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Geok Depe Mosque in Turkmenistan
(Image from Dreamstime photo library)

There is no compulsion in religion
(The Holy Qur'an; Ch.2:V.256)

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EDITORIAL

Fareed Ahmad – Newquay, UK

In this issue of *The Review of Religions* our lead article is the address given by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim community in which he warns of the dangers of becoming obsessed with the material world. He presents a timely reminder that a prophet was sent to the world in this age when materialism was held higher than God. He cautions us to note that this is nothing short of *Shirk* (associating partners with God) as noted by the prophet of this time. He quotes the Promised Messiah^(as) who wrote,

In this age of enlightenment and wisdom, no one really gets involved in outright shirk, or idolatry as such. However, in this age of materialistic advancement, the worship of material means has increased considerably.

Hidden idolatry is that one respects something as one respects Allah or loves

something when one should respect Allah, or one is afraid about it or depends on it totally

Islam tells us that it is only God Who is able to help, guide and protect man and it is only God Who has promised that He will help His servants. Thus, worship is not a hollow meaningless exercise but an act that exists solely for man's benefit. This issue of worship is of such fundamental importance in Islam that it is actually the subject of the Quran's commandment, in which God says,

O ye men worship your Lord Who has created you and those who were before you that you may become righteous.
(Ch. 2: V.22)

This verse also reinforces the fact that worship exists for man's benefit and this can be further gauged from the use of the word *Rabb* in the above verse.

Rabb does not merely indicate God as the Master or Lord of all but it also has the wider meaning of Him being the Creator and Sustainer. Being a sustainer implies that He is a living God Who provides for His creation, and such provision is not restricted to mere survival but extends much further to encompass the complete development of man. God is thus as a Being ‘Who creates and then develops by degrees’¹ and enables man to perfect the latent powers within him².

Worship therefore is a system for our own development and benefit. It is also a reminder that rather than seeking help from that which has been created we should turn to the source of creation Himself and drink from that pure fountain that has given life and sustenance to everything around us.

References

1. The Holy Qur’an: Five Volume Commentary by Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad^(ra) Ch.2: V22, note 28.
2. *ibid.*

References to the Holy Qur’an item count ‘Bismillah...’ (In the Name of Allah...) as the first verse of each Chapter. In some non-standard texts, this is not counted and should the reader refer to such texts, the verse quoted in *The Review of Religions* will be found at one verse less than the number quoted.

In this journal, for the ease of non-Muslim readers, ‘(saw)’ or ‘saw’ after the words, ‘Holy Prophet’, or the name ‘Muhammad’, are used. They stand for ‘*Sallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*’ meaning ‘Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him’. Likewise, the letters ‘(as)’ or ‘as’ after the name of all other prophets is an abbreviation meaning ‘Peace be upon him’ derived from ‘*Alaihis salatu wassalam*’ which are words that a Muslim utters out of respect whenever he or she comes across that name. The abbreviation ‘ra’ or (ra) stands for ‘*Radhiallahu Ta’ala anhu*’ and is used for Companions of a Prophet, meaning Allah be pleased with him or her (when followed by the relevant Arabic pronoun). Finally, ‘ru’ or (ru) for *Rahemallahu Ta’ala* means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him.

In keeping with current universal practice, local transliterations are preferred to their anglicised versions, e.g. Makkah instead of Mecca, etc.

Notes & Comments

STOP PRESS!

As we go to press, the predictable response from certain ill-guided Muslims following the Papal address at the University of Regensburg on 12 September has dominated the media. Little was said about the injustice of the invasion of Lebanon, even less about the mistreatment of the so-called prisoners of war or about the irresponsible comments by the Vatican and how far they have thrown the tottering Christian-Muslim dialogue and inter-faith understanding.

The Pope quoted Professor Theodore Khoury (Muenster) on the part of the dialogue carried on around 1391 by the Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Paleologus and a Persian on the subject of Christianity and Islam and the truth of both and states, “Without descending to details, such as the treatment accorded to those who

have the ‘Book’ and the ‘infidels’, he turns to his interlocutor...in these words: ‘Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached. The emperor goes on to explain in detail the reasons why spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable. Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul. “God is not pleased by blood, and not acting reasonably (“syn logo”) is contrary to God’s nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats.’

These allegations are not new but have been recycled from the past.

There is not a single teaching of Islam that is evil or inhuman. Despite the best efforts by its opponents, there has not been found any shred of evidence to prove that Islam was spread by the sword. The entire world knows that these are untrue accusations that have been squarely dismissed. Why the Pope chose this particular passage is beyond belief. It seems that the Pope forgot the quote from the passage chosen by him to speak well and to reason properly. One can never reason with distorted lies from the past.

Had the Pope forgotten that at the time of this dialogue, the Spanish Inquisition was at its full swing? Was this dark blot on Christianity not evil and opposed to humanity? If he wanted to illustrate the point about violence not chiming with God's nature then why did he not use the Inquisition as a case in point since its historicity is beyond doubt?

Perhaps, we are being unkind and should not have gone back so

far but should have looked at the present. The followers of Jesus Christ^(as) have been commanded to turn the other cheek but we do not see this in the wars being fought by the 'Christian nations' in the Middle East and beyond. It is a sad fact that more blood has been shed by Christian nations than anyone else. Who threw the bomb on Hiroshima? How much blood was shed by the First and Second World Wars? These deeds were not committed by Muslims.

One hopes that Muslims will act responsibly and in accordance with the beautiful teachings of Islam rather than make a fool of themselves and give the opponents of Islam the glee to laugh at their response. True guidance is only available in true Islam and not the version pedalled by narrow-minded Muslim clerics.

Mansoor Ahmed Shah

ESSENCE OF ISLAM:

Purpose of Scriptures — Part 11

This series sets out, in the words of the Promised Messiah^(as), Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a summary of his exposition of four outstanding topics: ISLAM; ALLAH, THE EXALTED; THE HOLY PROPHET^(saw) and THE HOLY QUR'AN. The original compilation, in Urdu, from which these extracts have been translated into English, was collated with great care and diligence by Syed Daud Ahmad Sahib, Allah have mercy on him and reward him graciously for his great labour of love. Amin. The English rendering is by the late Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, may Allah be pleased with him, and is quoted from *The Essence of Islam*, Volume 1. All references throughout, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, are from the Holy Qur'an.

Purpose of Scriptures

We are a witness and testify before the whole world that we have found in the Holy Qur'an the reality that leads to God. We have heard the voice of God and have witnessed the signs of the mighty arm of Him Who has revealed the Qur'an. We believe that He is the True God and is the Master of the worlds. Our heart is filled with this certainty as the ocean is filled with water. We, therefore, invite everyone to this faith and to this light on the basis of enlightened perception. We have found the **true light** which dispels all darkness and which really renders the heart cold to all that is beside God. This

is the only way by following which a person emerges from the grip of passion and the darkness of the ego as a snake sloughs off its skin.

(Kitab-ul-Bariyyah, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 13, p.65)

It is an obvious fact that the great merit of anything lies in its fulfilling the purpose for which it has been made. For instance, if a bullock is purchased for ploughing land its merit will be judged by the degree to which it is able to discharge its function of ploughing. In the same way, it is obvious that the true purpose of a heavenly Book is that it should rescue its followers from every sin and the

sinful life through its teaching and influence, and its power of reform and spiritual qualities, and should bestow a pure life upon them, and after purifying them, should bestow upon them full insight for the recognition of God and should establish a relationship of love and devotion between them and the Peerless Being, Who is the Fountainhead of all joys. In truth, this love is the root of salvation and this is the paradise on entering which all fatigue, bitterness, pain and torment are removed. Without doubt, the living and perfect revealed Book is the one which should lead a seeker after God to his goal and, rescuing him from a low life, should lead him to the True Beloved, meeting Whom is salvation itself. It should rescue him from all doubts and should bestow such perfect understanding upon him as if he can see God. It should establish such strong relationship between God and him that he should become a faithful servant of God and God should be so benevolent towards him that He should make a distinction between him and those beside him with diverse types of His help and support and should open the gates of His understanding to him.



The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as).

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as). In 1891, he claimed, on the basis of Divine revelation, that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been foretold by Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and by the scriptures of other faiths.

His claim constitutes the basis of the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

If a book fails to discharge this duty, which is its real purpose, and seeks to establish its merit by making other irrelevant claims, it would be like a person who claims to be an expert physician, but when a patient is brought to him and he is asked to heal him, he replies that he

is unable to heal him, but that he knows how to wrestle, or that he is an expert in astronomy or philosophy. It is obvious that such a person would be called a jester and would deserve the condemnation of all reasonable people. The chief purpose of a Book of God and a Messenger of God is to rescue the world from a life of sin and to establish a holy relationship between God and the world. It is not their purpose to teach people subjects of secular study and to instruct them in worldly inventions.

It is not difficult for a reasonable and just person to understand that the purpose of a Book of God is to lead people to God, and to make them believe in Him as a certainty, and to stop them from committing sin by impressing the majesty and awe of God upon their hearts. Of what use is a book which cannot cleanse a heart, nor can bestow such pure and perfect understanding as should make one hate sin? The attraction of sin is a dangerous leprosy which cannot be healed till the manifestations of the living understanding of God, and the signs of His awe, greatness and power, descend like rain and till a person perceives God with His awe-

inspiring powers as a goat perceives a tiger which is only two steps away from it. Man needs to be freed from the fatal passion of sin. The greatness of God should so occupy his heart that it should rid him of the overpowering desire of passion which falls upon him like lightning and instantly consumes his store of righteousness.

Can such impure passions as attack repeatedly like epilepsy and destroy all sense of piety be wiped out by any self-conceived concept of God? Or can they be suppressed by one's own thinking, or be blocked by an atonement whose suffering has not been personally experienced? Certainly not. This is not a matter of indifference but in the estimation of a wise person it is worthy of consideration above all else as to how he might safeguard himself against the ruin which confronts him on account of his daring and his lack of relationship with God, the root of which is sin and disobedience. It is obvious, that a person cannot give up a certain pleasure for the sake of a conjecture. It is only a certainty that can rescue one from another certainty. For instance, if we are certain that there are a number of

deer in a forest whom we can easily catch, we are incited by that certainty to enter the forest for that purpose; but if we are also certain that there are half a hundred lions in the forest and thousands of blood-thirsty pythons, we would be dissuaded from making the attempt. Thus, sin cannot be avoided without this degree of certainty. It is only iron that can break iron. There should be that certainty of the greatness and awe of God which should tear up the curtains of heedlessness, and should make the body tremble, and should make death appear near. The heart should be so overcome by fear that all relationship with the sinful ego should be cut asunder and one should be drawn by hidden hands towards God and the heart should be filled with certainty that God Who is truly present does not leave a daring offender without punishment. What shall a seeker after true purity do with a book which does not fill this need?

SUPREMACY OF THE HOLY QUR'AN:

Holy Qur'an Fulfils the Purpose of the Scriptures

I wish to convey it to everyone that the Holy Qur'an is the Book which

fulfils all these needs. Through it, a person is drawn to God and his heart grows cold to the love of the world. For those who follow it, God, Who is hidden beyond the hidden, in the end manifests Himself and displays those powers of which outsiders have no notion, and informs of His existence by the affirmation: **I am present.**

But the Vedas certainly do not possess this quality. They are like a worn out bundle whose owner is dead or is not traceable. The Permashwar towards whom the Vedas call is not proved to be living. Indeed, the Vedas put forward no proof that their Permashwar exists. The misleading teaching of the Vedas has rendered it doubtful that one could find the Creator through His creation; inasmuch as, according to the teachings of the Vedas, souls and particles are all eternal and uncreated, then how can one discover the Creator through that which is uncreated? Also, the Vedas shut the door of Divine revelation and deny the fresh Signs of God. According to the Vedas, Permashwar cannot display a Sign in support of His special servants which should be beyond the

knowledge or experience of the average person. The utmost that can be said about the Vedas is that they affirm the existence of God like an average being, and do not put forward any certain proof in support of the existence of God.

In short, the Vedas cannot bestow that understanding which comes fresh from God and conveys a person from earth to heaven. However our observation and experience, and of those who have passed before us, is witness that the Holy Qur'an draws its true follower to itself through its spiritual effect and its inherent light and illumines his heart, and then, by displaying great signs, creates such a strong relationship with God as cannot be cut asunder by a sharp sword. It opens the eye of the heart, banks up the dirty spring of sin, honours one with the delicious converse of God, discloses that which is hidden and helps acceptance of prayer and gives information of it. God Almighty, through His awe-inspiring signs, makes it manifest to everyone who opposes a true follower of the Holy Qur'an that He is with that servant of His who follows His Word. (*Chashma-e-*

Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 23, pp. 305-309)

God, in whose meeting is man's salvation and eternal happiness, cannot be found without following the Holy Qur'an. Would that people could see that which I have seen and they could hear that which I have heard and give up following stories and run towards reality. The means of obtaining perfect knowledge, through which one can see God, the cleansing water which removes all doubts, and the mirror through which one can behold that High Being, is the converse with God which I have just mentioned. He whose soul seeks the truth should arise and search for it.

I say truly that if souls were inspired by true search and hearts felt true thirst, people would look for this way and would search for it. I assure the seekers that **Islam** alone gives the good news of this way, for other people have since long sealed up the possibility of revelation. Be sure that this seal is not set by God, but as man has deprived himself of this favour, he seeks excuses for its absence. As it is not possible that we should be

able to see without eyes, hear without ears, or speak without a tongue, in the same way, it is not possible that we should be able to behold the countenance of the sweet Beloved without the Holy Qur'an. I was young and am now old, but I have found no one who might have drunk of this clear understanding without this holy fountain.

(Islami Usul ki Philosophy, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 10, pp.442-443)

The straight path and the principal means which is full of the light of certainty and constant experience, and is the perfect guide for our spiritual welfare and our intellectual progress, is the Holy Qur'an which is charged with the settlement of all the religious contests of the world. Each and every word of it consistently carries thousands of repeated confirmations and it contains a large quantity of the waters of life for us and comprises many rare and priceless jewels which are hidden in it and are being displayed every day. It is an excellent touchstone whereby we can distinguish between truth and falsehood. It is the one bright lamp which shows the way of truth. Without doubt,

the hearts of those who have a relationship with the straight path are drawn to the Holy Qur'an. Gracious God has so fashioned their hearts that they are drawn towards this Beloved like a lover and find no rest elsewhere, and hearing a plain and clear directive from it, they listen to nothing else. They accept joyfully and eagerly every verity contained in it. In the end, it becomes the means of illumination of the heart and lighting up the conscience and of wonderful disclosures. It leads everyone to the heights of progress according to their capacities. The righteous have always been in need of walking in the light of the Holy Qur'an.

Whenever Islam has been confronted with any other religion in consequence of some new condition of the age, the sharp and effective instrument that has immediately come to hand is the Holy Qur'an. In the same way, whenever philosophic thought has been given publicity in opposition to it, the Holy Qur'an has destroyed that poisonous plant and has so humiliated it as to provide a mirror to its students which shows up the true philosophy which is

contained in the Holy Qur'an alone and nowhere else.

In the modern age, when Christian missionaries started their propaganda and made an attempt to draw away unintelligent and ignorant people from the Unity of God and to make them worship a humble creature and employed every kind of sophistry for dressing up their doubtful ideas and thus created a storm in India, it was the Holy Qur'an which repelled them so that they are not now able to face a well-informed person and their extensive apologetics have been folded up like a piece of paper.

(Izala-e-Auham, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 3, pp. 381-382)

Beauty and Perfection of the Holy Qur'an

I call Allah to witness that the Holy Qur'an is a **rare pearl**. Its outside is light and its inside is light and its above is light and its below is light and there is light in every word of it. It is a spiritual garden whose clustered fruits are within easy reach and through which streams flow. Every fruit of good fortune is found in it and every torch is lit from it. Its light has penetrated to

my heart and I could not have acquired it by any other means. And Allah is my Witness that if there had been no Qur'an I would have found no delight in life. I find that its beauty exceeds that of a hundred thousand Josephs. I incline towards it with a great inclination and drink it into my heart. It has nurtured me as an embryo is nurtured and it has a wonderful effect on my heart. My self is lost in its beauty. It has been disclosed to me in a vision that the garden of holiness is irrigated by the water of the Qur'an, which is a surging ocean of the water of life. He who drinks from it, comes to life; indeed, he brings others to life. *(A'ina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 5, pp. 545-546)*

The expression *Khatam-an-Nabiyyin* which has been applied to the Holy Prophet(saw) demands that the Book that was revealed to him, should be the most perfect of all books and should comprise all excellences; and indeed so it is. The rule is that whatever degree of spiritual power and inner perfection is possessed by the person upon whom the word of God descends, the same degree of power and majesty is possessed by

that word. As the spiritual power and inner perfection of the Holy Prophet^(saw) were of the highest degree, which no one exceeded or will exceed, therefore the Holy Qur'an occupies that high station and rank which has not been reached by any of the previous books or scriptures. The capacity and spiritual power of the Holy Prophet^(saw) were the highest of all, and all excellences had reached their climax in him. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an that was revealed to him is also perfect and as the excellences of Prophethood reached their climax in him, the excellences of the miracle of the word reached their climax in the Holy Qur'an. Thus he was the *Khatam-un-Nabiyyin* and his Book was the *Khatam-ul-Kutub*. From the point of view of every aspect of a miraculous word, the Holy Qur'an is at the highest stage.

The perfection of the Holy Qur'an is seen and its miraculous character is proved from every point of view, that is to say, from the points of view of excellence of composition, of the sequence of its subjects, of its teaching and its perfection and of the fruits of its teaching. That is why the Holy Qur'an has not

demanded its match from any particular point of view, but has issued a general challenge demanding a match from any point of view. From whichever point of view it is looked at, it is a miracle. (*Malfuzat, Vol. III, pp. 36-37*)

The Holy Qur'an is a miracle the like of which never was and never will be. The door of its graces and blessings is always open, and it is bright and manifest in every age as it was in the time of the Holy Prophet^(saw). It should also be borne in mind that the speech of everyone corresponds to his high resolve. The higher the resolve and determination and the purpose of the speaker, the same will be the case with his speech. Divine revelation also follows the same rule. The higher the resolve of the person to whom Divine revelation is vouchsafed, the higher will be the character of the revelation. As the circle of the resolve, capacity and determination of the Holy Prophet^(saw) was very wide, the revelation that came to him had the same high rank. No one else will ever attain the same degree of resolve and courage inasmuch as his message was not for any limited time or for any particular people, as

was the case with the Prophets before him. It was said to him:

Say, O mankind! truly I am a Messenger to you from Allah.

(Ch.7:V.159)

and again:

We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples.

(Ch.21:V.108)

Who can match him, the range and scope of whose Prophethood is so vast! It is an article of faith with us that if any verse of the Holy Qur'an is again revealed to anyone else, the scope of his revelation will never be as vast as that of the Holy Prophet^(saw). (*Malfuzat, Vol. III, p.57*)

The fine verities pertaining to religion, and all the learning pertaining to the subject of Divinity, and conclusive arguments in support of the truth together with the mysteries and insights that are set out in the Holy Qur'an, are such that human faculties collectively are not able to discover them nor can the intelligence of an intelligent person alight on them on its own. A consideration of past ages has shown that no philosopher

or wise man was able to discover all that knowledge. But in this case, there is a wonder upon wonders, that is to say, that knowledge and insight were bestowed upon one who was entirely unlearned. He had never seen a school nor read a book nor kept company with any learned or wise person. He lived his life among wild people, was born and brought up among them and kept company with them. The Holy Prophet^(saw) being unlettered is a matter so patent that no historian of Islam is unaware of it.

(*Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in Vol. I, pp. 561-563*)

Matchlessness of the Holy Qur'an

Whatever comes into being by the exercise of God's perfect power, whether it is a part of creation, or it is a Holy Book literally revealed by Him, it is necessary that it should possess the quality that no one out of creation should have the power to produce its like. This is proved in two ways: one is by way of deduction. God is One and without associate in His Being, attributes and works, and this does not admit of any partnership with Him in any of His creations, words or actions. If such partnership were per-

missible in respect of any of His creations, words or actions, then it would be permissible in all His attributes and actions, and as such it would be permissible that there should be another God. That which possesses all Divine attributes would be God and that which possesses some of the attributes of the Divine, would be a partner of God in respect of those attributes, and this is contrary to reason. It follows that it is necessary that God should be One without associate in all His attributes and words and actions, and His Being should be free from all those inconsistencies which would lead to someone being His partner.

Secondly, it is proved by observation of all those things which have been created by God that none of them could be created by man, not even the least of them like a fly, a mosquito or a spider. On observing their shape and formation, one sees such wonders that furnish conclusive proof of the existence of the Creator of the universe. Besides all these arguments, it is clear to every wise person that were it permissible that someone other than God could have the power to create that which

God has created by His power, then no part of creation could be cited as proof of the existence of the True Creator and the matter of His recognition as the Creator would become doubtful; for if some of those things that have been created by God Almighty could be created by someone else, then there is no reason why someone else cannot create everything that God has created.

Now that it is established that it is necessary that that which God has created should be matchless and its matchlessness is conclusive proof of its being from God, this is a complete refutation of the proposition that it is not necessary that the Divine word should be matchless, or that its being matchless is no proof of its being from God ... Matchlessness is a speciality of the work and word of God. Every wise person knows that the principal means that reason has for establishing the Godhead of the Divine is that everything that proceeds from God is so matchless that it is conclusive proof of the Unity of the Creator. Had this means not been available, the way of reason reaching God would have been closed.

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 1, pp. 149-182)

The Holy Qur'an is a Book which has proclaimed its own matchlessness and has claimed its own greatness, its wisdom, its truth, the beauty of its composition and its spiritual lights. It is not true that the Muslims have themselves put forward these excellences on behalf of the Qur'an. It sets out its own merits and excellences and puts forward its matchlessness and peerlessness as a challenge to the whole of creation and calls out loudly: **Is there any contestant?** Its verities and fine points are not confined to two or three which would leave room for doubt on the part of an ignorant person, but are like the surging ocean and are visible in every direction like the stars of heaven. There is no truth that lies outside it. There is no wisdom that is not comprised in it. There is no light that is not obtainable through following it. These things are not without proof and are not mere words. It is an established and clearly proved verity which has been shining through 1,300 years. We have set out this verity in great detail in this book and have expounded the fine

points of the Qur'an at such length as to constitute a surging ocean for the satisfaction of a seeker after truth.

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 1, pp. 662-665, footnote 11)

JALSA SALANA: NEW ZEALAND ADDRESS

Text of the address delivered by the head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya community Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad – Khalifatul Masih V, at the conclusion of the Jalsa Salana in New Zealand, April 2006.

By the Grace of Almighty Allah, the Jalsa Salana of New Zealand is coming to a conclusion.

This is the first Annual Convention held in the presence of the Khalifa of the time. Secondly, although not this address, the Friday Sermon before it was broadcast directly to the world through MTA International. This is the age when, in accordance with the prophecies of the Holy Prophet^(saw), the message of Islam was to spread in all corners of the world through his spiritual son. The world was to contract into one global village and the new inventions were to aid and assist the Promised Messiah^(as) in this task. Today, your country has also become a witness to the fact that the message of Ahmadiyyat, that is true Islam, has reached here through the Promised Messiah^(as) and is being heard all over the world.

An Ahmadi should not be content simply because all new inventions have been pressed into the service of the true servant of the Holy Prophet^(saw) for the spread of his message. Nor should one be happy merely because Allah the Almighty, through His Grace, has provided you the opportunity to join Ahmadiyyat. These are the Blessings from the Almighty Allah that He has bestowed on us and on the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^(as). It is certainly our good fortune that Allah enabled us to accept the Promised Messiah^(as). It is the Favour and Beneficence of Almighty Allah that we have been included amongst those responsible to fulfil the prophecy of the Holy Prophet^(saw).

We are fortunate indeed that Almighty Allah has enabled us to convey to the Promised Messiah^(as) in accordance with the prophecy of

the Holy Prophet^(saw) his greetings of peace. All these are blessings of Allah the Almighty.

Having received so many blessings, we have certain responsibilities that we should bring about special reformation in ourselves. This is because the Reformer, the Messiah and the Mahdi, with whom we associate ourselves, and announce that that Messiah and the Mahdi that was supposed to come, according to the prophecies of the Holy Prophet^(saw), has come and that we are his followers.

We invite: ‘O people of the world, join this Community if you want to improve yourselves in this world and have a good life in the Hereafter.’ So if we do not realise our responsibilities and do not bring about changes in our lives after accepting Ahmadiyyat, then our claims and slogans will be hollow. The world will ask us the difference between them and us. If having believed in the Promised Messiah^(as) we do not cause any reformation to occur within us, there would be no visible difference in our lives and theirs.

In fact, we may be doubly guilty.

Therefore, this is a serious moment for every Ahmadi to ponder. He should assess his own life and see how he can transform his life to fulfil the expectation that our Imam expects from each one of us, and how we should spend our lives. If we develop the realisation of self-assessment, the changes in our lives will begin to occur.

When we assess ourselves, we should see what the Promised Messiah^(as) expects from us. I place before you the words of the Promised Messiah^(as) for self-examination. He states:

‘It must be remembered that not obeying some of the injunctions of Almighty Allah, is tantamount to rejecting all the commandments.’

Allah the Almighty does not like to share if one portion belongs to Satan and the other to Allah the Almighty. This principle has been created so that man can come nearer to Allah the Almighty.

Although it is difficult to achieve nearness to God and it requires a sort of death, yet in this is the existence of real life. Blessed is he

who throws out the satanic portion from his life. As a result, his household and his self and his town become recipients of that blessing.

But if he receives only a small portion, then it will not be a blessing until he affirms his ‘Ba’ait’ by his conduct. In itself, ‘ba’ait is nothing. Just as a person will not be happy with you if you talk a lot but do not deliver, likewise Allah the Almighty has the highest self-respect amongst the most respected. Can it be that on the one hand you obey Him and on the other obey His enemies? This would be hypocrisy.

One should not care about Tom, Dick or Harry in this regard. One should remain steadfast to the last breath of one’s life.

Evil is of two kinds. One is to associate others with God; not to understand His Magnificence and Majesty; and to be lax in His worship and in His obedience. Second, is to show no affection to his servants; and not to remit the rights that belong to them. It is necessary that one should refrain from both evils. One should remain steadfast in obedience to God and

stand firm on the covenant that one has undertaken in ‘Ba’ait’. Do not cause any harm to God’s creatures. Study the Holy Qur’an with full attention and act on its injunctions. Avoid frivolous and idle talk and shun idolatrous assemblies. Establish the five-time prayers.

In short, there should be no Divine commandment that you defer. Keep your body clean and purify your heart of any grudge, malice or envy. These are the things that God desires from you.”

So, this is a fundamental matter that he has told us about. It is not possible that you accept some of what Almighty Allah says and accept some of what Satan says. There has to be one: you either become the Servant of Allah or you can follow Satan.

Remember that when Satan disobeyed Allah, Allah the Almighty declared him as the rejected and disgraced. Satan promised God, ‘I will continue to beguile Your servants. I will continue showing them the worldly attraction and I will sit in the way that leads to You so that I can continue to seduce Your servants.’

Allah the Almighty made it clear to him, ‘I will fill Hell with those who listen to you.’

Indeed, ever since the creation of Adam, Almighty Allah had determined that those who associate with Satan would sever their relationship with God Almighty.

Therefore, the first thing that the Promised Messiah^(as) told us when we accepted Ahmadiyyat was to develop a relationship with Allah the Almighty; and he stated that Allah the Almighty has established Jama’at Ahmadiyya so that those who join this Jama’at are the ones who establish a special relationship with Allah the Almighty. He said, ‘There is a custom in this world amongst friends, that a friend does not want the other to keep friendship with his enemy.

Similarly, Allah’s self-esteem would not tolerate that one should claim friendship with Allah the Almighty and promise to follow His commandments after taking Ba’ait at the hand of the Promised Messiah^(as), and yet associate any partners with Allah.

This is a fundamental command-

ment in the Holy Qu’ran that one who associates partners with Allah cannot be a Muslim. Allah the Almighty has made it very clear that He will never forgive anyone who associates partners with Allah.

As He says:

Surely, Allah will not forgive that any partner be associated with Him.

(Ch.4: V.49)

meaning that Allah will never forgive that any partner is associated with Him. Because of this fundamental commandment, the Promised Messiah^(as) has made it the first condition of ‘Ba’ait’ that the one taking ‘Ba’ait’ should promise with total sincerity that, in future, he would avoid associating partners with Allah the Almighty until he enters his grave. In other words, he would make it compulsory for himself that he would not go anywhere near this association.

The Promised Messiah^(as) has given a very fine explanation of this association. If we look at our everyday life, we would be horrified lest we come under the

displeasure of God. He states, ‘Shirk’ (associating partners with Allah) does not only mean that stones or inanimate objects are worshipped.

In fact shirk is that the worldly means are worshipped and emphasis is placed on ‘worldly gods.’ Then he states, ‘The other kind of shirk is to place too much reliance on worldly means like saying that had such and such had not happened, I would have died. This is also a shirk.’

He said: ‘In this age of enlightenment and wisdom, no one really gets involved in outright *shirk*, or idolatry as such. However, in this age of materialistic advancement, the worship of material means has increased considerably.’

The Promised Messiah^(as) further states, ‘Hidden idolatry is that one respects something as one respects Allah or one loves something when one should respect Allah, or one is afraid about it or depends on it totally.’ See, to what depths of idolatry, he has drawn our attention.

Some people do not perform their Salat on time or because they are busy in their worldly work and pursuits, they sometimes forget that it needs to be observed on time. They cannot say their Prayers at work or at their place of business.

This only means that they consider their work or their business more important than the worship of God the Almighty. Instead of believing God Almighty as their Provider, they consider their work or their business as the source of their income.

Had they placed God Almighty above everything and had thought that whatever they receive is due to the blessings of Allah, they would have first thought of worshipping Him and prostrating before Him.

It is the five prayers which if performed with total devotion and purity of heart, that show that the person has the real fear of Allah the Almighty in him and before Him everything else is insignificant.

Therefore, every Ahmadi should firmly keep in mind that our Provider, our Sustainer and Creator

is our Allah. He is the One who nurtures us and He is our Sustainer.

In short, the highest sin is to associate anything or anyone with Allah the Almighty and specially the hidden idolatry. Another form of idolatry is to tell a lie in order to gain some benefit or advantage. Lies are told in the course of conducting a business or to make false statements in the court of Law to win a case.

Once, the opponents of the Promised Messiah^(as) filed a suit against him. The nature of the case was such that, in the opinion of the lawyers, if the Promised Messiah^(as) did not make the statement as the lawyers wanted, they felt certain that he would be found guilty. The fact was that the Promised Messiah^(as) had sent by post a manuscript to a press for publication. In the same package that contained the manuscript, he enclosed a letter of instructions in a separate envelope.

According to the rules of the post office, this was an offence. Because of the enmity of the owner of the press, the owner informed the post office about the offence

and the post office instituted a criminal case in the court against the Promised Messiah^(as). The proposal of the lawyers was to say that he did not personally place that letter in the parcel.

The Promised Messiah^(as) categorically stated that he would never tell a lie and that he was not going to offend his God out of fear of some punishment. When the case started, the judge asked him if he had included the envelope in the packet. The Promised Messiah^(as) replied, 'Yes!' and said that the subject matter of the letter was related to the subject of the manuscript and that he never intended to insert that letter to save any money. The judge was so impressed by this statement, that he acquitted the Promised Messiah^(as).

Besides this case, the Promised Messiah^(as) was involved in many other court cases but he always spoke the truth and always submitted himself to God Almighty.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw) was also worried about his followers that they may fall into the practice of idolatry. One tradition states:

‘Abada bin Nasi told us about Shaddad bin Aws that he was crying.

When it was enquired from him as to why he was crying, he replied, “I have remembered something that I had heard from the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw) that made me cry. I heard the Prophet of Allah^(saw) say:

‘I worry about my followers and about their hidden desires and idolatry.’ The narrator states that he asked: ‘O Prophet of Allah! Do you think your followers will indulge in idolatry after you?’

On this, the Apostle of Allah replied, ‘Yes! However, my followers will not start worshipping the Sun or the Moon or idols or stones but they will indulge in hypocrisy in their daily actions and they will suffer from hidden desires.

If any of them started the day in a state of fast and some desire caused any interference with it, then he would abandon the fast and would be occupied with his

desire.”

(Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal; vol. 4, p.124, Beirut publication)

Keep these matters in mind and look around you. The world is immersed in a lot of artificiality and pretence. Even the Muslims are not exempt from this. Some say their prayers to show-off to others. Some go to perform their Hajj as a false pretence.

There are many other hidden desires. As I have already mentioned, many forego their daily prayers in preference to their worldly pursuits. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw) has already said that one who is fasting will break his fast to get involved in other affairs.

The Promised Messiah^(as) has then said that the second evil is not to fulfil the rights of human beings. It is your duty to treat fellow human beings with affection. End all grievances. Purify yourselves of malice and envy.

It is a fundamental principle that in order to create a peaceful atmosphere of love and brotherhood in

any society, one has to sacrifice one's emotions. The more one is able to sacrifice one's feelings, the more his heart would be rid of all grievances and malice and the more he would develop the emotions of love and affection.

The Promised Messiah^(as) has made it a condition for every Ahmadi that he will not be overcome by sensual desires whatever the circumstances. He further stated that it is incumbent on every Ahmadi to desist from causing harm or unnecessary hardship through his emotions to his fellow beings in general and to the Muslims in particular. He should do this neither by his tongue nor by his hands. This is the discharge of the rights due to man and wonderful proclamation of promoting love and affection in society that an Ahmadi makes when he joins Ahmadiyyat.

He who does not act on this injunction, should ask himself if he is being sincere to the promise he made at the time he took his bai'at at the hands of the Promised Messiah^(as). How is he going to tell others if he is not being sincere to himself?

In short, when each Ahmadi controls his anger, only then will he win the hearts of others by his conduct and spread the perfume of love and affection in the society.

The Promised Messiah^(as) says:

‘Remember, there is great enmity between emotions and reason. When anger and emotions take over, reason cannot exist. But the one who is patient and shows tolerance, is given a Divine Light that creates in one new powers of reflection and wisdom. Then light manifests light. Because hearts and minds become dark with anger and emotions, this darkness produces further darkness.’

Hence, if you want to enlighten the world, you have to create an environment of love and affection starting from your own homes to the entire society and indeed the world. We will have to curb and control our emotions of anger to spread this Divine light that has been given to us by the true servant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw). In this way, while we will be creating an atmosphere

of love in our own society, we will also be fulfilling our pledge that we made to the Promised Messiah^(as) and be able to absorb the love of Allah the Almighty.

What expectations does the Promised Messiah^(as) have from his Jama'at?

I mentioned some before. I present another extract that clearly shows how he was occupied day and night in improving the standard of piety in his followers and thinking how he could mould them to discharge the rights that belong to Allah as well as those that belong to mankind.

In this respect, the Promised Messiah^(as) states:

‘Until a man keeps his affairs with Allah clean and clear, and fulfils these two rights, he can achieve nothing.

As I have said these rights are also of two kinds: the rights that belong to Allah and the rights that belong to mankind. The rights that belong to mankind are also of two kinds. First is for him who has

become your spiritual brother in faith, whether he is your real brother or father or son.

They all have a special spiritual affinity. The other is true sympathy for all human beings.

The most significant right due to Allah is to worship Him and this worship should not be based on any personal need.

Indeed, He should be worshipped even if there is no heaven or hell and the love that a creature should feel towards his Creator should not wane in any way. This is why there should be no question of heaven or hell in these rights that belong to Allah.

With respect to the sympathy for all human beings, my faith is that the heart is not fully cleansed until we pray for our enemy.

Call on Me, I respond.
(Ch.2:V.187)

Allah the Almighty has placed no constraint that if you pray for your enemy, He will not

accept it. Indeed, it is my religion that praying for your enemy is a practice of the Holy Prophet^(saw).

Hadhrat Umar^(ra) became a Muslim because the Holy Prophet^(saw) used to pray often for him. Therefore, you should not hold any personal enmities and you should not become a true tyrant.

I am most grateful that I cannot see a single opponent of mine for whom I have not prayed two or three times. I advise you the same and instruct you the same. Allah the Almighty is as displeased with a person who holds unjust malice and injures others as He is with those who associate partners with Him. He does not want separation on one hand while on the other He does not want any association, that is to say the separation of the human race and the association of partners with Him and this is the very same path that we should pray for the unbelievers. This cleans and opens the heart and raises the spirit. Therefore, as long as our Jama'at does not adopt this

practice, there will be no difference between them and others.

In my opinion, it is essential that if one forms a spiritual friendship with someone and one of his relative is of lower status, then he should treat him with brotherliness and affection and should love him because this is the Glory and Majesty of God.

Therefore, those of you who have developed a relationship with me, should become such a people about whom it is stated in the Holy Qu'ran

فَانَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَشْتَقِي جَلِيْسَهُمْ

meaning that it is such a nation whose companion cannot be ungracious. This is the summary of this teaching that has been presented in

تَمَلَّعُوا بِالْاِخْلَاقِ اللّٰهِ

(Malfoozat; vol. 3, pp. 96-97)

In short these are the teachings and the high moral values that the Promised Messiah^(as) wants to

inculcate in us. Its summary is that:

- The love for Allah the Almighty and a relationship with Him should be such that it is free of any selfish motives. Worship towards Him because that is the object of worship and it is the realisation that you have to appear face to face before Him and not to obtain any personal benefit.
- Secondly, love and sympathy for fellow-beings should be such that the slightest injury to anyone should become a cause of pain for you, so much so that if your opponent, who is always ready to cause you hardship, encounters any difficulty, you pray for him. Pray for the removal of his hardship and pray for his reform.
- Thirdly, the Promised Messiah^(as) said that Allah the Almighty wants to bring His creatures together: firstly, unity between each other and secondly within themselves. This is why Prophets are sent to impart teaching and guidance. Therefore, we, who are in the

Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^(as), should try to unite the world. We should also try to create their relationship with Allah the Almighty, because Allah the Almighty does not keep His relationship with the one who does not do this.

If Allah the Almighty severs His relationship with us then the very reason for our life is finished. Hence, it is the responsibility of every Ahmadi that he should create pious changes in his life and thus fulfil the purpose of the advent of the Promised Messiah^(as)

May Allah enable us to do so! Whatever spiritual benefit we have gained from this Jalsa, may we be able to make it a part of our lives and may we take away all the blessings, and may we continue to create an environment of love and affection in our society!

May Allah enable us to do that!
AMIN

ISLAMIC TERRORISM – Part 9

Ninth extract specifically written in 1989 for the book Murder in the Name of Allah by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(rw). The labelling of the term 'Islamic Terrorism' represents not only a lack of understanding of the religion but is part of a political agenda designed to exploit Islam.

What is 'Islamic' terrorism, I wonder? Islam is as closely related to terrorism as light is to darkness or life is to death or peace is to war. They do come into contact with each other, of course, but from directions diametrically opposed. They are found grappling with each other but never walking hand in hand happily together.

However, one cannot deny that on many occasions some Muslims are found involved in terrorist activities either on behalf of a group or on behalf of a country with a predominate Muslim population.

Are there not equally, other groups involved in terrorism and subversion throughout the world? Would it be fitting to label all brands of terrorism by using the same principle which gave birth to the term 'Islamic terrorism' creating a list of Sikh terrorism, Hindu

terrorism, Christian terrorism, Jewish terrorism, atheist terrorism, Buddhist terrorism, Animist terrorism and pagan terrorism?

It is not easy to close one's eyes to various brands of terrorism which unfortunately flourish all over the world; in fact, it is impossible for an observer not to be aware of the persecution, bloodshed and murder, often in the name of some purported ideal or noble cause. Terrorism is a global problem and needs to be studied in its larger perspective. Unless we understand the forces behind the violence, we shall not be able to understand why some Muslim groups and states are turning to terrorism to achieve certain objectives.

I am fully convinced that almost every form of communal violence witnessed in the world today, wherever that is and whatever cloak it wears, is essentially political in nature. Religion is not

the exploiter; it is itself exploited by internal or external political interests.

For instance, we find terrorism generated by racialism – but that, in the final analysis, is essentially political in nature. There are other small expressions of terrorism born out of rebellion and hatred against prevailing social systems and cultures. These are generally regarded as acts of madmen and anarchists. There is a special kind of terrorism which is related to the Mafia's struggle for supremacy; this terrorism is directed by certain factions against other factions within the Mafia. Obviously, this terrorism is really a power struggle and therefore political.

When we examine so-called 'Islamic terrorism', we discover political forces working behind an Islamic facade. More often than not, the real manipulators and exploiters are not even Muslims themselves. Let us turn to some particular illustrations of terrorism in order to diagnose the underlying maladies. We shall begin with Iran and see how Khomeinism came to be born.

It is common knowledge that in the days of the Shah there was great prosperity. The highly ambitious industrial and economic development plans augured a bright future for the country. But can man live by bread alone? As far as Iranians under the despotic rule of the Shah were concerned, the answer was an emphatic 'No'. They wanted to have a responsible share in the running of affairs in their own country. They could no longer just be satisfied with full stomachs. Their hunger for self-respect and dignity and their craving for freedom and liberation from a highly regimented system of oppression made them more and more restive and volatile. This situation was ripe for a violent and bloody revolution.

If the nature of this imminent revolution had not been essentially Islamic, it would have been a communist revolution and could have been even bloodier and more extreme. The turmoil which was to shake Iran from north to south and east to west was a natural and inevitable consequence of a long political oppression and negation of fundamental human rights and

liberties, and also of subversion and exploitation by a great Western foreign power. Iran was aware of the fact that the despotic regime of the Shah was fully backed, supported and sanctioned by the government of the United States of America. The people's hatred and urge for revenge did not stop at the toppling of the Shah's regime and the destruction of all internal forces which in one way or another had been responsible for the maintenance of the monarchy.

The consciousness of American support had brought out in the Shah the very worst of his despotic tendencies. He had been held in awe to begin with, but gradually awe gave way to terror. The fear of revolt stiffened his attitude even more with the passage of time. Gradually a police state of the worst type came to be born in Iran. With the passage of time, Iranians became aware that the police state was fully and unequivocally supported by the government of the USA. The Shah played the part of a mere puppet whose strings were tied to the subtle, manipulating fingers of USA. This, as has been

mentioned above, led to a situation ripe for revolution motivated by a consuming fire of hatred.

The situation was capitalised upon by Ayatollah Khomeini. The ideology which he propounded to give colour and complexion to his revolution was Shia Islam. But was it really a love of Shia Islam which generated hatred against the USA, or was the name of Islam a mere facade to hide the underlying motives? Had Khomeini not raised the banner of Islam, would there not have been a revolution in some other name? Is it not a fact that had Khomeini not exploited the situation and given it an Islamic colour and complexion, the same situation of hatred could have been equally well exploited by a non-religious philosophy such as nationalism or scientific socialism?

In fact Khomeini outpaced forces which were coming fast at his heels and which, given time, might have overtaken him and all he stood for. That is why the situation in Iran became extremely complicated and confused. The basic urge of the revolution was not against communism or any

leftist philosophy but was aimed at the Shah and his mentors. But because there was a real likelihood of leftist leadership taking over the reins of revolution from Khomeini, he had to fight on three fronts simultaneously. After toppling the Shah, he not only undertook to eradicate and exterminate all supporters of the former Shah, but also to root out American influence wherever it was suspected to be. That in itself could have lent support to the leftist ideology which, if permitted to flourish unchecked, might have succeeded in snatching the power from Khomeini's hands and replacing the Islamic ideology with Marxism-Leninism.

Fortunately for Ayatollah Khomeini, he was shrewd and powerful enough to wield the double-edged sword of Islamic ideology not only against American rightism but as effectively against Russian leftism.

But when all is said and done, it is clear that, whatever else it was, it certainly was not Islam which guided and instructed the Iranian

revolution. At best, you can, if you wish, call what happened and is happening in Iran Khomeinism. The real forces at work are not truly and essentially religious in character. Political powers have exploited the reaction of the Iranians against the Shah to achieve purely political ends.

There is a long history of a growing Iranian consciousness of its exploitation and enslavement by foreign powers of one type or another. Despite the fact that a very large majority of Iranians are Muslims, one cannot ignore the fact that Iranians have never been able to forget or forgive the conquest by Arabs of their homelands. Although the wounds appeared to have been healed long ago and many potent factors such as commonality of religion and common enmity against other countries have played an important role in cementing the Iranians to the Arabs, it cannot be denied that there is still an undercurrent of dissatisfaction at the Arab domination of Iran for the past few centuries. One must also bear in mind that in the pre-Islamic era, Iran could boast one

of the most powerful and illustrious civilisations ever to have influenced mankind anywhere in the world. At the inception of Islam, the Arabs knew of only two worlds – that in the West, dominated by the Roman Empire, and that in the East, commanded and governed by the Chosroes of Iran. The memories of that remote and glorious past, though subdued to some extent by the strong influence of Islamic brotherhood, could not entirely be wiped out. There always has been a long and lingering shadow of the great Iranian civilisation in the hearts of Iranian intellectuals.

The long history of Iranian-Arab feuds and Iranian punitive excursions into Arabia also left ugly and irritating scars on the Arab minds which even the great healer, time, could not obliterate. This is only human. People throughout the world may sometimes find it difficult to dissociate themselves from the past or to forget injuries and insults to their honour. Such chapters of history are never permanently closed but are opened again and again.

Enough of Arab-Iranian feuds of the past. Let us now turn to more modern times. It is not against the Arabs alone that the Iranians have been nursing their grievances. During the Second World War, the Iranians were subjected to a worse kind of domination by predominantly British forces. Whilst in the Arab case there had at least been the redeeming factor of a common cultural and religious bond, in the case of the British the chasm between the ruler and the ruled, rather than narrowing, grew wider. Nor could it be bridged by any social, cultural or religious similarities.

After the decline of British influence, there followed an era of indirect control and subjugation of Third World countries by the major powers through stooges and puppet regimes. It was in this period of neo-imperialism that the Iranian protégé was transferred from the British lap to the American lap. The Shah of Iran thus became a symbol of American imperialism which supported conflicting ideologies to its own as it does today, for example, in Poland, Nicaragua, Israel and South Africa.

The fuel of hatred which was ultimately sparked off by the Khomeinian revolution was not only a product of American oppression but had been accumulating for centuries, like the subterranean reserves of oil and gas. The important point to note is that this hatred was not essentially religious in origin. If Khomeini had not exploited the hatred in the name of Islam, some communist leader would certainly have exploited it in the name of social justice. Whatever religious or irreligious name was given to the revolution, the underlying forces and factors would remain the same.

I have pointed out many times to those who regard excesses committed by Khomeini against some of his own people, and acts of revenge perpetrated in other countries as Islamic in character that Islam as a religion has nothing to do with the expression of Iranian dissatisfaction. In a manner of speaking, the West should treat Ayatollah Khomeini as their benefactor rather than as their enemy. I say this because I am quite positive that if Khomeini had not exploited the situation and given it an Islamic

face in order to support and perpetuate a junta of Muslim ‘clergy’, the situation would most certainly have been exploited by Iranian leaders of leftist inclination. The same Iran which we see as green sprinkled with red today would have instead appeared to us entirely red. It would be naive to say that the communist leadership created and trained by Dr. Mossadeq had been weakened and enfeebled to such a degree at the time of the Shah’s overthrow that it could not have played an effective and revolutionary role at this epoch-making juncture of Iranian history. In fact, the communist leadership was well supported and trained. It was entirely ready to seize an opportunity. But for Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran could well have ended up as a radical Marxist regime. Such an event would have had disastrous consequences for the oil-rich but militarily weak Middle East. So even Khomeinian Islam – however gory and loathsome it may appear to the West – could be seen as a blessing in disguise. The role of Ayatollah Khomeini should be seen in this perspective.

The Iraq-Iran war may not appear to be relevant to the subject under discussion but it does throw some light on the nature of explosive events in a part of the world of Islam. Both countries claim to be Muslim and purport to draw their inspiration for hating, destroying, and annihilating each other from the sacred name of Islam.

All the soldiers who died in the battle on the Iraqi side were applauded as great martyrs by the Iraqi media. All the Iranian soldiers who died at the hands of the Iraqis were condemned as infidels dispatched straight to hell by the Iraqi media. Exactly the same story was repeated in reverse day in and day out on the other side of the border in Iran. Whenever an Iraqi soldier was bayoneted to death the battlefield resounded with the cry of ‘Allahu Akbar’ (God is the greatest). On which side was Islam? One wonders! All this demonstrates the hollowness of these slogans. The only point which can be proved beyond a shadow of doubt is that the Iraqi and Iranian soldiers who laid down their lives for an apparently noble cause were

duped by their leadership. Islam was neither here nor there. The Holy Qur’an states:

Allah will surely defend those who believe, Allah loves not the perfidious and the ungrateful. Permission to fight is granted to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged, and Allah indeed has the power to help them. They are those who have been driven out of their homes unjustly only because they affirmed: our Lord is Allah. If Allah did not repel the aggression of some people by means of others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated, would surely be destroyed. Allah will surely help him who helps His cause; Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty.
(Ch.22:Vs.39-41)

Whenever they kindle a fire to start a war, Allah puts it out. They strive to create disorder in the land and Allah loves not those who create disorder.
(Ch.5:V.65)

If two parties of believers should fall out with each other and start fighting, make peace between them. Then if one of them should transgress against the other, fight the one that transgresses until it submits to the command of Allah. Then if it should so submit, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the just. All believers are brothers; so make peace between your brothers, and be mindful of your duty to Allah that you may be shown mercy.

(Ch.49:Vs.10-11)

During the war, the above teachings were ignored by the warring nations. In Makkah, during the times of the annual pilgrimages some attempts were made by Iran to deliver the message of Khomeinian revolution to the rest of the Muslim world through the pilgrims who came there. Unfortunately, these attempts sometimes resulted in very ugly situations, to the extreme embarrassment of Muslims. For instance, what happened in Makkah during the

1987 pilgrimage and the extreme counter-measures taken by Saudi Arabia were much talked about in the Western media. The Holy Qur'an, however, teaches all Muslims:

But fight them not in the proximity of the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you therein, should they fight you even there, then fight them; such is the requital of disbelievers.

(Ch.2:V.192)

One benefit which all the great powers (which have overtly or covertly been supporting Israel), chief among them being the USA, have drawn from Khomeini and Khomeinism is that Khomeini was left with no choice but to prolong the Iraq-Iran war. That diverted the attention of the Muslim world from a most irritating thorn in their side, Israel, towards a completely different issue. The consciousness of an external enemy threat gave way to a growing mistrust between one Muslim and another.

The Middle Eastern world was torn apart. The 'fear' of Israel was

shelved as a minor and latent danger which could be attended to later. The fear of one section of Muslims for another was a far more pressing and demanding factor which put into oblivion real or imaginary fears about an external enemy. Of course, to dupe the simple common soldier, the slogan that Islam was in danger was often used on both sides. In reality, what was happening was the revival of historic rivalries and jealousies between the Arabs and the Iranian *ajm* (non-Arabs, aliens). It was not a question of Islamic versus non-Islamic forces or Shiaism versus Sunnism, but a simple and straightforward re-enactment of feuds surviving over thousands of years. That is why even those Arabs who had formerly been critical of Iraq and Saudi Arabia were inevitably led to taking the side of Iraq. It was simply a matter of Arab survival against the growing challenge and threat from Iran.

The Arabs indulged in prolonged inter-tribal feuds over petty matters before the advent of Islam. Islam put a stop to this. It joined Muslims into a brotherhood, free

of rivalries and discrimination of any sort. But when Muslims ceased to live by the teachings of Islam, brothers became foes and tribal rivalries returned to the forefront. So what we observe in the world of Islam is not truly Islamic in character. It is another case of the revival of old feudalistic tendencies.

The great powers roundly condemned the war and repeatedly demanded a cessation of hostilities, but they were themselves responsible for a constant supply of arms to both Iraq and Iran. After all, warplanes, rockets, missiles, cannons, tanks, other artillery vehicles and destructive weapons which were freely used by both warring factions were not manufactured on their own soils. Overtly and covertly, Middle Eastern oil and Western weapons changed hands. The fire of war was fuelled, in the ultimate analysis, by the oil which was produced by Iraq and Iran and converted into weapons by Western and Eastern non-Muslim powers. As far as the West was concerned, this was not a bad bargain at all – Middle Eastern oil

was bought in exchange for obsolete or relatively old weapons. What more advantageous bargain could be envisaged than this?

As we have seen, even the Israeli arch-enemy was totally forgotten. Muslims killed Muslims. The oil of the Muslim world was used to burn and destroy the economy of the Muslim world. The painstaking economic achievements of the previous decade were nullified. As far as progress and prosperity were concerned, instead of moving forwards both Iraq and Iran started to travel backwards in time.

Of course, all wars have devastating effects on economic development, material and human resources, cultural achievements and industry. But in the case of advanced countries, the war industry can be supported from their own resources or those of their allies. The demands and pressures of war and the struggle for survival do not simply drain their resources; it enriches their scientific knowledge and technical know-how to a remarkable degree in a short span of time. The knowledge and expertise gained

during times of war can be employed immediately afterwards not just to rehabilitate the economy but to give it a tremendous boost. The destructive wars give rise to new constructive ideas and breakthroughs in scientific and industrial achievements. Therefore, though impoverished materially as a result of a prolonged war, they can be greatly enriched in order to build a better future.

Such, alas, is not the case in the scientifically and economically backward countries which indulge in the luxury of war. Their only choice is to sell whatever they have and even pawn their future by making arrangements with scientifically and industrially advanced countries to supply them with war materials. Without doing that, it would be impossible for any war in the Third World to be prolonged for such a long time and with such devastating effect, as happened in the Iraq – Iran war. The responsibility for whatever atrocities these countries commit against each other and occasionally against other countries must, to some extent, be

shared by those who are responsible for the supply of arms and ammunition to them.

When all has been said and done, all debts settled, and the exchange of commodities taken into account, perhaps it would be pertinent to consider the question of who after all is the beneficiary of the hostilities?

We have seen that Islam is condemned as a barbaric religion which upholds terrorism, preaches hatred and intolerance and divides adherents into opposing camps of bloodthirsty foes. This is not surprising. There are fringe benefits to be obtained by those who design, plot, implement and provide the instruments of destruction to the most unfortunate warring factions of the Muslim *umma*.

Incidentally, the term 'Islamic terrorism' leads to another interesting term which has been coined by the Western media in the last decade: 'Islamic nuclear bomb'. Pakistan is alleged to possess this. Of course, there has to be an Islamic nuclear bomb if

there is any such thing as Islamic terrorism. Maybe some other terms applicable to various modes of war will become attached to the prefix 'Islamic'. Why do we not hear of a Christian nuclear bomb, a Jewish nuclear bomb, a Hindu nuclear bomb, an Apartheid bomb or a Shinto bomb? It is strange that with the possibility of referring to thousands of other 'religions' bombs, the Western media has chosen only to pick upon, identify and censure the single Islamic bomb, whose very existence is doubtful.

As stated earlier, the real forces at work are not truly and essentially religious in character. Why single out 'Islamic' whenever terrorist forces are at work today in Muslim groups or countries? Those powers responsible for the prolongation of the Iraq-Iran war by ensuring a constant supply of arms cannot escape their responsibility for the immense waste of life and property and the indescribable human suffering that has resulted from it. Whatever their ulterior motives may have been, they will only help Khomeinism to survive longer. Had the warring countries

been left alone with their meagre resources, Khomeinism might have started to decline.

Among other things, this war revived and strengthened a nationalist spirit which diverted the attention of the Iranians from internal problems towards the threat of an external enemy. But for the war, the Iranians might have become disillusioned much more rapidly with the overly intolerant and stiff cult of Khomeinism. Within Iran, there is a very strong tendency towards assessing the values of the revolution and judging its pros and cons. Though a major part of the elite has been wiped out, the intellectuals who have survived are bound to reassess their losses and gains during the Khomeinian revolution. A move towards finding a new order for Iran could be imminent.

During the war, the need to keep up the morale of the common masses in Iran was amply met by the excitement of the conflict. When Iran runs out of morale, that will be the day of great uncertainty. Whether the present

regime is replaced by leftist or rightist forces or by whatever is left of the middle-roaders, there will certainly be a great battle to gain supremacy and take over the government. Everything will go back into the melting-pot and nobody can say for certain what is in store for Iran. Allah knows best. I can only pray for the people of Iran that their difficult times may come to a peaceful and happy conclusion. They are a brave and gifted people indeed. They have suffered so much in the past and are still suffering, both at the hands of non-Iranian and Iranians – and, ironically, they have also acquired a bad name into the bargain. May Allah show mercy upon them and deliver them from their great predicament.

Now we turn to another aspect of the Khomeinian revolution in Iran. Soon after coming to power, Ayatollah Khomeini planned not only to change the life-style of Iranian Muslims from overt or covert foreign domination, but he also committed himself to bring about similar revolutions in the neighbouring Muslim states. He also made it known to the Muslim

world that he would play a stronger role in helping the Palestinians and defeating the Zionist forces. Obviously, neither the other Muslim states nor the state of Israel were willing to receive couriers of the Iranian revolution with open arms, so the export could not be effected through legal and peaceful means. Iran has failed to deliver the revolutionary goods to neighbouring Muslim countries. It has achieved a measure of success, without doubt, in the Palestinian – Israeli sector. As I have already explained, the terrorist activities carried out in this area, whether directed against Israel or against representatives of Western powers, take their licence not from Islam but from the philosophy of the Iranian revolution alone.

The growing talk of militancy and the use of force which we hear needs to be carefully analysed before we can understand the importance of this bizarre phenomenon. The narrow, non-tolerant attitude is certainly becoming more popular with the Muslim ‘clergy’ in almost all Muslim countries. The

responsibility for this mainly lies on the shoulders of Saudi Arabia, which is attempting to capture the imagination of the whole Muslim world and seems resolved to spread its political influence under a religious guise. As it enjoys the unique advantage of being the custodian of the two holiest cities in Islam, Makkah and Madinah, it is certainly in a position to exploit this situation to its best advantage.

The religious philosophy of the Saudis emanates from Wahabism, which draws its inspiration from the non-tolerant world of medieval Islam rather than from the more benign understanding of Islam at the time of the Holy Prophet^(saw). The spread of Saudi influence is aided by Saudi petro-dollars and the colossal size of Saudi bank balances in major banks throughout the world. It is to the credit of Saudi Arabia that part of the interest accruing from these colossal investments is being used to form channels of aid from Saudi Arabian coffers to the poorer Muslim nations with sizeable Muslim populations. More often than not, this aid is provided not to boost their ailing economies, but

to build mosques, training schools and institutes producing scholars of a Saudi brand.

Hence, wherever you follow the flow of Saudi aid, you will also observe a rapid increase in the narrow, non-tolerant attitudes of Muslim ‘clergy’. No doubt, when the Christian world hears these voices roundly condemning all non-Islamic values and *preaching jihad* (that is, holy war), against non-Islamic governments, they are led to believe that the talk of this holy war will readily be translated into actual belligerency. What is happening is in fact completely different.

The Muslim ‘clergy’ talk loudly about holy wars and the utter destruction of non-Islamic forces. What they actually mean by non-Islamic forces is not Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, or atheist forces. According to their view, all Muslim sects other than their own are either non-Muslim in their character or hold to doctrines that render them liable to earn the wrath of Allah and His true servants. The real enemies of Islam, as they discern them, are

not non-Muslims but some sects of Islam within the world of Islam. The awakening militant tendencies are much more directed by Muslims of one sect against Muslims of another sect than against non-Muslims. This is why so much stress is laid by them on capital punishment for apostasy. That is their weapon against Muslims who differ on some doctrinal issues from the majority sect of a country. These sects are, in fact, dealt the death blow in two steps – first, their doctrines are declared to be non-Islamic, which earns them the title of apostates; and second, the doctrine of death being the penalty for apostasy, they are considered liable to be executed.

A neutral observer will agree that this growing militant tendency is creating disorder among the Muslims themselves and that it is responsible for generating extreme hatred in the hearts of adherents of one sect against the adherents of another.

As far as the non-Muslim powers are concerned, they can feel completely safe and should rest

assured that there is no danger whatsoever to them from the so-called militant tendencies of the Muslim world. To demonstrate this, one has only to consider the relationship of Saudi Arabia with the West, particularly the USA. It is inconceivable that Saudi Arabia or countries under her influence could even dream of raising the sword against the USA or her allies. The Saudi regime is 100 per cent dependent for survival on the USA. Almost the entire wealth of the ruling family is deposited with American and Western banks. On top of this, the dependence upon the West for internal and external security is so obvious that it need not be dwelt upon here. These two factors alone guarantee that neither Saudi Arabia nor any Muslim country under her influence can ever pose a threat to the non-Muslim West. Moreover, the very fact that none of the Muslim states is today self-reliant in its production of war materials, and has to depend either upon the West or East for all of its defensive or offensive requirements, provides more than enough of a guarantee for the safe and peaceful conduct of their relations with

non-Muslim powers. The same principle is applicable to countries like Libya and Syria, which enjoy more cordial relationships with Eastern powers than with Western ones.

No one who has even a remote understanding of modern warfare can imagine a real threat from so-called 'Islamic' militancy. Of course, there is danger in these growing tendencies and one is bound to be perturbed by them. The danger from 'Islamic' militancy is a threat to the world of Islam itself; it is an inward-looking threat which is destroying the peace of Muslims everywhere. All the intolerance, narrow-mindedness and bigotry which we observe in the Muslim world today is playing havoc with the peace of the Muslim world. Alas!

I am conscious of the fact that, strictly speaking, the word 'terrorism' applies to acts of terror, attempts to cause bomb explosions, and so on. But I do not believe that this is the only type of terrorism the world is suffering from. I believe that whenever repressive measures are taken by

governments against their own countrymen to still the voice of disagreement, those measures too should be included within the term 'terrorism' and be as strongly and roundly condemned as any other form of terrorism. I consider all oppressive measures taken by governments against the left or right within their own countries as terrorism of the worst type. When acts of terrorism are directed against foreign governments and take the form of the use of explosives here and there, or the hijacking of planes, such events gain a great deal of attention. World opinion sympathises with the victims of such callous terrorist acts, as indeed it should. Such sympathies are not merely voiced, but are generally followed by constructive means to prevent and pre-empt such attempts in the future. However, what about those hundreds of thousands of people suffering under the stem and merciless hands of their own governments? Their cries of anguish are seldom heard outside. Their cries of protest are very often muffled by the application of strict measures of censorship. Even if philanthropic agencies like

Amnesty International draw the attention of the world to such cruel acts of persecution, torture, and denial of human rights, such events are only mildly condemned, if at all, by world governments. More often than not, these are considered to be internal matters for the countries concerned. Instead of being described as acts of terrorism, they are widely mentioned as government efforts to suppress terrorism in these countries, and to establish peace, law and order.

I am quite convinced that in essence all restrictive and punitive measures taken by a government against its own people to suppress a popular movement or suspected opposition, more often than not, go beyond the limits of genuine legal measures and end up as brutal acts of violence designed to strike terror in the hearts of a dissatisfied section of their own people. Humanity has suffered far more through such acts of State terrorism than through all acts of sabotage or hijacking put together. As far as Islam is concerned, it categorically rejects and condemns every form of terrorism. It

does not provide any cover or justification for any act of violence, be it committed by an individual, a group or a government

There are, of course, regions of restlessness in the Muslim world where groups, organisations, and sometimes even governments, seem to be committed to acts of terrorism, violence and sabotage. Palestine, Lebanon, Libya and Syria are often in the news. In a majority of cases, those concerned happen to be Muslim by faith, but there are exceptions. Amongst Palestinians, for instance, there are many who have pledged themselves to terrorism against Israel but happen to be Christian by faith. For convenience or through lack of knowledge they are all dubbed by the Western media as Islamic terrorists. In Lebanon, there have been Muslim terrorists and Christian terrorists, and also Israeli agents and soldiers involved at one time or another in terrorist activities which appeal human sensitivities. But you will not hear of Jewish or Christian terrorism in relation to what is happening in Lebanon. All acts of

violence are put together and wrapped up in the package of 'Islamic terrorism'.

As far as Salman Rushdie is concerned, no sane person with any real knowledge of the Holy Qur'an can agree with Imam Khomeini that his death sentence is based on any Islamic injunction. There is no such punishment for blasphemy in the Holy Qur'an or in the Traditions of the Holy Prophet of Islam^(saw). Blasphemy against God is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in the following words:

And abuse not those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they, out of spite abuse Allah in their ignorance.
(Ch.6: V.I09)

No authorisation has been granted to any man to inflict any punishment for blasphemy against God.

Blasphemy was committed by Jews against Mary, the mother of Christ^(as). It has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, where it says:

And for their disbelief and for their uttering against Mary a grievous calumny.

(Ch.4: V.151)

Again no punishment other than by God Himself is prescribed. It is both tragic and deplorable that Imam Khomeini has thus inadvertently maligned Islam rather than defending it and has caused immense damage to the image of Islam in the free world.

The Imam of the Grand Mosque of Azhar, in Cairo, has already discredited Imam Khomeini's edict, and I am certain that there are also many Shia Muslims who would disagree with Imam Khomeini in this instance.

Despite all this, it would be unjust if one were to ignore the real issue. I feel it is unfair, as some politicians and scholars have done, to condemn Khomeini only rather than Salman Rushdie, who has produced a book whose extreme language is deliberately offensive to the many millions of Muslims throughout the world. Nor is this all. The book has helped to undermine peace between

Muslims and Christians and, if one can judge from the comments in some letters to national newspapers, to have unleashed the forces of racial intolerance.

Let it be very clear that I do not justify terrorism of any kind whatsoever, whatever the colour, religion, sentiment or objective the terrorist may claim to represent. Islam is my faith and religion; and Islam does not approve of disorder in any form. Islam is far from teaching terrorism.

What is the religion of the terrorism organised and supported by Colonel Qaddafi's oil-dollars, one may ask? What again is the religion of terrorist activities that Syria has been indulging in in the past? Is it Islam? If so, what is the difference between this Islam and scientific socialism? Is it not a fact that the *Green Book* of Colonel Qaddafi is only green in colour of its binding? The contents of the book are red through and through.

If the terrorist activities of the Muslim 'fundamentalists' of Iran or Libya are to be dubbed as 'Islamic terrorism', the colour of

their Islam would appear to be dark green. How could the concept of Islam be diametrically opposed to itself and how could Islam be 'green' and 'red' at the same time, one wonders? If anything, Libya's terrorism can only be seen as nationalist terrorism in disguise. Incidentally, it reminds one of Fidel Castro of Cuba. He marches far ahead of Colonel Qaddafi in his taste for violence and terrorism. Yet one never hears his deeds described as Christian terrorism.

One thing leads to another: the discussion of terrorism conjures up before one's vision various phases of history. Christianity has been purportedly involved in ugly acts of persecution and torture, and some Christian monarchs have indulged in brutal acts of violence and persecution under the misguided notion that they were serving the religion of Christ^(as). During the years of the Black Death, 1348-9, were not many Jews burnt alive in their homes? In the age of the Spanish Inquisition, a long reign of terror prevailed under the guidance and direction of some Christian priests.

Numerous helpless women at various times, were put to death because they were said to be witches and there was a distorted notion that this was the Christian way of dealing with witchcraft.

However much these acts were related directly to Christianity, the crimes against humanity were a product of a very dark age when ignorance ruled supreme. When will man begin to understand the difference between the conduct of a person and the teachings of his religion? If one confuses the two and tries to understand religion by studying the conduct of its adherents, many questions arise. The conduct of adherents of every religion varies from country to country, from sect to sect, from age to age, and from person to person.

How very different is the conduct of Jesus'^(as) disciples from those in Pinochet's Chile, or in South Africa, who claim to uphold Christian values. Which is to represent Christianity? Are we entitled to describe the First and Second World Wars, in which millions of people lost their lives¹,

as Christian wars against humanity? In the Second World War, Russian losses alone are estimated to have exceeded 6.1 million. Three-quarters of the entire population of Bosnia was wiped out. The loss of property and material are of such magnitude as to be almost impossible to assess². Will this enormity be described as Christianity in action or shall we take our understanding of Christianity from those early Christians who, having been struck on one cheek, turned the other cheek towards the striker, and those who were fed to beasts and burned alive in their homes rather than answer violence with violence? I would much rather choose the latter.

Any act of war in a Muslim country is perceived in the West as the extension of 'Islamic terrorism' but in any other country such an act is seen as a political dispute. Why must such dual standards of justice prevail in this day and age? One really begins to wonder if there is an undercurrent of hatred for Islam beneath the apparently calm surface of Christian civilisation. Is it perhaps a hang-over from centuries of Crusades

against Muslim powers or is it the old wine of the orientalist's venom against Islam served in new goblets? The idea that Islam was spread by the sword is highly questionable. The wars of Muslim governments should be judged according to the prevailing principles of politics and international relations and not on the basis of religion.

The expression of violence is symptomatic of the many diseases in society. The Muslim world today does not know which way to turn. People find themselves dissatisfied about many things over which they have no control whatsoever. They are dead-meat for exploitation by their own corrupt leaders or agents and by stooges of foreign powers. Unfortunately, many leaders in Muslim countries themselves seek sanction from Islam for their acts of violence and oppression, as happened in the time of the late General Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan. Bloody revolutions are totally alien to the philosophy of Islam and have no place in Islamic countries.

As a man of religion, and head of

a spiritual community of followers who have faced a century of persecution, terror and cruelty, I most strongly condemn all acts and forms of terrorism because it is my deeply rooted belief that not only Islam but also no true religion, whatever its name, can sanction violence and the bloodshed of innocent men, women and children in the name of God.

*God is love, God is peace!
Love can never beget hatred,
and peace can never lead to war.*

References

1 In the First World War, the mobilised forces of the Allies totalled 42.6 million and the Central Powers had 22.85 million. Total casualties on both sides were 57.6 per cent. In the Second World War, the peak armed strength was 72,581,566, out of which 16,829,758 were killed or missing (presumed killed) and 26,698,339 were wounded. (Source: Arthur Guy Enock,

This War Business, London: Bodley Head, 1951, and US Department of Defence.) The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has estimated that the First World War cost \$400,000,000,000, excluding civilian property damage and the cost of loss of life. According to one estimate, the direct costs of the Second World War for the participating nations were a staggering grand total of \$1,098,938,000,000.

2 William I. Roehrenbeck, *Collins Encyclopaedia*, vol. 23, article headed 'War Costs and Casualties'.

Love of the Promised Messiah^(as) for the Holy Qur'an

Based on a speech delivered by Dr Iftikhar Ahmad Ayaz OBE, at the Annual Convention of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK, July 2006

The verse of the Holy Qur'an from Sura Al-Furqan (Chapter 25) holds a prophecy about the latter days. The prophecy was:

And the Messenger will say, 'O my Lord, my people indeed treated this Qur'an as a thing to be discarded.'

Our Master Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa^(saw) had given the glad tidings of the advent of The Promised Messiah^(as) and the Blessed Guided One, who would hold the principal mission of exposing the superiority and excellences of the Holy Qur'an and its dissemination and promulgation.

The Holy Prophet^(saw) said, 'When faith will rise to the Pleiades, then a man from Persia will bring it back'. In some other narrations it is mentioned that knowledge of the Holy Qur'an will vanish and the Holy Qur'an will be discarded.

That exactly was the scenario before the advent of the Promised Messiah^(as), and in accordance with the saying of the Holy Prophet^(saw) that nothing will remain of the Holy Qur'an except its name, the Holy Qur'an was no more than a piece of decoration kept on the shelf and a number of ill-fated customs and rituals were associated with it. Perilously, both by virtue of meaning and by virtue of practice, it had been completely forsaken.

It was the time of the fulfilment of that great prophecy of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet of Islam^(saw), and Allah The Exalted raised that true and devoted lover of the Holy Qur'an, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah^(as) and the Guided One, who with fathomless depth of love and devotion submerged into the waters of the Holy Qur'an and secured such precious and priceless gems which were the need of the time.

The Promised Messiah^(as) was constantly devoted to the cause and study of the Holy Qur'an. His unflinching loyalty and devotion to it and the intense feelings with which he expressed his love of the Holy Qur'an leaves one bewildered, perplexed and breathless.

His knowledge of and reliance on the Holy Qur'an as a potent source of guidance was only as a result of fervent prayers in solitude, through which he addressed his Lord and Creator.

Once, it was discovered that whilst studying and reflecting upon the Holy Qur'an the Promised Messiah^(as) was intently addressing God prayerfully: 'O my Creator, this is Your message and I can appreciate it only if You teach me' (*Hayat en Nabi*).

Every fibre of his being and every thought which dominated his heart was his intense love for the Word of God and every interest of his life was immersed in this.

When compiling his masterpieces of writings he would walk up and down his room with the Holy Qur'an in his hands, reading and meditating upon it. He always had a

copy of the Holy Qur'an with him which he used to recite and mark at relevant places. It could be said without exaggeration that he had read it thousands of times. Unlike other writers, scholars or speakers who would refer to relevant literature when preparing their works, the Promised Messiah^(as) invariably referred to the Holy Qur'an. That is why in all his writings one cannot help noticing Qur'anic verses being profusely quoted. In short, the entire literature produced by him is a treasure of exhaustive commentaries of the Holy Qur'an. The knowledge of the Holy Qur'an he exposed and the way he inspired and prepared his followers to cling to it and make it the order of their lives, is an astonishing achievement, the like of which the world has never witnessed.

The Promised Messiah^(as) states in one of his writings:

'The light of the Holy Qur'an has penetrated to my heart and I could not have acquired it by any other means. And Allah is my witness that if there had been no Qur'an I would have found no pleasure in life'.
(*Aina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam*,

Ruhani Khazain, vol. 5, pp. 545-546).

In this context, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^(ru) said:

‘The presentation of the Holy Qur’an as understood by the Promised Messiah^(as), is the most attractive way of preaching and the strongest possible way’
(Majlis Shoora Pedrobad, Spain, Sept. 1982).

Not only did the Promised Messiah^(as) read, study and meditate upon the Holy Qur’an but he advised his followers to do likewise. He also loved to listen to the recitation of the Holy Qur’an. Once, he went for a walk when someone told him that the son-in-law of Haji Habib-ur-Rehman Sahib, amongst the party, recited the Holy Qur’an in a melodious voice. The Promised Messiah^(as) sat down by the roadside and requested him to do so which he willingly did. While listening to the recitation, tears rolled down his cheeks.

His unparalleled love and devotion to the Holy Qur’an also found vivid expression at the Conference of Great Religions when his monumental work *Philosophy of the*

Teachings of Islam was read before a mammoth audience. This was a masterful exposition of the five assigned themes of the Conference from the Holy Qur’an by the Promised Messiah^(as).

Those around him felt that the entire existence of the Promised Messiah^(as) was for the cause of the Holy Qur’an.

An old lady by the name of Hayat Bibi, daughter of Late Fazal Deen Sahib, narrates that her father was very close to the Promised Messiah^(as). He used to collect and deliver food to Huzur. He said that Huzur would go inside, close the door and sit in the courtyard reading the Holy Qur’an. Sometimes he would go into lengthy prostrations and cry so much that the ground would become soaked by his tears.

The Promised Messiah^(as) says:

‘It is not possible that a person should believe fully in God Almighty except through the Holy Qur’an. For this characteristic is special to the Holy Qur’an that by following it perfectly all obstacles that exist between man and God are removed. God, Who is hidden

from the entire world, is seen only through the Holy Qur'an' (*Chashma-e-Marifat, Ruhani Khazain, vol. 23, pp. 271-272*).

And by God! we are a witness that so many of his companions and so many in Jamaat Ahmadiyya today, by Allah's Grace, have experienced God in their lives through their devotion and dedication to the Holy Qur'an. This is the revolution which the Promised Messiah^(as) created through his love for the Holy Qur'an. And this distinguishes him as the most outstanding unique lover and servant of the Holy Qur'an in this age, beyond compare.

The son of the Promised Messiah^(as), Hadhrat Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad (Allah be pleased with him), narrates that the Promised Messiah^(as) was most of the time absorbed in studies and he particularly concentrated on the Holy Qur'an.

Those who saw him found him reading the Holy Qur'an with such attention and devotion that he would be completely engrossed in its meaning.

It is said that a non-Ahmadi tax-collector, Munshi Adbul Wahid

from Patiala, was a frequent visitor to Qadian to see Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Murtaza Sahib, father of the Promised Messiah^(as). He knew the Promised Messiah^(as) from an early age. He testified that when the Promised Messiah^(as) was about the age of 14 or 15 years, he spent almost his entire day reading the Holy Qur'an and writing notes on it in the margins. The father of the Promised Messiah^(as) commented that he was not concerned about anything else and spent his day reading the Holy Qur'an in the mosque (*The Review of Religions, Urdu, Qadian, January 1942, p. 4*).

Once, the Promised Messiah^(as) was travelling in a Palanquin from Qadian to Batala. The journey took about five hours. Just as he left Qadian, the Promised Messiah^(as) opened his pocket edition of the Holy Qur'an and started reading the first Chapter, Sura Al-Fatiha and for five hours he was completely absorbed in the study of this short Chapter as if it was a vast deep ocean in which he was diving to great depths in search of the pearls of love and mercy of his eternal beloved- the Holy Qur'an (*Seerat-ul-Mahdi, vol. II*).

Deep and true love for the Holy

Qur'an and by the blessings of devotedly following it, the Promised Messiah^(as) was granted intimate knowledge of the Holy Qur'an by Allah.

The fact is that the Promised Messiah^(as) was sent for the service of the Holy Qur'an. He himself states:

‘God Almighty has raised me so that I expose to the world those buried treasures of the Holy Qur'an and purify and cleanse them of the vicious filth of objections heaped upon them by the opponents of Islam. Allah's torrential passion for the care of the honour of the Holy Qur'an at present is over-whelming and Allah is determined to sanctify and safeguard the honour of the Holy Qur'an against the tarnishing objections of the wretched enemy’
(*Malfoozat vol.I, p.38*).

After the Promised Messiah's^(as) divine commission, the Holy Qur'an furthermore became the order of his life. God Almighty revealed to him:

‘Every kind of goodness and blessing can only be found in the Holy Qur'an’.

And he abundantly benefited from that goodness and blessings throughout his life. He dived deep into the ocean of the wisdom and knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and surfaced such pearls and jewels which left the world dumbfounded and stunned. It was the intensity of his love that he presented the Holy Qur'an before the world as a perfect and living scripture.

In his grand publication *Baraheen-i-Ahmadiyya*, he splendidly established forever the verity, veracity, truth and perfection of the Holy Qur'an by irrefutable arguments and convinced the world that it was the only scripture that would live till the Day of Judgement. He called upon followers of all other religions to contest the superiority of the Holy Qur'an regarding any matter on the condition that their claims and their arguments must be based on their religious scriptures. It was such a valiant challenge that it reduced all other faiths to silence. No one has ever accepted that challenge to this day, and no one will ever have the courage to do so till the Day of Judgement. That is the legacy he left behind for the Ahmadiyya community, and in fact for the entire humanity. To ensure that it lasts till the Day of Judgement

in its pristine purity, Allah graced him with the re-establishment of the system of divine succession (Khilafat). Today, we are blessed with the fifth chapter of Khilafat and we find the gems of the Holy Qur'an offered to us by our beloved Khalifa (may Allah support him with His mighty help), to reform and enrich our lives and enjoy the real, everlasting prosperity.

We have at our disposal, over eighty books of the Promised Messiah^(as) which unfold for the world the authenticity, truth and wisdom of the Holy Qur'an. It is a legacy of immeasurable treasure provided to us to publicise the Holy Qur'an all over the world and resolutely respond to any objection against it.

The Promised Messiah^(as) was immersed in the love of the Holy Qur'an on account of its unique message and uncountable beauties. But the founding sentiment of his love for the Holy Qur'an was in reality the love of God, as he says in an Urdu couplet:

‘The beauties of the Holy Qur'an are conspicuously obvious, but the real cause of my love for it O my heavenly Master.

Is that it has come from Thee, and my heart remains restless to kiss and circuit it over and over again.’

(Qadian ke Arya aur hum)

It is indeed the love of Allah from which sprouts the love of the Holy Qur'an.

To the Promised Messiah^(as), the Holy Qur'an was the remedy to all ills, whether physical or spiritual.

Hadhrat Dr. Mir Mohammad Ismail Sahib (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that on the day when the Ambassador from Rome was visiting Qadian; after Maghrib prayer, when Huzur was sitting on a seat, he felt pressure in his head so he lay down on a mat on the floor. The Companions moved in to press his head but Huzur soon stopped them and when most of them had left, he requested Maulvi Adbul Karim Sahib^(ra) to recite some portion of the Holy Qur'an. Maulvi Sahib compiled and continued to recite in a melodious voice until Huzur said that he felt better *(Seerat-ul-Mahdi, Narration No. 459)*.

The Promised Messiah^(as) inundated mankind with the gushing

rivers of the teachings and wisdom of the Holy Qur'an. He presented the Book of Allah as a living Book. He unveiled the real holy and radiant face of the Holy Qur'an by exposing the light of wisdom and knowledge granted to him by Allah. In all his publications and speeches, he vehemently proved by powerful reasoning that each and every letter and word of the Holy Qur'an is safeguarded and will be meticulously preserved from any sort of interpolations till the Day of Judgement.

Addressing the Jama'at, the Promised Messiah^(as) states:

'I am repeatedly admonishing you that genuine love and obedience of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet^(saw) turns a person into a man of miracles and the doors of the unseen are opened upon such a perfect soul'.
(*Zameema-i-Anjam Atham, p.61*)

How many outside the panel of Ahmadiyyat today can dare to make such a claim and produce even one person who by the blessings of the Holy Qur'an has become a man of miracles and the doors of the unseen have been opened upon him? This is an exclusive honour for those who in

the footsteps of the Promised Messiah^(as) have moulded their lives in the template of the Holy Qur'an.

The Promised Messiah^(as) further states:

'By raising me at the head of the fourteenth century, Allah the Exalted commissioned me to revive and rejuvenate the vigorous faith of Islam. It is my mission that during these tumultuous times I manifest the beauties and the greatness of both the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet of Islam^(saw), and with all the light and blessings and miracles and divine knowledge Allah has given me, defend Islam against the attacks of all its enemies'
(*Barakatud Dua, p.36*)

This remains the primary mission of Jama'at Ahmadiyya today. There are no people on this earth today beside the Ahmadiyya Jama'at who are ever ready to lay their lives for the honour and sanctity of the Holy Qur'an. Indeed, it is the Ahmadis who have been slain and tortured and locked up in the terrifying dark cells for expressing their love and devotion to the Holy Qur'an. They have been made victims of

blasphemy by those who have totally discarded the Holy Qur'an and their example, practice and behaviour, tarnishing the very name of the Holy Qur'an, and who, by writing misconceived commentaries of the Holy Qur'an, continue to strengthen the hands of the opponents of Islam and are in fact themselves a disgrace to Islam. Whatever they do, let them know that each and every Ahmadi, man and women, old and young, is ever ready to offer every sacrifice for the honour of the Holy Qur'an. It is through this Jamaat and only this Jama'at that the Holy Qur'an will become the order of this world soon.

With the blessings of the knowledge bestowed upon him by Allah the Exalted, the Promised Messiah^(AS) inundated mankind with the gushing rivers of the teachings and wisdom of the Holy Qur'an. He presented the Book of Allah as a living Book. He unveiled the real holy and radiant face of the Holy Qur'an by exposing the light of wisdom and knowledge granted to him by Allah. In all his publications and speeches, he vehemently proved by powerful reasoning that each and every letter and word of the Holy Qur'an is safeguarded and will be meticulously preserved from any sort of

interpolations till the Day of Judgement.

The Promised Messiah^(AS) says:

'I hereby assure the audience that God, on whom depends the salvation and everlasting prosperity of man, cannot be found other than through following the Holy Qur'an. Understand with conviction that just as it is not possible for us to see without eyes, listen without ears or speak without a tongue, similarly it is not possible to set our eyes on that Beloved without the Holy Qur'an'
(Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam)

Stating the excellences and the greatness of the Holy Qur'an, the Promised Messiah^(AS) says:

'The Holy Qur'an has expressed its eloquence and richness by its truth, wisdom and encompassing all the rightful needs of humanity, and in an amazing manner has absorbed the truths of all faiths. There is no truth which is not contained in the Holy Qur'an. The beauty of it is that not even a single word in the Holy Qur'an is excessive

and there is nothing that is irrelevant. Its luminous style is beyond imagination. Its boundless richness is absolutely fabulous, reflected in the beauty of its arrangement, succinctly covering mountains of knowledge from the beginning to the end'.

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya Vol IV)

As such, the Promised Messiah^(AS) firmly relied on the Holy Qur'an to retaliate and defend Islam against the attacks of the opponents. Whichever part, or verse of the Holy Qur'an was targeted by the opponents, the Promised Messiah^(AS) responded promptly in a smashing manner, completely crushing the enemy's will to move any further. Such an awe inspiring way of protecting the grandeur of the Holy Qur'an manifests the infinite passion and love of the Holy Qur'an with which he was inebriated.

His love was not limited to expressions of sentiments; he brought forth the miraculous power of the Holy Qur'an in such a forceful manner that the entire world of religion was spellbound.

A Christian Priest, Imaduddin, wrote a book by the name *Zain-ul-*

Aqwal specifically criticising and vilifying the Holy Qur'an. In reply, the Promised Messiah^(AS) wrote the book *Noor-ul-Haq*, in which he profusely revealed the depth of knowledge and distinguished teachings of the Holy Qur'an. There are not a few, but several such instances found in his publications, where he proved the falsehood of untrue religions from the Holy Qur'an. Accordingly, he exhorted every believer to always base the claims of faith and support reasoning on the Holy Qur'an.

Those who love and take that passion to its ultimate heights always eulogize and portray their beloved in various ways and sing in praise of its beauties and attributes. In the same tone, the Promised Messiah^(AS) revealed glimpses of the intensity of his love for the Holy Qur'an in various ways.

For instance, Hadhrat Yusuf^(AS) is said to be exceptionally handsome, but in the sight of the Promised Messiah^(AS) the Holy Qur'an is far superior in its attractiveness, beauty, charm and elegance. He says:

'It is said that the beauty of Yusuf^(AS) was very attractive, but the Holy Qur'an is unique in its

quality and charm; You have heard that Yusuf fell into a gorge but this Book rescues those who are in the gorge and that is its claim'. (*Durrisameen, Urdu*)

And he says:

'The elegance and beauty of the Holy Qur'an is the soul of every Muslim.

Crescent is the moon of others;

Our moon is the Holy Qur'an'.

The Promised Messiah^(as) writes:

'I always felt my heart inclined towards the subtleties, intricacies and vastness of the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and I was enamoured by its fathomless beauty. I have seen that it gives me the knowledge and so many different kinds of fruit of wisdom which will never run out and neither shall I ever be deprived of those. It is my conviction that the Holy Qur'an strengthens faith and enriches belief. By God! It is a priceless, matchless pearl. Its inner self is light and its outer self is light and its each and every word is light. It is a

spiritual garden whose clustered fruits are within easy reach and through which streams flow. Every fruit of good fortune is found in it and every torch is lit from it. I was magnetised towards it and it is firmly lodged in my heart. It has nurtured me like a baby is nurtured in its mother's womb. It has an astonishing impact upon my heart. Its beauty has charmed me. I have seen in a vision that all honours and blessings are irrigated by the waters of the Holy Qur'an which is a surging ocean of the elixir of life. He who drinks from it comes to life; Indeed, he brings others to life. By God! Its face is more beautiful than everything else. It is a face which has been moulded in the template of beauty and crowned with splendour'

(*Aina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khazain, Vol. 5, pp.545-546*).

Regarding the authenticity of the Holy Qur'an, the Promised Messiah^(as) said, the Holy Qur'an is superior to Hadith and is a divine arbiter to check the validity and authenticity of a Hadith. However, he further stated that:

‘It is incumbent upon our Jama’at that if a Hadith, that is a saying of the Holy Prophet^(saw) is not against the Holy Qur’an and practice, then whatever its rank, it should be accepted and followed in practise and given priority over man-made jurisprudence’.

(Al-Haq Ludhiana Debate, 1891, Review Debate Chakralvi, p. 506).

Before the advent of the Promised Messiah^(as), several Muslim sects believed that some verses of the Holy Qur’an had been abrogated and were not worth practice anymore. They were there merely for recitation and it was not incumbent to follow them in practice. The incandescent fervent love of the Promised Messiah^(as) for the Holy Qur’an could not stand this abrogation of the verses of the Holy Qur’an and with utmost conviction he proclaimed that not even a dot of the Holy Qur’an had ever been repealed and it would never be repealed. He was that ardent and genuine lover of the Holy Qur’an who was bent upon protecting the Holy Qur’an and strived in announcing that today only those would be honoured in Heaven who would honour the Holy Qur’an.

His doctrine is that the Holy Qur’an superseded all previous scriptures and laws, but itself it can never be abrogated as it is the Word of God. The earth and the heaven can vanish, but the Law, the Commandments and any verse of the Holy Qur’an can never be altered. He stated that if someone believes in abrogation, he is in his sight excluded from the group of believers and is a non-believer heretic.

The Promised Messiah^(as) states:

‘The Holy Qur’an is that authentic, pure and final word of God in which man has absolutely no involvement, not even to the extent of a dot or stroke. In all its contexts, in all its words and meaning, it is from Allah the Exalted in totality, and no sect of Muslims has any excuse not to accept it as such. Its each and every word has an excellent order of continuation and succession. It is an immutable revelation- the letters of which have been counted and because of being a miracle in itself, it will always remain safe from any kind of change or interpolation’.

(Azala i Auham, Vol.2, P.219)

Hence, the Promised Messiah^(as), with his profound sentiments of love for the Holy Qur'an, eradicated and eliminated all misconceptions about the Holy Qur'an, and restated its irrevocable honour.

The Promised Messiah^(as) not only himself gained mastery over the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, but also provided assured guidance to others to understand the Holy Qur'an. Undoubtedly it was an adorable service to the Holy Qur'an.

There was a time when people thought that no one can either understand the Holy Qur'an, nor follow it in practice, but he unleashed and scattered before the world all the secrets and gems of its understanding.

The Promised Messiah^(as) says:

‘The one who as a devoted follower of the Holy Qur'an genuinely pursues and perseveres in pure love and enhances it to limits, is graced as a shadow to manifest the attributes of Allah the Exalted. All that is the result of that ferocious power and impact that we witness in the discourse of

the Holy Qur'an. Such an overwhelming effect cannot be found in any other book which is considered revealed by any other faith'. (*Zamima Chashma i Maarfat, page 59*)

In each and every book of the Promised Messiah^(as), there are glimpses of the love of the Holy Qur'an in one way or another. His versified writings in Urdu, Arabic and Persian, equally demonstrate the depth of his boundless passion and love for the Holy Qur'an in such a touching manner that there is no example of its kind anywhere else.

He says:

‘The light of the Holy Qur'an is a light more clear and bright by far than any other kind of light! And Holy indeed is He, Who is the source of this veritable river of radiance! O Lord! Does Thy Word constitute only a book? Or is it a Universe in itself? For, whatsoever was indispensable for mankind, for progress of the human mind, we find amply provided in this marvellous scripture!’

(*Durrisameen, Urdu*)

Similarly, in an Arabic verse, the Promised Messiah^(as) says:

‘A holy book which is the embodiment of all distinctions, it causes its faithful to drink cups of knowledge and never stops providing more. We have observed in it, manifest signs of guidance and we have found in it wisdom which saves from destruction and blesses with prudence’.

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya)

To express the beauty, the glow, the enticement and captivation of the beloved, the lovers correlate it with the sun and the moon. But the Promised Messiah^(as) beautifully expresses his innermost sentiments for his beloved, the Holy Qur'an, in a Persian couplet when he says:

‘The eye that has not accessed light from the Holy Qur'an,
By God! It will never be relieved of spiritual blindness all its life.

I cannot compare this light with the light of the sun because I can see that hundreds of Sun are encircling the Holy Qur'an’.

(Durrisameen, Farsi)

The Promised Messiah^(as)'s attach-

ment and fondness of the Holy Qur'an was limitless. He says:

‘Ay ye those who read Ummul Kitab, that is Sura Al-Fatiha! Now watch this sun with my eyes. Ponder upon the supplication of Al-Fatiha again and again. It manifests the reality of it all.’

(Durrisameen, Urdu)

He further says:

‘The light that is emanated by the Holy Qur'an exceeds that of a thousand Sun.’

(Durrisameen, Urdu)

Addressing the Jama'at, the Promised Messiah^(as) exhorts:

‘You should study this Holy Scripture with the utmost attention and deepest deliberation and cherish it with love. You should love it as you have never loved anything else. Indeed, God has conveyed to me: “All good lies in the Qur'an”. All kinds of good is to be found in it and this is the truth. Unfortunate indeed are those who give preference to other things over it. The Holy Qur'an is the fountainhead of all

salvation, for all betterment and success. There is not a single spiritual need which has not been met for you in this Holy Book. It is the Holy Qur'an that, will testify the truth or falsehood of your faith on the Day of Judgment. Appreciate therefore the value of blessings bestowed upon you. It is a precious blessing and a great treasure. Without the Holy Qur'an, the whole world would have been no better than a dirty clot of half-formed flesh. Indeed, it is a book compared to which all other sources of guidance amount to nothing'
(*Noah's Ark, p.36-37*)

During the time of the Promised Messiah^(as), a journalist once visited Qadian and he was amazed to see the earnestness and fervour of everyone for the Holy Qur'an. He wrote:

'The genuine and true love for the Holy Qur'an that I saw in this Jama'at in Qadian, I have never seen anywhere else before. After morning prayer in the Mubarak Mosque, I went round for a walk and saw everyone without exception, young and old, sitting by a

lantern reciting the Holy Qur'an. It was a truly captivating scene'. In a nutshell, he said that 'in Ahmadiyya Qadian I could see nothing but the Holy Qur'an everywhere'.
(*AlHakam, Qadian, reproduced Alfazl, Rabwah, 4-01-2006*)

That is the atmosphere we need to revitalise and sustain in our lives everywhere. Our true love for the Promised Messiah^(as) can best be expressed through our love for the Holy Qur'an and the devotion of our life to its service.

The inestimable meritorious service of the Holy Qur'an inaugurated by the Promised Messiah^(as) is being vehemently pursued and developed by Jamaat Ahmadiyya today. The Jama'at is restless to continue and accomplish the mission of the Promised Messiah^(as) to uphold the honour, purity and superiority of the Holy Qur'an and ensure that it reaches each and every household on this planet, and its dazzling light obliterates darkness for ever from the hearts of mankind. Let me conclude with a heart rending Persian couplet of the Promised Messiah^(as):

'O ye ignorant, tighten up your

belt for the service of the Holy Qur'an before you hear that so and so is dead.'

(Durrisameen, Farsi)

Let us take that message to our hearts. Let us live for the Holy Qur'an. There should be none amongst us who misses on the daily recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Each and every one of our household should remain perfumed with the fragrance of the Holy Qur'an. Let us put our heart and soul into its understanding. Let us follow its teachings faithfully in our lives so delete we are accepted into the fold of the beloveds of Allah. Remember, that, that is the only way to the love of Allah. Let us be amongst those chosen to illuminate the entire world with the glow of the Holy Qur'an and bring lasting peace to the world through its teachings and lead humanity out of darkness into the ever shining light of Islam Ahmadiyyat. Allah enable us to do so. That then would indeed be an honourable tribute to the love of the Promised Messiah^(as) for the Holy Qur'an!

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