mistakes as they did. “Do not run after illusions.” “Do not be deceived.” “Do not give up your life for nothing.” We need to lift up those voices.

And in all this work, the greatest resource are communities themselves, especially like those young people who are here today. We are joined by talented young men and women who are pioneering new innovations, and new social media tools, and new ways to reach young people. We’re joined by leaders from the private sector, including high-tech companies, who want to

support your efforts. And I want to challenge all of us to build new partnerships that unleash the talents and creativity of young people — young Muslims — not just to expose the lies of extremists but to empower youth to service, and to lift up people’s lives here in America and around the world. And that can be a calling for your generation.

So that’s the first challenge — we’ve got to discredit these ideologies. We have to tackle them head on. And we can’t shy away from these discussions. And too often, folks are, understandably, sensitive about addressing some of these root issues, but we have to talk about them, honestly and clearly. And the reason I believe we have to do so is because I’m so confident that when the truth is out we’ll be successful. Now, a second challenge is we do have to address the grievances that terrorists exploit, including economic grievances. Poverty alone does not cause a person to become a terrorist, any more than poverty alone causes somebody to become a criminal. There are millions of people — billions of people - in the world who live in abject poverty and are focused on what they can do to build up their own lives, and never embrace violent ideologies.

Conversely, there are terrorists who’ve come from extraordinarily wealthy backgrounds, like Osama bin Laden. What’s true, though, is that when millions of people — especially youth — are impoverished and have no hope for the future, when corruption inflicts daily humiliations on people, when there are no outlets by which people can express their concerns, resentments fester. The risk of instability and extremism grow. Where young people have no education, they are more vulnerable to conspiracy theories and radical ideas, because it’s not tested against anything else, they’ve got nothing to weigh. And we’ve seen this across the Middle East and North Africa.

And terrorist groups are all too happy to step into a void. They offer salaries to their foot soldiers so they can support their families. Sometimes they offer social services — schools, health clinics — to do what local governments cannot or will not do. They try to justify their violence in the name of fighting the injustice of corruption that steals from the people — even while those terrorist groups end up committing even worse abuses, like kidnapping and human trafficking.

So if we’re going to prevent people from being susceptible to the false promises of extremism, then the international community has to offer something better. And the United States intends to do its part. We will keep promoting development and growth that is broadly shared, so more people can provide for their families. We’ll keep leading a global effort against corruption, because the culture of the bribe has to be replaced by

good governance that doesn't favor certain groups over others.

Countries have to truly invest in the education and skills and job training that our extraordinary young people need. And by the way, that's boys and girls, and men and women, because countries will not be truly successful if half their populations — if their girls and their women are denied opportunity. And America will continue to forge new partnerships in entrepreneurship and innovation, and science and technology, so young people from Morocco to Malaysia can start new businesses and create more prosperity.

Just as we address economic grievances, we need to face a third challenge — and that's addressing the political grievances that are exploited by terrorists. When governments oppress their people, deny human rights, stifle dissent, or marginalize ethnic and religious groups, or favor certain religious groups over others, it sows the seeds of extremism and violence. It makes those communities more vulnerable to recruitment. Terrorist groups claim that change can only come through violence. And if peaceful change is impossible, that plays into extremist propaganda.

So the essential ingredient to real and lasting stability and progress is not less democracy; it's more democracy. It's institutions that uphold the rule of law and apply justice equally. It's security forces and police that respect human rights and treat people with dignity. It's free speech and strong civil societies where people can organize and assemble and advocate for peaceful change. It's freedom of religion where all people can practice their faith without fear and intimidation. All of this is part of countering violent extremism.

Fourth, we have to recognize that our best partners in all these efforts, the best people to help protect individuals from falling victim to extremist ideologies are their own communities, their own family members. We have to be honest with ourselves. Terrorist groups like al Qaeda and ISIL deliberately target their propaganda in the hopes of reaching and brainwashing young Muslims, especially those who may be disillusioned or wrestling with their identity. That's the truth. The high-quality videos, the online magazines, the use of social media, terrorist Twitter accounts — it's all designed to target today's young people online, in cyberspace.

And by the way, the older people here, as wise and respected as you may be, your stuff is often boring — (laughter) — compared to what they're doing. You're not connected. And as a consequence, you are not connecting.

So these terrorists are a threat, first and foremost, to the communities that they target, which means commu-

nities have to take the lead in protecting themselves. And that is true here in America, as it's true anywhere else. When someone starts getting radicalized, family and friends are often the first to see that something has changed in their personality. Teachers may notice a student becoming withdrawn or struggling with his or her identity, and if they intervene at that moment and offer support, that may make a difference.

Faith leaders may notice that someone is beginning to espouse violent interpretations of religion, and that's a moment for possible intervention that allows them to think about their actions and reflect on the meaning of their faith in a way that's more consistent with peace and justice. Families and friends, coworkers, neighbors, faith leaders — they want to reach out; they want to help save their loved ones and friends, and prevent them from taking a wrong turn.

But communities don't always know the signs to look for, or have the tools to intervene, or know what works best. And that's where government can play a role — if government is serving as a trusted partner. And that's where we also need to be honest. I know some Muslim Americans have concerns about working with government, particularly law enforcement. And their reluctance is rooted in the objection to certain practices where Muslim Americans feel they've been unfairly targeted.

So, in our work, we have to make sure that abuses stop, are not repeated, that we do not stigmatize entire communities. Nobody should be profiled or put under a cloud of suspicion simply because of their faith. Engagement with communities can't be a cover for surveillance. We can't "securitize" our relationship with Muslim Americans dealing with them solely through the prism of law enforcement. Because when we do, that only reinforces suspicions, makes it harder for us to build the trust that we need to work together.

As part of this summit, we're announcing that we're going to increase our outreach to communities, including Muslim Americans. We're going to step up our efforts to engage with partners and raise awareness so more communities understand how to protect their loved ones from becoming radicalized. We've got to devote more resources to these efforts.

And as government does more, communities are going to have to step up as well. We need to build on the pilot programs that have been discussed at this summit already — in Los Angeles, in Minneapolis, in Boston. These are partnerships that bring people together in a spirit of mutual respect and create more dialogue and more trust and more cooperation. If we're going to solve these issues, then the people who are most target-

ed and potentially most affected — Muslim Americans — have to have a seat at the table where they can help shape and strengthen these partnerships so that we're all working together to help communities stay safe and strong and resilient.

And finally, we need to do what extremists and terrorists hope we will not do, and that is stay true to the values that define us as free and diverse societies. If extremists are peddling the notion that Western countries are hostile to Muslims, then we need to show that we welcome people of all faiths.

Here in America, Islam has been woven into the fabric of our country since its founding. Generations of Muslim immigrants came here and went to work as farmers and merchants and factory workers, helped to lay railroads and build up America. The first Islamic center in New York City was founded in the 1890s. America's first mosque — this was an interesting fact — was in North Dakota.

Muslim Americans protect our communities as police officers and firefighters and first responders, and protect our nation by serving in uniform, and in our intelligence communities, and in homeland security. And in cemeteries across our country, including at Arlington, Muslim American heroes rest in peace having given their lives in defense of all of us.

And of course that's the story extremists and terrorists don't want the world to know — Muslims succeeding and thriving in America. Because when that truth is known, it exposes their propaganda as the lie that it is. It's also a story that every American must never forget, because it reminds us all that hatred and bigotry and prejudice have no place in our country. It's not just counterproductive; it doesn't just aid terrorists; it's wrong. It's contrary to who we are.

I'm thinking of a little girl named Sabrina who last month sent me a Valentine's Day card in the shape of a heart. It was the first Valentine I got. I got it from Sabrina before Malia and Sasha and Michelle gave me one. So she's 11 years old. She's in the 5th grade. She's a young Muslim American. And she said in her Valentine, "I enjoy being an American." And when she grows up, she wants to be an engineer — or a basketball player. Which are good choices. But she wrote, "I am worried about people hating Muslims...If some Muslims do bad things, that doesn't mean all of them do." And she asked, "Please tell everyone that we are good people and we're just like everyone else." Now, those are the words — and the wisdom — of a little girl growing up here in America, just like my daughters are growing up here in America. "We're just like everybody else." And everybody needs to remember that during the course of this debate.

As we move forward with these challenges, we all have responsibilities, we all have hard work ahead of us on this issue. We can't paper over problems, and we're not going to solve this if we're always just trying to be politically correct. But we do have to remember that 11-year-old girl. That's our hope. That's our future. That's how we discredit violent ideologies, by making sure her voice is lifted up; making sure she's nurtured; making sure that she's supported — and then, recognizing there are little girls and boys like that all around the world, and us helping to address economic and political grievances that can be exploited by extremists, and empowering local communities, and us staying true to our values as a diverse and tolerant society even when we're threatened — especially when we're threatened.

There will be a military component to this. There are savage cruelties going on out there that have to be stopped. ISIL is killing Muslims at a rate that is many multiples the rate that they're killing non-Muslims. Everybody has a stake in stopping them, and there will be an element of us just stopping them in their tracks with force. But to eliminate the soil out of which they grew, to make sure that we are giving a brighter future to everyone and a lasting sense of security, then we're going to have to make it clear to all of our children — including that little girl in 5th grade — that you have a place. You have a place here in America. You have a place in those countries where you live. You have a future.

Ultimately, those are the antidotes to violent extremism. And that's work that we're going to have to do together. It will take time. This is a generational challenge. But after 238 years, it should be obvious — America has overcome much bigger challenges, and we'll overcome the ones that we face today. We will stay united and committed to the ideals that have shaped us for more than two centuries, including the opportunity and justice and dignity of every single human being.

Thank you very much, everybody. ■

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Environmental Protection

Perspectives from the Quran and the Sunnah

By Prof. Henry Francis B. Espiritu

[Professor Espiritu is Associate Professor-VI of Philosophy and Asian Studies at the University of the Philippines (UP), Cebu City, and is a candidate in PhD Philosophy at the Ateneo de Manila University. His research interests include Islamic studies, Islamic feminist discourses, Islamic philosophy, Sufism and Public theology, and he is a fervent student of the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. In this article Prof. Espiritu addresses the topic of environmental protection from an Islamic perspective. In so doing, he provides valuable insight into key concepts of Islamic theology, including the primary attributes of God, the status of man among all creation, and the distinctive responsibility of man as vicegerent of God on earth. The information presented herein presents a convincing argument in favor of ecological sustainability being a sacred duty prescribed for Muslims in the original and authentic sources of Islam.]

One of the ninety-nine Names of Allah is “*Al-Quddus*”. This particular attribute of Almighty Allah has the following meanings: the Holy One, the Pure One, and the Immaculate One. This Divine Name of Allah as “*Al-Quddus*” is manifested in ecology by the environment’s capacity to purify itself naturally. For instance, the bodies of animals that die upon the earth and the putrefying remains of vegetation are subjected to chemical transformation; and in time, they are naturally deposited into the depths of the earth thereby preserving the purity of the earth’s surface. Likewise, rains regularly drench the earth, the sun lights upon the earth, and the wind continually sweeps all impurities on the earth’s surface. In like manner, a true Muslim must endeavor to take lessons and benefit from Allah’s Divine Name of “*Al-Quddus*” by seeing to it that his life and his environment are both pure and clean. Muslims can only maintain the pristine purity of the environment if they make it their spiritual duty to actively protect the environment from all types of manmade ecological destruction.

Islam teaches that humans are stewards of Allah’s creation. Declares the Holy Qur’an: “He brought you forth from the earth and made you dwell in it” (*Hud*:61). On the basis of the Islamic concept of *khilafah* (stewardship), humans are tasked by Almighty Allah to be protectors of their environment. The Holy Qur’an further exhorts Muslims to protect the ecology and everything that comprise it by these profound words: “The seven heavens and the earth, and those in them declare His glory. And there is not a single thing but glorifies

Him with His praise” (*Bani Isra’il*:44). Since the whole universe is the outward expression of Allah’s greatness, no Muslim should cause destruction to the environment nor engage in activities that destroy ecological balance and sustainability. Islam invites all human beings in general and Muslims in particular to be always on guard and mindful of ecology’s welfare, by seeking to protect the environment from all harms, destruction, and impurities.

Allah has generously allowed humans to benefit from the creatures and fruits of the earth for as long as they are lawful and clean (*halalan wa tayyiban*). As humans benefit from Allah’s creatures, they have a spiritual duty to take care of their environment and an ethical obligation not to offset nature’s equilibrium and to ensure that future inhabitants of the earth will continue to have access to these bounties of Allah. In many passages of the Holy Qur’an, Allah warns us that wastage of natural resources is a grave sin, and destroying the balance of the earth through wanton and indiscriminate use by greedy exploiters deserves punishment in the Hereafter (See: *Araf*:31 and *Bani Isra’il*:26-27).

Almighty Allah, the Eternal Lawgiver of the cosmos has provided us with sound environmental principles as well as spiritual laws governing ecological spirituality so that we, His servants, will be able to live our lives upon this earth as His trustees and vicegerents in caring for and protecting His creation. According to the Holy Qur’an, the earth, and in truth, the whole universe were created by Allah in the most beautiful and perfect manner, since Almighty Allah made the cosmos and everything in it, humans included, in perfect and beautiful balance (*Tin*:4). Humans were tasked by Allah the duty of protecting the environment’s well-being since it is the human beings who are the best of creatures and are gifted by Allah with rational discernment and freewill to carry-out His command in protecting the earth and the whole of nature. However, there are many times when humans show their ungratefulness and denial of the covenant which they made with their Lord that they started to behave despicably, as if they are “the lowest of the low” by beginning to pollute their environment and by greedily exploiting natural resources simply to satisfy their lust, selfishness, vanity and caprice (*Tin*:5). In the words of the Holy Qur’an: “Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of that which men’s hands have wrought, that He [Allah] may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return [back to Him]” (*Rum*:41). No wonder, that in our present milieu, many calamities emanating from the environment befall humankind. These environmental catastrophes are reminders for us to repent from our irresponsible ways and unsustainable manner of treating our ecology, and to go back once

again to Allah's instructions and guidance in the manner of caring for our environment and natural resources.

Time and again, the Holy Qur'an reminded all the peoples of the world, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to take seriously this divine mandate of *khalifat-ul-ardh* (stewardship of the earth) by seeing to it that no wastage and exploitation of the earth's resources are being done by fellow humans. All of us should be mindful that the satisfaction of our basic necessities must not be done in a wasteful or prodigal manner at the expense of the future generations following us (See *Araf:31*). We, Muslims who are the direct inheritors of the commands of Allah as found in the Holy Qur'an, should all the more follow His directives in caring for and protecting our environment. We must fully adhere to the Qur'anic commands against wasting our natural resources and against exploiting and polluting our ecology. By following the examples of environmental protection undertaken by the Holy Prophet Muhammad and His Blessed Companions, we will be able to preserve our ecological resources for the years to come.

Prophet Muhammad was a great exemplar to all Muslims in respect to environmental management and ecological protection. The Holy Prophet participated in the city planning of Medina as an urban area with environmental sustainability in mind. He forbade the cutting down of trees, killing of wild animals and hunting birds not just in Medina, but also in the city of Mecca and the oasis surrounding Taif. The Prophet declared that the distance of 1,000 square meter circumferential radius around Mecca must be designated as conservation areas. Within these areas, he strongly prohibited the cutting down of trees, hunting and killing of insects and birds, and even breaking of palm branches (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, pp.113). He likewise forbade Muslims from wasting water while performing their ablution, even if they are living near streams or riverbanks. These prohibitions show that indeed, the Holy Prophet is very concerned with environmental protection and that he wanted all Muslims to do likewise (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, pp.43).

The Prophet saw that Medina was a verdant oasis where date palms grew in abundance and many cattle fed upon its fertile grasslands. In Medina, he commanded that for every palm tree that is cut, another must be planted in its stead. The people of Taif sent a delegation to establish alliance with Medina; and as one of the framers of the terms of agreement, the Holy Prophet added provisions declaring that the valleys of Taif must be environmentally conserved, so that destroying farms and hunting wild animals in the region were forbidden and that all tribal elders of Taif must strictly implement this provision. Also, upon his peaceful conquest of the city, the Prophet enjoined the Muslims of Mecca to

plant trees and date palms along the grassland peripheries and near wells so that underground aquifers will not dry-up and grasses will not be scorched by the desert heat. Again, the Prophet prohibited the cutting of old giant trees which were used by wayfarers and beasts of burden for resting and shelter (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, pp.83-87).

The Prophet gave clear and strict orders regarding environmental sanitation. He was very concerned about the health of cattle, camels and horses as well as the cleanliness of their grazing sites. He also gave orders that mosques should be cleansed and perfumed regularly with aromatic herbs and wood resins, that the front-yards and backyards of a Muslim's house should be thoroughly cleaned, and that no one should urinate nor defecate near bodies of waters nor human waste be thrown near sources of running water (*Tirmidhi*, pp.64-66 and *Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Wudhu*, pp.103). Similarly, this statement from the Holy Prophet illustrates well the principle of sustainable land use: "If someone revives an infertile piece of land by planting trees and by farming on it, such person will be rewarded by God for this righteous deed. If any living creature benefits from this land or from its produce, it will be recorded as charity for the one who cultivates it" (*Bayhaqi*, pp.20-22). On a personal level, the Holy Prophet himself was a practical model to others in terms of environmental sanitation. He, alongside his beloved wife Hazrat Aishah Siddiqah, would make their surroundings clean by sweeping the floor of their own house, courtyard, and backyard even as far as the adjacent lot next to the Prophet's mosque (*Sunan Tirmidhi*, pp.11-13).

The *Sahabah-ul-Kiram* (Holy Companions of the Prophet), who themselves were ideal examples of holiness, followed the Prophet's guidance with respect to ecological protection. For instance, the first Caliph of Islam, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq warned the armies who were defending the borders of Islam: "Do not burn farmlands, nor uproot and cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not slaughter cattle or sheep that are not yours". It is narrated that one fine day, Hazrat Abu Bakr was planting trees by the roadside, a Bedouin passerby thought that for the Caliph to plant trees with his own hands is beyond the dignity of his office, he therefore frankly told Hazrat Abu Bakr his opinion. Upon hearing it, Hazrat Abu Bakr replied: "The Prophet said that if a person plants a tree, the fruits eaten by any humans or any of God's creatures, or even those eaten by travelers will be recorded as charity for the one who planted it. This is why I am planting trees by the roadside." (*The Virtues of Sayyidina Abubakr as-Siddiq*, pp.78).

For my final point, allow me once again to quote from the Holy Qur'an: "Oh children of Adam, attend to

your adornment at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not prodigal; surely He loves not the prodigals” (*Araf:31*). We Muslims must endeavor to comply with this directive of ecological sustainability given by Almighty Allah to us and strive to teach this to our fellow believers. In order to be true disciples of our Prophet Muhammad and to be truly obedient worshippers of Almighty Allah, we Muslims must therefore strive to live in accordance with nature, cease from wasting resources from our environment, endeavor to protect our environment from man-made degradation, and pro-actively promote ecological sustainability measures. Furthermore, we should always be aware of our responsibility to manifest God’s divine character of “*Al-Quddus*” (The Most Pure) in our lives, by our constancy in guarding our surrounding, making it pure and clean always. Above all, we must constantly remember that Allah has entrusted us to be His stewards in taking care of the earth and all of His creatures. By the grace of Allah, we will be faithful trustees of the environment which Allah has entrusted upon us to care for, cherish and protect. In this way, we will, God willing, be able to bequeath a cleaner, more habitable and more livable world for the incoming future generations. Amen. ■

Lessons on Maintenance of Temporal and Spiritual Orders

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

[This article is a transcript of a *Jumma Khutba* (Friday Prayer Sermon) delivered by Maulana Muhammad Ali on April 16, 1948, translated from Urdu into English by Dr. Mohammad Ahmad. In this sermon, Maulana Muhammad Ali explains that Islam requires Muslims to obey those in authority over them (in terms of temporal governance), whether the administrators be Muslim or non-Muslim. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, he goes on to explain, strength of the Muslim community depends on unity and respect for its leaders. Applying these principles to the Lahore Ahmadiyya organization, Maulana Muhammad Ali movingly reminds its members of the power of forgiveness and humility. It is by overlooking others’ minor faults and embracing their good works, he explains, that this community will progress, and it is the cultivation of such an environment wherein lies its strength.]

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

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

And let not possessors of grace and abundance among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah’s way; and pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (24:22)

In the last Friday sermon, I had mentioned that Allah the Most High and His messenger have also given great importance to the temporal authority and order in society, and rebellion against it has been prohibited. Our Holy Prophet stressed that even if those in authority take away what is your due and are guilty of inequity do not rebel against them. The words of one *hadith* go so far as to state:

When you are involved in *Jihad* against the enemy, you should not be thinking about the character of your *Imam* (leader). It is incumbent upon you to strive along with all those in authority whether your *Imam* is most pious (*birun*) or most sinful (*fujurun*). Even if he is guilty of a major sin do not part with him during the striving.

The Arabic word *bir* is used first in this *hadith* to indicate that the Imam should preferably be the one who is the best in piety. If, however, his election was faulty, misplaced, beyond your control or his character deteriorated afterwards (the Arabic word *fujur*, indicating the breadth in wrongdoing), you are still to obey his authority and continue to support him in the striving.

Language critical of the righteous Caliphs

It is true that we find some incidents narrated in the *hadith* where the companions of the Holy Prophet were critical of the *Imam*. There is also one *hadith* that states: “Speaking the word of truth before the iniquitous ruler is the greatest *Jihad*.”¹ The ruler is called iniquitous because he will not accept the truthful word but will become angry upon hearing it. Thus speaking the truth under these circumstances is considered a *Jihad*. There are also examples in the *hadith* where people used strong language to criticize the righteous Caliphs. These were people who had great strength of faith. When Hazrat Umar delivered a sermon in support of curtailing the amount of dowry given to the women, a woman stood up and said, “O son of Khattab, Allah is giving us while you are taking away from us.” With this reprimand she quoted the Quranic verse:

And if you wish to have (one) wife in the place of another and you have given one of them a heap of gold, take nothing from it. (4:20)

There is also another well-known incident regarding Hazrat Umar when he commanded that the *Amir* should

be obeyed. A man stood up and responded with very harsh criticism of his order. Pointing towards the cloak the Caliph was wearing, he said: “We will not obey your command until you explain the source of the cloth from which your cloak has been made. The material that you received as war bounty would not have been sufficient for this purpose.” In response Hazrat Umar did not say that you are very rude to accuse me of dishonesty. Instead he asked his son to respond to the query. Hazrat Umar’s son stood up and explained that he had given his share of the cloth to his father from which the garment was made.

Exception in the case of disobedience to God and His messenger

This incident seems to indicate that those in authority can be criticized and disobeyed even for minor infractions. Remember, however, that what was said by the Holy Prophet cannot be compared to individual behavior. Whatever the Holy prophet stated is indeed correct and rests on a firm foundation. He said obey them unless they command disobedience to God and His messenger. Even if you suffer personal loss or those in authority are corrupt. There is only one exception that is as long as you are not prohibited from obeying God and His messenger. Today the Promised Messiah has also put great stress upon this. Those in authority should be obeyed unless their command is contrary to the word of God and His messenger.

Obedience when those in authority are Non-Muslim

Today the forty or fifty million Muslims remaining in India have no choice but to obey and submit to the non-Muslim authority. The fifty or sixty million Muslims in China also have no recourse but to submit to the non-Muslim authority. Now some sovereign Muslim states are coming into existence. Muslims have, however, lived for centuries under the rule of non-Muslim authorities. This would not have been possible without obedience to those in authority. The only exception being that if the ruler commands disobedience to Allah and His messenger, he is not to be obeyed.

The Commandment of the Holy Quran regarding spiritual matters

I have stated that a temporal system of governance can function only if its authority is accepted. There is a spiritual domain also, though. This is not under the authority of a king or a government. A system is, however, needed for this also to function and it is essential to follow it. For this purpose one has to make sacrifice. The spiritual order in fact demands greater sacrifice than the temporal. In my previous sermon I had discussed in

detail regarding the temporal order. I had commented on this verse of the Holy Quran:

And dispute not one with another, lest you get weak-hearted and your power depart. (8:46)

The command regarding the spiritual order is even more exalted.

Slander against Hazrat Aisha and the establishment of her innocence

In order to draw your attention to it I have recited these words of the Holy Quran from the chapter *Al-Noor*:

... and pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? (24:22)

When were these words revealed? This revelation came after an incident occurred amongst the Muslims of such gravity that the honorable wife of the Holy Prophet, Hazrat Aisha, was the subject of slander. As is customary such gossip spreads from one person to another and some Muslims also associated themselves with the slanderers. The word of God ultimately established her innocence with the revelation of these words:

Why did they not bring four witnesses of it? So, as they have not brought witnesses, they are liars in the sight of Allah. (24:13)

Connected with this incident was a companion of the Holy Prophet by the name of Mistah who had taken part in spreading the false reports against Hazrat Aisha. He was a relative of Hazrat Abu Bakr and was indigent. Hazrat Abu Bakr had been giving him a stipend for his maintenance. After this incident Hazrat Abu Bakr suspended his financial assistance. It was at this juncture that the Divine revelation came:

And let not possessors of grace and abundance among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah’s way; and pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (24:22).

The command was for a full pardon as if nothing had happened and the argument given for it was: “Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?”

Forgive the faults of others, without them asking for forgiveness

These are the words of the Holy Quran that impress and bring about a change of the heart. Such a grievous sin, the slandering of a chaste woman! A woman no other than the noble wife of the Holy Prophet and the daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr. The person who participated in this slander has nevertheless been of some service to the

cause of Islam. He was from amongst the emigrants and had participated in the battle of *Badr*. Hence the Divine command to forgive him. If you love that Allah forgive you then you should learn to forgive His servants. One who is himself seeking Allah's forgiveness, his desire to be forgiven is false if he does not forgive the servants of Allah. This also shows that Allah the Most High desires to imbue us in His coloring. This is the lesson of the command, "create Allah's morals within your selves." Allah is Forgiving but His forgiveness is for those who forgive His servants. The Holy Quran reminds us of two of God's attributes, those of: "Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance". (40:3)

Allah the Most High is The Forgiver of sins even without repentance and also accepts repentance when somebody repents. Just as Allah forgives without a person asking for His forgiveness you should also be at the spiritual level where you should forgive people without their seeking your forgiveness. He, who pardons when pardon is sought, is not doing anything extraordinary. True greatness lies in forgiving even when forgiveness is not asked for.

Taking the moral high ground

The Imam of the age has also laid stress upon your choosing to be called a liar even if you are telling the truth. This does not mean that you randomly accept being called a liar. What this means is that although you are truthful in a matter, do not expect the accusers to come and ask for your forgiveness. Take advantage of the power of forgiveness within you and forgive spontaneously. Some people have the tendency to become upset over small differences and cut off relations until their forgiveness is sought. This is not the right way and the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet forbid it. The Promised Messiah prohibits it.

It is only through forgiveness of your brethren that your organization can survive. Remember well that this is a spiritual order. If you want to build and strengthen your organization you need to follow the principle of forgiving your brethren and embracing them unconditionally. Let not the thought enter your heart, why should you be the one showing humility? Discord worsens because "A" always considers "B" at fault and vice versa. In order to sustain order in your organization, even if you think that your position is based upon righteousness, forgive those who are unrighteous. Your benefit lies in this. This is what will result in the resolution of your internal conflicts and the maintenance of order and harmony within your organization.

Be strong in opposing the enemy and show humility to your brethren

Remember well that the Imam of the age has laid the foundations of a temporal and a spiritual order amongst us. Both of these systems can only be sustained if we manifest complete obedience and submission and do not exaggerate the shortcomings of our brethren. You are endowed with two strengths, the strength to fight back and the power to be humble. Use your strength to fight back against the disbelievers and remain firm in your effort. Use the power of humility amongst your selves. Be humble before your friends, even if your friend is at fault. This is the meaning of the verse:

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the disbelievers, compassionate among themselves. (48:29)

If the power to oppose is used against your friends, it will lose strength and you will not be able to stand up to the disbelievers, therefore it is incumbent that you preserve your strength.

Remind yourselves of the goodness of those who work and pardon their shortcomings

This is a very useful principle – work together within the system of your organization and to pardon each other's shortcomings and mistakes. I am reminding you of this because your founder Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has entrusted you with a great and noble task. Do not think of what you could accomplish in Pakistan? Pakistan is a mere skeleton you have to reform its spirit and character to bring it to life. This is the purpose with which Allah the Most High sent Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, to inculcate faith in the hearts and minds of people. It was their faith in Allah that enabled the Muslims to become capable of running a huge terrestrial empire. There is no doubt that major cracks have appeared in the moral fabric of this nation. It is also possible that the closer we look, the more apparent these cracks become. Only Allah has the true estimate of this. It is your duty to overlook some one's faults and focus upon their redeeming qualities. Take the case of Mistah. There is no doubt that he was guilty of a grave calumny but God gave preference to his one good deed. He was amongst the companions of the Holy Prophet during the battle of *Badr*. It is my observation that we ourselves commit grave errors and overlook them. We are, however, swift in our verbal tirades against people who have accomplished magnificent works. This is not appropriate. When judging others always put more weight to their good deeds and overlook their weaknesses.

The overall strength of our organization

God knows better that when I estimate the overall

strength of this organization, I find many exemplary qualities in it. When these people pass away one would only wonder if there would be others like them. Look at Khwaja Kamal ud Din. We had differences with him. During one annual convention it almost appeared that the organization would be there no longer. The work that he did is highly exalted. Where can we find people like him today? Remember well that all those who work for this organization are human beings and not angels. There is no doubt that they have shortcomings but you should look at their work and ignore their weaknesses. You should appreciate the great job they accomplished and overlook their faults: “Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?” Strengthen this principle and be aware of your own shortcomings. Many a great prophets cried out in their prayers, “I have been unjust to my soul!” Everyone is answerable to God and we all seek His protection. So if someone wants to be forgiven, he should overlook the faults of his brethren, without it one cannot expect God’s forgiveness. I have said that this organization has amongst its members people whose good qualities exceed far beyond their shortcomings. This organization as a whole appears to distinguish itself from the rest. Their character and morals are exalted and their deeds are exemplary. If I start counting, the list could be a long one. There is no doubt that there have been many among this organization who were of highly exalted spiritual status.

The Appreciation of the works of this organization by others

Some of you may have attended the annual awards ceremony of the Muslim High School yesterday. You might have observed how impressed the higher authorities were by the works of your organization. When we were constructing the building for this high school we requested the government for assistance. Those who were assigned this task, one of their senior officers questioned whether we would be able to raise half of the funds for the construction of this building. One of his subordinates advised him that this was a very active organization and they will be able to accomplish everything. His words were proven true and the school building was completed within three months. So you must have observed yesterday the good opinion higher authorities of this government have about your organization. They know well, what kind of people are needed to be of service to Pakistan. That is why the chief guest attending this ceremony was of the opinion that this organization should establish a college. The graduates of this college will be among the best to serve Pakistan. What is after all the distinguishing feature of this school? It is a school of the same organization that is subject to so much name calling by the people. Why is

it that they send their children to get educated over here? It is because they realize that they get the best education over here.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s breadth of vision, strength of knowledge and action

Remember well that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad accomplished a stupendous task by forming this organization. I wish the word had not been used by a part of this organization that turned off a lot of people otherwise many would have joined its ranks.² We observed many great qualities of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. His visionary insight was such that few since the time of the Holy Prophet have been gifted with it. Many of the conditions of this age foretold by the Holy Prophet were also revealed to him. His strength of knowledge was such that whosoever got close to him became a scholar and a strong protagonist of learning. And he had another gift that was his strength of action. He accomplished whatever task he undertook. People claim that we have destroyed this organization and struck the last nail in its coffin. It will stay alive as long as its knowledge base given by Hazrat Mirza Sahib remains alive and the prophecies that he made about this age are still being fulfilled. Search the pages of history and you will not find such breadth of vision or strength of knowledge and action. You will not find these three elements together! Do not assume that the world does not recognize this. The world acknowledges but we have not appreciated Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Just as we have not truly recognized the Holy Prophet Muhammad. You should keep up your effort, the harder you work, the more you will reap the fruits of your labor. You are seeing how much hold that evil has over the world and how rampant bribery and corruption is. Try your best to reform the character and create good morality in the world. Spend your full effort in this quest and then observe the good effects of your labor. ■

Footnotes:

1. Tariq bin Nasai, *Al-Baiati*, Vol. 2, page 186.
2. Reference is being made here to the claim by the Qadian section of the Movement (which led to the split in the Movement and the creation of the Lahore section) that Hazrat Mirza Sahib was a “prophet” as the word is understood in Islamic terminology.

Stages of Spiritual Conditions of Man

Excerpt from “Teachings of Islam”

By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

[This article contains excerpts from the Preliminary Notes of the book “Teachings of Islam” by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. This highly acclaimed book actually comprises a lecture presented at an interfaith conference held in Lahore in December 1896. The lecture discusses five subjects that presenters were to discuss from their respective faith traditions: 1) the physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man, 2) the state of man in the life after death, 3) the real object of the existence of man and the means of its attainment, 4) the results produced by actions in the present life and the life to come, and 5) the sources of Divine knowledge. In these excerpts from the Preliminary Notes, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad introduces the first subject by describing the stages of spiritual conditions of man as revealed in the Holy Quran. The book “Teachings of Islam” is one of the many Lahore Ahmadiyya publications for which the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society was able to receive certification of approval/authentication by Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy; this permits the distribution of this book in many Arab countries and facilitates furthering the goal of countering extremist ideologies by emphasizing the spiritual foundations of the faith.]

Some preliminary notes have been made at the outset which may appear as not bearing upon the questions. However, as they are necessary for the full comprehension of the subject, I have been obliged to resort to them.

The first question relates to the physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man. The Quran observes this division by fixing three respective sources for this threefold condition of man, that is, three springs out of which these three conditions flow. The first of these in which the physical conditions of man take their birth is termed the *nafs al-ammara*, which signifies the “uncontrollable spirit”, or the “spirit prone to evil”. Thus, the word of God says:

“Surely (man’s) self is wont to command (him to do) evil” (12:53)

It is characteristic of the *nafs al-ammara* that it inclines man to evil, tends to lead him into iniquitous and immoral paths, and stands in the way of his attainment of perfection and moral excellence. Man’s nature is prone to evil and transgression at a certain stage in his development, and so long as he is devoid of high moral

qualities, this evil nature is predominant in him. He is subject to this state so long as he does not walk in the light of true wisdom and knowledge, but acts in obedience to the natural inclinations of eating, drinking, sleeping, becoming angry or excited, just like the lower animals.

As soon, however, as he frees himself from the control of animal passions and, guided by reason and knowledge, he holds the reins of his natural desires and governs them instead of being governed by them – when a transformation is worked in his soul from grossness to virtue – he then passes out of the physical state and is a moral being in the strict sense of the word.

The source of the moral conditions of man is called, in the terminology of the Quran, the *nafs al-lawwama*, or the “self-accusing soul”:

“Nay, I swear by the self-accusing spirit!” (75:2)

This is the spring from which flows a highly moral life and, on reaching this stage, man is freed from bestiality. The swearing by the self-accusing soul indicates the regard in which it is held. For, the change from the disobedient to the self-accusing soul being a sure sign of its improvement and purification makes it deserving of approbation in the sight of the Almighty.

Lawwama literally means “one who reproves severely”, and the *nafs al-lawwama* (self-accusing soul) has been so called because it upbraids a man for the doing of evil deeds and strongly hates unbridled passions and bestial appetites. Its tendency, on the other hand, is to generate noble qualities and a virtuous disposition, to transform life so as to bring the whole course and conduct of it to moderation, and to restrain the carnal passions and sensual desires so as to keep them within due bound.

Although, as stated above, the “self-accusing soul” upbraids itself for its faults and frailties, yet it is not the master of its passions, nor is it powerful enough to practice virtue exclusively. The weakness of the flesh has the upper hand sometimes, and then it stumbles and falls down. Its weakness then resembles that of a child who does not wish to fall but whose legs are sometimes unable to support him. It does not, however, persist in its fault, every failure bringing a fresh reproach. At this stage, the soul is anxious to attain moral excellence and revolts against disobedience which is the characteristic of the first, or the animal stage, but does, notwithstanding its yearning for virtue, sometimes deviate from the line of duty.

The third or the last stage in the onward movement of the soul is reached on attaining to the source of all spiritual qualities. The soul at this stage is, in the words

of the Quran, the *nafs al-mutma'inna*, or the “soul at rest”:

“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)

The soul is now freed from all weaknesses and frailties and is braced with spiritual strength. It is perfectly united with God and cannot live without Him. As water flows with great force down a slope and, on account of its great mass and the total absence of all obstacles, dashes down with irresistible force, so does the soul at this stage, casting off all trammels, flow unrestrained towards its Maker.

It is further clear from the words “O soul that art at rest with thy Lord, return to Him” that it is in this life, and not after death, that this great transformation is worked and that it is in this world, and not elsewhere, that access to paradise is granted to it. Again, as the soul has been commanded to return to its Master, it is clear that such a soul finds its support only in its Supporter. The love of God is its food, and it drinks deep at this fountain of life and is, therefore, delivered from death. The same idea is expressed elsewhere:

“He is indeed successful who causes it to grow, and he indeed fails who buries it” (91:9–10)

In short, these three states of the soul may be called the physical, the moral and the spiritual states of man. Of these, the physical state – that in which man seeks to satisfy the passions of the flesh — is most dangerous when the passions run riot, for it is then that they deal a death blow to the moral and spiritual qualities of man, and hence this state has been termed the “disobedient spirit” in the Holy Word of God.

...

Attention must also be called to another very important point. The Quran does not inculcate doctrines which are contrary to reason and which, therefore, a person can follow only against his better judgement. The whole purpose of the Book, and the pith of its teachings, is the threefold reformation of man, and all other directions are simply means to this end. As is seen in the treatment of bodily diseases, the physician recognizes the necessity of dissecting or performing surgical operations or applying ointments to wounds, etc. The Quran also employs these means on fit occasions to serve the purpose when necessary and advisable. All its moral teachings, precepts and doctrines have an all-pervading purpose beneath them which consists in transforming men from the physical state, which is imbued with a tinge of savageness, into the moral state, and from the moral into the spiritual state, which is boundless.

It has already been observed that physical conditions of man do not differ in quality from his moral state. The fact is that physical conditions, when subjected to regulation and used within proper limits according to the directions of reason and good judgement, are transformed into moral conditions. Before a man is guided in his actions by the dictates of reason and conscience, his acts do not at all fall under the heading of moral conditions however much they may resemble them; they are but natural and instinctive impulses. For instance, the affection and docility which a dog or a cat or any other domestic animal shows towards its master cannot be designated as courtesy or refined manners, nor can the fierceness of a lion or a wolf be classed as rudeness or misbehaviour. What we call good or ill manners or morals are the results of the exercise of reason that comes into play on appropriate occasions. A man who is not guided by the dictates of reason in his actions may be compared either to a child whose reasoning powers are not yet matured or to an insane who has lost all reason. The only line of distinction that can be drawn between the movements of a mad man or a child, on the one hand, and the actions of a man of reason, on the other, is that the former are only natural impulses while the latter are the result of an exercise of the reasoning faculty. For instance, the child will, as soon as it is born, seek the breast of its mother, while a chicken will, after it is hatched, begin to pick up food with its beak. Similarly, a leech inherits instinctively the habits of that worm and a serpent or a lion the habits of its own kind.

The child begins, soon after its birth, to show human peculiarities. As it advances in years, these become more conspicuous. It cries louder and its smile develops into laughter. It expresses its pleasure or displeasure in its movements, but these movements are still more the result of impulse than of an exercise of the intellect. Such is also man in his savage state when his intellectual faculties are yet in an embryonic state. He is subject to the impulses of his nature and whatever he does, he does in obedience to them. His deeds are not the result of due deliberation. The impulses of his nature, subject to external conditions, take an outward shape.

It should not, however, be assumed that all these movements are necessarily improper; some of them may resemble the deliberate acts of a reasonable person, but it cannot be denied that they are not preceded by any exercise of the reasoning faculties or by any deep consideration of their propriety or impropriety. Even if we assume the presence of a slight degree of reasoning in some acts of the savage, we cannot class them generally as good or bad actions, for the more powerful factor in bringing them about is not the reasoning faculty but an instinctive impulse or a yielding to desire and passion.

In short, we cannot class as “moral” the acts of a person whose life is akin to that of the savage and who is subject to his natural impulses like the lower animals, infants or madmen. The first stage of a moral being — of one whose acts can be classed as good or bad morally — is that in which he is capable of distinguishing between good and bad actions, or between two good or two bad actions of different degrees. This takes place when the reasoning faculty is sufficiently well developed to form general ideas and perceive the remoter consequences of actions. It is then that man regrets the omission of a good deed or feels repentance or remorse after doing a bad one. This is the second stage of man’s life which the Quran calls *nafs al-lawwama*, “self-accusing soul” or, to take a more familiar term, “conscience”.

But it should be remembered that, for the savage to attain to this stage of the self-accusing soul, mere admonition is not sufficient. He must have so much knowledge of God that he should not look upon his own creation by the Almighty as an insignificant or meaningless act. This soul-ennobling perception of the Lord can alone lead to actions truly moral, and it is for this reason that the Quran inculcates a true knowledge of God along with its admonitions and warnings and assures man that every good or bad action bears fruit which may cause spiritual bliss or torture in this life, while a clearer and more palpable reward or punishment awaits him in the next.

In other words, when man reaches this stage of advancement, called the “self-accusing soul”, his reason, knowledge and conscience reach the stage of development in which a feeling of remorse overtakes him in the doing of unrighteous deeds and he becomes eager to perform good ones. This is the stage in which the actions of man can be said to be moral.

It seems necessary here to define the word *khulq* (moral). There are two words alike in form except in the vowel point: *khalq* which signifies “external creation” and *khulq*, meaning “internal creation” (or inborn quality). As the perfection of internal creation is achieved through moral excellence and not through the innate passions of man, the former is the proper significance of the word *khalq*, and not the latter. We may take this opportunity of exposing the error of the popular view that forbearance, humility, meekness and the like are the only qualities which constitute good morals. The fact is that, corresponding to every external action, there is an

inner quality which, when exercised in its proper place, is termed “moral”. For instance, in weeping the outward action is that of the eye from which tears flow, but corresponding to this there is in the heart a quality of melting which may be called “tenderness” which, when properly applied by a moral being, is one of the excellent morals.

Again, a man uses his hands in defending himself against, or opposing, an enemy, but corresponding to this power of the external organ, there is in the heart a quality which we call “courage” and this, when properly used, is also one of the high morals, the possession of which is necessary for man to attain perfection. Similarly, a man sometimes saves an oppressed person from the oppressor with his hands or feels impelled to give something to the helpless or the hungry or serve mankind in some other way. All such actions proceed from the inner quality, which is called “commiseration”. Or, sometimes, a person inflicts punishment upon a wrongdoer and the source of this outward action is the moral quality termed “vengeance”. Or, again, there are occasions upon which a man who receives an injury, refrains from injuring in return, and he passes over the action of the aggressor. This refraining results from the moral quality, called “forbearance”. In like manner, man sometimes employs his hands or feet or brain or wealth in doing good to his fellow-beings. In such cases the corresponding moral quality is “charity”. The truth is, as already stated, that all these qualities are only ranked as moral qualities when they are used on the proper occasion. Thus, in the Holy Book, addressing Prophet Muhammad, the Supreme Being says:

“And surely thou hast sublime morals” (68:4)

In short, all the qualities with which man’s mind is naturally endowed, such as politeness, modesty, honesty, generosity, jealousy, perseverance, chastity, devoutness, moderation, compassion, sympathy, courage, charity, forgiveness, patience, kindness, truth, fidelity, etc., when they are called into action within their proper spheres and on proper occasions, fall under the definition of virtue. All these grow out of the natural inclinations and passions of man when the latter are controlled and regulated by reason. The desire for progress is an essential characteristic of man and is not shared by the lower animals. Hence it is that true religion, good company and virtuous injunctions transform man’s natural inclinations into morals. ■

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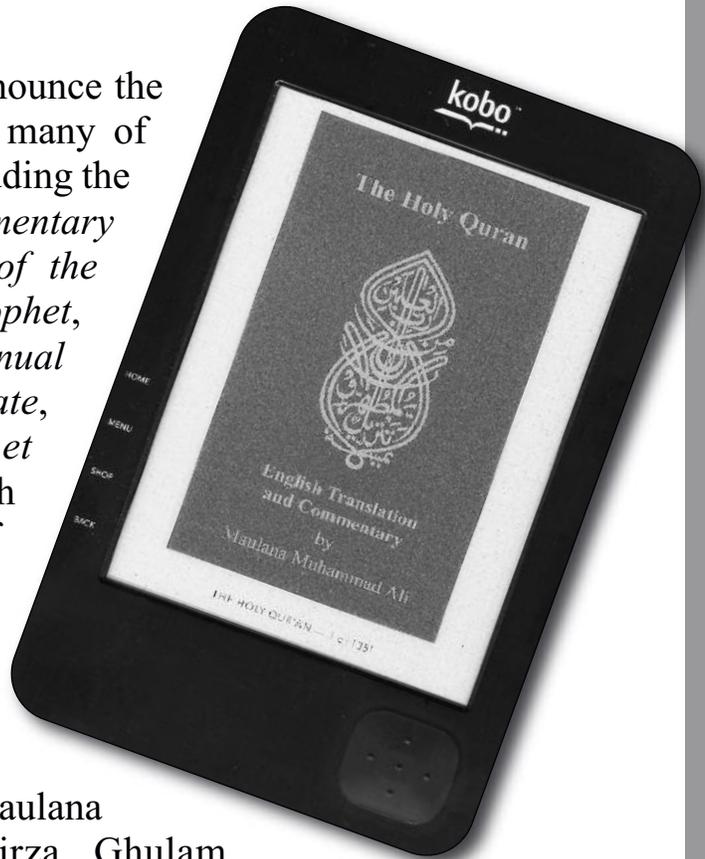
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