



THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS

VOL LXXXII

NO. 8

AUGUST 1987

IN THIS ISSUE

- GUIDE POSTS
- THE CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC SOCIETY
- SURROGATE MOTHERS
- ISLAM AND RUSSIA
- MISSION OF THE HOLY PROPHET
- A REAL LIFE DRAMA
- ISLAM AND REVELATION

MANAGING EDITOR
AMATUL MAJEED CHAUDHARY

European Edition
EDITOR: B. A. ORCHARD



THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world reformer and the Promised Messiah. The Movement is an embodiment of true and real Islam. It seeks to unite mankind with its Creator and to establish peace throughout the world. The present head of the Movement is Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. The Ahmadiyya Movement has its headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan, and is actively engaged in missionary work.



Contributing Editors

1. M. A. Saqi
2. Mushtaq A. Bajwah
3. A. M. Rāshed
4. Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry
5. Nasir A. Sheikh
6. Dr. Q. M. Barakatullah
7. Prof. Saleh M. Alladin
8. Mrs. Bahri Hamid
9. Khalil Mahmud
10. Prof. Saud Ahmad

The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

A monthly magazine devoted to the dissemination of the teachings of Islam, the discussion of Islamic affairs and religion in general.

The Review of Religions is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents the pure and true Islam. It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

All correspondence should be forwarded directly to:

*The Editor,
Islamabad,
Sheephatch Lane,
Tilford,
Surrey, GU10 2AQ,
U.K.*

annual subscriptions:
U.K. & Europe £12
U.S.A. & Canada \$20



CONTENTS

Page

1. Guide Posts (Bashir Ahmad Orchard)	2
2. The Concept of Islamic Society (K. Mahmud)	5
3. Surrogate Mothers (Abdul Majid)	12
4. Islam and Russia (Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah)	14
5. Mission of the Holy Prophet (Mostafa Sabet)	25
6. A Real Life Drama (Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry)	31
7. Islam and Revelation (Bashir Ahmad Orchard)	33

Guide Posts

EYES UPLIFTED

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

“Guide us in the straight path.”

(Quran 1:6).

In the field of religion the desire of a Muslim is embodied in the above short prayer which he recites thirty-two times during the course of offering the five daily prayers. Many devout Muslims offer additional prayers during the day and even in the night thereby increasing the number of recitations. They beseech God time and time again to keep their feet firmly planted on the Right Path.

There is no doubt we are living in a world infected with sin and temptation. Little regard is paid to religious and moral values. The love and fear of God is to be found in the hearts of only a few. Most of the rest being indifferent to the laws of God have little or no faith — not even in the existence of God. They do as they please as they choose to satisfy the inclinations of the flesh and their worldly desires. They do not understand and appreciate the significance of holy living.

The real purpose of life is to walk in the way of God; and this is the objective taught not only by Islam but also by all revealed religions since the time of Adam:

“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I commanded you this day for your good.”

(Deut. 10:12).

“Blessed are they that keep my way.”

(Proverbs 8:32).

“Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways.”

(Psalm 128:1).

“Teach me thy way, O Lord.”

(Psalm 27:11).

Jesus taught the prayer:

“Thy will be done.”

(Luke 11:2).

There are some who would like to walk in the way of God but feel they lack the capacity to alter their style of living and there is no chance for them to make the grade. This notion is wrong. Resolution is lacking due to their negative attitude whereas a firm positive approach would soon have them speeding on their way along their spiritual journey. The foremost step to be taken is sincere and earnest prayer for divine guidance and assistance. Prayer is our most effective weapon. All things may be wrought through prayer.

“And when My servants ask thee about Me, say:
I am near. I answer the prayers of the
supplicant when he prays to me. So they
should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that
they may follow the right way.”

(Quran 2:187).

God most certainly hears and answers the prayers of those who call upon Him with faith and devotion. The constant prayer of a Muslim is:

“Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone
do we implore for help. Guide us in the
right path — the path of those on whom
Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, those
who have not incurred Thy displeasure, and
those who have not gone astray.”

(Quran 1:5–7).

Another essential requisite of the spiritual wayfarer is that he should focus his attention on the ideal state he is striving to accomplish and not upon the pitfalls and snares he fears are likely to entrap him thereby impeding his progress. Imagine a plank of wood on the ground. Normally a person in good physical and mental health would find little difficulty in walking along it from one end to the other. However, if the same plank of wood was placed across the space between two high buildings then most persons would be deterred from walking over the plank for fear of falling. The more they look down the more likely they are to fall. On the other hand, if they look straight ahead and a little upwards, along with a spirit of confidence, then crossing the plank

should not be such a difficult proposition. Tight-rope walkers look up — never down. Likewise if a person constantly directs his attention downwards upon sin then it is more likely than not he will fall into the very sins he wants to avoid. It would be better for him to focus his attention upwards towards his spiritual goal. It is not meant that he should not be aware of the presence and dangers of sin. The point under stress is that he should not constantly be directing his attention on them as this practice can draw him into their web.

The sex problem cannot be solved by constantly drawing people's attention to the subject. Today sex is highlighted on television, radio, in the press, books, magazines, advertisements, cinemas, theatres and even in children's educational curriculums. With eyes lowered on sex it is no wonder that so many wrongfully indulge in it in direct contravention to the laws of God. If greater attention was given to the positive ideal of clean and pure living then how much more it would uplift and beautify the character of mankind.

It was believed at one time that the public executions of criminals would deter people from committing crimes. On the contrary it was discovered that following public executions murders and violent crimes increased thus proving that brutality begets brutality. Similar is the case with visual scenes of sex as well as written and verbal descriptions about it which is all too prevalent today. The result is the existing permissive society.

Yet a further important factor which a spiritual wayfarer should ever keep in mind is the keeping of good company. Truly it has been said that a man is known by the company he keeps. This is a vital point which should never be forgotten. God says in the Holy Quran:

“Keep company with the righteous.”

(9:119).

It is not suggested that we should boycott the company of those who are not our selected friends and companions. In life we have to associate with all kinds of people. Nevertheless we should be careful in the selection of our more intimate company. We should avoid becoming “one of the crowd” or “one of the boys” in order to fit in with those whose way of life is not commendable. The Holy Prophet of Islam is reported to have said that the character of a man takes on the colour of the company he keeps, so one should therefore pass one's time in the company of the good.

We should be cautious with those whom we associate and not fraternise with those whose principles are not good. A bad person should be shunned as he is a curse to others. Good company helps us to be good while bad company leads us to corruption.

These three guide lines: prayer, focus on higher ideals and keeping good company will go a long way in elevating the spiritual life of a person.

The Concept of Islamic Society

(K. Mahmud)

The development of Islamic society is based upon the implementation of the social values of Islam. Allah states in the Holy Quran (51:57) that He has not created mankind except to serve Him. The Arabic word for service here means “to subject oneself to a vigorous spiritual discipline, working with all one’s inherent powers and capacities to their fullest scope, in perfect harmony with and in obedience to Divine commandments, so as to receive God’s impress and thus to be able to assimilate and manifest in oneself His attributes.” Therefore, according to the Holy Quran the purpose of man’s creation is that he might manifest the attributes and qualities of Allah (God) in his own person so that he may become god-like (within his human limitations) through following and obeying the Will of God.

The Holy Quran further emphasises that the Creation of the world is not purposeless and that to believe that it has no purpose is tantamount to unbelief. It says “And we have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in vain. That is the view of those who disbelieve . . .” (38:28). The Quran teaches us that there is a Divine purpose and wisdom in the Creation (46:4).

The Holy Quran then points out the various natural divisions of mankind and shows how these are to be used for our benefit and for achieving the goals and aims of existence. It has been written, “All values affecting man are based upon the concept that each human being is capable of achieving the highest stage of moral and spiritual development and that his personality must be respected.” The Quran takes note of diversities of race, colour, language, wealth, etc., which serve their own useful purposes in the social scheme, and describes them as signs of God for those who hear and possess knowledge:

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that, surely, are signs for those who possess knowledge.”

(30:23).

This verse confers no privilege nor imposes any disability. The Quran says that God has divided mankind into tribes and nations for greater facility of

intercommunication. Neither membership in a tribe nor citizenship in a state confers any privilege, nor are they sources of honour. The true source of honour in the sight of God is a righteous conduct:

“O mankind, we have created you from a male and a female; and we have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is most righteous among you. Surely Allah is All-knowing, All-aware.”

(49:14).

In his Farewell Address, the Prophet said:

“You are all brothers and are all equal. None of you can claim any privilege or any superiority over any other. An Arab is not to be preferred to a non-Arab, nor is a non-Arab to be preferred to an Arab . . .”

It is only consciousness of the fact that all mankind are equally creatures and servants of God and that they must all constantly seek the pleasure of God, that can bring about the realisation of true brotherhood which can stand the test of all the contingencies to which life is subject.

Islam teaches that in order to establish the proper social order in the world, God has been sending His Messengers as prophets into the world to teach mankind the natural laws of social organisation. These prophets are human beings who have been inspired by God to know the needs of the people of their time and the methods necessary for bringing about human advancement.

This very teaching of Islam is an important aspect of its social values since it teaches the Muslims to have the highest regard for all the Prophets who have appeared in the world. This is stressed again and again in the Quran.

“And for every people there is a Messenger.”

(10:48).

“. . . And there is a Guide for every people.”

(13:8).

“And there is no people to whom a warner has not been sent.”

(35:25).

“And we did raise among every people a Messenger with the teaching: Worship Allah and shun the Evil One.”

(16:37).

Other quotations emphasising the fact that all the Messengers taught basically the same message, were all men and mortal human beings and were too many to be mentioned are found in 21:26; 25:25; 10:3; 12:110 and 40:79.

It is therefore a principle of a Muslim's belief that he should believe in the essential truth of all prophets and revere them and that he should also believe in and respect the revealed Books which preceded the Holy Quran. This is a social value that causes Muslims to respect other religions and to have regard for them. The Holy Quran states:

“Say, we believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us, and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and other Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them and to Him we submit.”

(3:85).

In Islam, morals form the basis of society and it is upon moral principles that society is structured. The fundamental moral principle is the fear of God.

The Holy Quran itself states in its opening verses that it is a book and a guidance for the God-Fearing (2:3). The object is to create in the believer an eternal awareness of the existence and presence of God. This then acts as a deterrent against evil and an encouragement toward good deeds. This principle is further strengthened by the daily prayers which deter men from indecency and evil. As the Holy Quran says:

“. . . Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil, and remembrance of Allah, indeed, is the greatest virtue. And Allah knows what you do.”

(29:46).

However, Islam bases itself on acceptance of life, not on rejection or withdrawal. Monasticism, therefore, is not permissible in Islam. According to its teaching the family is the basic unit of human society. The foundation of a family is laid through marriage. There is no room in Islamic society for a class of people who live apart neither marrying nor multiplying in the earth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) has stated that marriage is one half of faith. He has also stated that:

“Some people marry for the sake of beauty, others for family connections, others for wealth, but your choice should be determined by moral and spiritual considerations, as these are the sources of lasting happiness.”

Moreover, Islam does not regard marriage as an indissoluble sacrament. This type of inflexibility has caused trouble and is still causing great problems to other religions. Islam regards marriage as a civil contract, imparting mutual duties and obligations. Marriage in Islam is, moreover, a relation between families as well as individuals. The Holy Quran also allows for limited polygamy under prescribed conditions. This practice has proven to have given

far greater social benefits to mankind than the rigid and inflexible enforced monogamy prescribed but loosely practised in the West.

It must be seen that Islamic society is an organic unit. One aspect of its teaching depends upon another. It is therefore for this reason that much emphasis is given to family organisation and the relation of the sexes. This factor is often greatly misunderstood. Islam stresses close family relations but beyond this emphasis is placed on propriety of relations. It is, therefore, recommended that for the good of society and for more healthy and higher moral relationships, the opposite sexes should not freely and indiscriminately intermingle, especially after puberty. In conformity with these values, Islamic society has always witnessed the development of female schools and colleges alongside similar institutions for males. There have always been women's hospitals established alongside hospitals for men. Women doctors, writers, scientists and teachers have attained great heights in Islamic society while functioning in an intellectual community of their own sex. This has always been seen as a more natural type of social relationship geared to avoid giving rise to the various types of social ills which have been observed where there is an unrestrained and completely loose intermingling of the sexes. Moreover, when social conditions do warrant various types of intermingling, Islam has prescribed that men and women should restrain their eyes, dress modestly, while women should particularly restrain their charms (24:31–32). These types of precautions are meant for the good of society but are not meant as a denigration of the status of either sex. The Holy Quran in several places stresses the equal importance of both sexes:

“Whoso acts righteously, whether male or female and is a believer,
We will surely grant a pure life; and We will surely bestow on such
their reward according to the best of their works.”

(16:90).

This parallel relationship is considered so important that full emphasis has been given in another verse where it is stated:

“Surely, men who submit themselves to God and women who
submit themselves to Him, and believing men and believing women,
and obedient men and obedient women, and truthful men and
truthful women, and men steadfast in their faith and steadfast
women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and
men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and
women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who
guard their chastity, and men who remember Allah much and
women who remember Him — Allah has prepared for all of them
forgiveness and a great reward.”

(33:36).

This verse and others (3:195; 9:73; 67:12) leave no room for doubt that according to the teachings of Islam God has given equal importance to both sexes.

Islam represents the culmination of the teaching of all the prophets. For this reason many matters are explained in the Holy Quran and the Hadith (traditions) which were not touched upon in earlier historic periods.

The Holy Quran has indicated three major evil tendencies that individuals must strongly guard against in order to prevent social disorders. It is pointed out that upon the commissioning of the first prophet Adam, God commanded submission to him but Iblis refused. This refusal of Iblis was based upon pride and arrogance and his fall was due to these evil tendencies. Pride, greed and jealousy are deadly sins which can lead to self-destruction as well as social disintegration.

It is for this reason that Islam has taken steps to eliminate customs which can lead to such social evils. Amongst these are the Islamic prohibitions on drinking, gambling, the eating of swine and the taking of interest (usury). These prohibitions are not to be taken lightly. They are of great importance to social progress. The Holy Quran has stated:

“They ask thee concerning wine and games of chance. Say, in both there is a great sin and also some advantages for men; but their sin is greater than their advantage.”

(2:220).

“O ye who believe! wine and games of chance . . . are only an abomination of Satan’s handwork. So shun each one of them that you may prosper. Satan seeks only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of wine and the game of chance, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from Prayer . . .”

(5:91–92).

The Quran clearly indicates in these verses that while there may be some social advantages in these practices, their harm outweighs their good and in the end they create enmity and hatred among the people through greed, envy, jealousy, and pride. This is a most important point in social development. It is therefore very distressing to Muslims and others who know the truth of these teachings to see that some established governments throughout the world are re-introducing banned gambling practices which can only lead to the moral degeneration of their citizens. Also the world wide usurious practices of international monetary organisations are causing untold misery for millions of human beings. Islam has clearly pointed out the harmful effects of these practices and has therefore prohibited them.

It is also to be deplored that authorities tend to overlook or sometimes even encourage the practice of drinking in institutions where young people are being educated. The Holy Prophet has stated:

“God has cursed wine, and the one who drinks it, and the one who serves it, and the one who sells it, and the one who purchases it, and the one who prepares it, and the one who asks for its preparation, and the one who carries it and the one to whom it is carried.”

The question regarding the consumption of swine and its effects are much more subtle. However, suffice it to say that this animal which is a scavenger and remarkably different in its habits from other animals normally used as food, has been prohibited widely by many of the prophets. The full extent of its effects upon the brain, nervous systems, blood circulation and character of those who eat it is still to be investigated more deeply but its disease bearing aspects are well-known and widely documented.

In contrast to these practices, Islam has encouraged voluntary prayer and fasting. Some advantages of fasting have been proven. (1) Bringing the passions under control. (2) Brightening the soul and spirit. (3) Adding taste to prayer. (4) Removing a false sense of pride and prestige. (5) Saving time and trouble. (6) Helping the economy. (7) Contributing to the preservation of health. (8) Teaching democracy. (9) Teaching moral discipline. (10) Keeping faith in God a living force.

Islam has, in fact, continually laid great stress on moral principles as a basis for improving the society. The Holy Prophet has stated:

“My Lord hath ordered me nine things: (1) to reverence Him both externally and internally; (2) to speak true and with propriety in prosperity and adversity; (3) to observe moderation in both affluence and poverty; (4) to benefit my relations and kindred who do not benefit me; (5) to give alms to him who refuseth me; (6) to forgive him who injureth me; (7) that my silence should be for attaining knowledge of Allah; (8) that when I speak, I should mention Him; (9) that when I look on Allah’s creatures it should be as an example for them; and Allah hath ordered me to direct in what is lawful.”

There are many other aspects of Islamic society of which it is not possible to encompass in this short essay such as economics, relation of the citizen to the state, government, etc.

The whole aspect of education and the emphasis placed upon it by the Prophet however requires some mentioning. Suffice it to say at this point that he stressed that the search for knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim male and female, and that one should seek knowledge even if it be in China. Also that it is obligatory for a Muslim to strive for knowledge from the cradle to the grave and that knowledge is the lost camel of the Muslim and he should seize it wherever he finds it.

If these principles are put into practice and everyone genuinely strives to improve his knowledge in all spheres while remembering that we are only infinitesimal creatures in the universe; and that our life on this planet is not the be-all and end-all of our existence but that we have a Creator who has sent us guidance through His inspired prophets — if we can do this and maintain the fear of God in all our actions, then there can be no doubt that the society of this world will improve — God willing.

Bibliography

- Holy Quran* — (English translation and commentary edited by Malik Ghulam Farid) Rabwah: Oriental and Religious Publishing Company, 1969
- 8500 Precious Gems from the World's Best Literature*
(Secunderabad, Abdullah Alladin, 1942)
- Extracts from the Holy Quran*
(Secunderabad, Abdullah Alladin, 1943)
- Khan, Muhammed Zafrulla
Civilization at the Crossroads
(Qadian: Nazir Dawat-o-Tabligh, n.d.)
- Khan, Muhammed Zafrulla
Contribution of Islam to the solution of the world's problems today
(*Muslim Sunrise* Vol. xxv. no. III 1958)
- Khan, Muhammed Zafrulla
Islam: its meaning for modern man
(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962)
- Khan, Muhammed Zafrulla
The Message of Ahmadiyyah
(Rabwah: Oriental and Religious Publishing Company, n.d.)
- Khan, Muhammed Zafrulla
Moral Principles as the Basis of Islamic Culture
(Washington, D.C.: American Fazl Mosque, n.d.)

Surrogate Mothers

(Abdul Majid)

One of the many dilemmas faced by the Christian world is the question of polygamy and divorce which are forbidden under the teaching of Christianity. In spite of the fact that many of the Prophets of the Bible, particularly the more notable Prophets such as Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, practised polygamy, the main objection on the teachings of Islam by the Christians is against polygamy; and though the Bible (Old Testament) permitted divorce, the New Testament does not. The only ground on which divorce is permissible under the New Testament is adultery (Matthew 19:9). However, besides adultery, mental and physical cruelty has also been included and recognised by law in many Christian States, as a valid ground for divorce, with the result that the incidence of divorces has gone out of all proportions.

While the doctrine of divorce has been adopted by the Christians, polygamy is still prohibited so much so that even the followers of other faiths, such as Islam, which permit polygamy, cannot have more than one wife.

There can be no denying the fact that situations can arise where second marriages become a necessity of life. For instance, if a woman is unproductive and incapable of bearing due to some intrinsic defect, for which she cannot be blamed or held responsible, or is afflicted with some physical disability so that she is or becomes incapable of performing conjugal obligations, the only course for the husband would be to have a second wife with a view to having children and satisfying biological urges without resorting to immoral and corrupt practices.

As a result of the restrictions on polygamy, the married couples, who do not have children due to the wife being barren, take recourse to the unnatural method of surrogate mothers. Under this arrangement, another woman, married or unmarried, is hired for a fixed price, and is inseminated with the sperm of the hirer husband through mechanical device, instead of by direct intercourse which would be an act of adultery being out of wedlock. The alarming complications arising out of such an arrangement have been demonstrated by the case of surrogate mother, Mary Beth Whitehead, reported in the Democrat and Chronicle of January, 5 and 7, 1987, who was

hired by William and Elizabeth Stern on contract for \$10,000, and was inseminated with the sperm of William Stern. The surrogate mother refused to give up the baby after birth and the matter is being contested in a Superior Court in New Jersey.

Viewed in the context of this situation, the teachings of Islam, which permit polygamy in certain situations, would obviously appear to be quite in the fitness of things to meet the exigencies of practical life. It is indeed a paradox on the part of those who criticise the teachings of Islam in respect of polygamy and divorce and are forced to practise it in one or the other form. Divorce, which is not permissible in Christianity, save on account of adultery, has been adopted and practised so frequently that most of the marriages end up in divorces. The undue barriers placed on divorce and polygamy have opened the floodgates of adultery which is being tacitly tolerated, if not approved, as stated in the New Encyclopaedia Britannica:

“Rigid monogamy was not unrelated to the common and widely tolerated practice of adultery, which the Roman Catholic Church regarded as more tolerable than divorce.”

(AWAKE — November 8, 1985 — page 10).

As to polygamy, which has not been legally adopted, like divorce, is being practised in the form of surrogate mothers, which, amounts to the admission of the fact that the teachings of Islam in respect of polygamy and divorce are quite in accord with the human nature and a way to meet the practical needs of mankind. The Quran says:

“The disbelievers do often wish (by their conduct) that they were Muslims.”

(Surah 15:3).

which obviously means that in whatever way the disbelievers may object to the teachings of Islam, they would be forced (by circumstances) to follow it.

Islam and Russia (2)

(Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah)

PROMISED MESSIAH'S PROPHECY

The Promised Messiah's prophecy about the tragic end of the Tsar is part of a poem which originally appeared in *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5. (Roohani Khazain, Vol. 21, pp. 151–152). The prophecy was made on April 15, 1905. At that time Tsar Nicholas II was enjoying prestigious autocratic rule over Russia. The prophecy is transliterated into English by Sir Chaudhry Muhammad Zafarullah Khan and is as follows:

“A sign will appear some days hence (April 15, 1905) which shall overwhelm country and town and meadow. People will be seized in a wave of Divine wrath, so suddenly that a naked one will have no time to secure his loin cloth. Suddenly an earthquake will severely shake man, and trees, and rocks, and oceans. In the twinkling of an eye the earth will be overwhelmed and streams of blood will flow like channel tides. Those whose night garments were white as jasmine will wake up in the morning as if clad in red. Men and animals will go out of their minds and pigeons and nightingales will forget their songs. That hour will bear hardly upon every traveller and those on a journey will lose their way in agony. The waters of mountain streams will run red with the blood of the dead like red wine. Men high and low will be convulsed with fear and the Czar himself will, at that hour, be in sad case. That Divine sign will be a specimen of terror. Heaven will attack with a drawn sword. Hasten not to repudiate this, thou stupid fool, for on the fulfilment of this sign depends my truth. This is a prophecy based on Divine revelation and will surely be fulfilled; wait then a while in righteousness and steadfastness.”

(Tazkira, English, pp. 308–309).

THE TSAR'S FAMILY

The Tsar Nicholas II was about 50 years old at the time of his tragic end. He was man of middle height, with gentle eyes and brown beard. Tsar Nicholas II

knew well how to guard his dignity while he was in power. His wonderful eyes of a most delicate blue looked at a person straight in the face with kind and tender expression. To sum up he had a charming personality.

The Empress Alexandra Fedorovna was a beautiful, dignified and gracious lady. She was five years younger than her husband. She had a slender figure.

The Royal Family had four young daughters called Grand Duchesses and one son officially called Grand Duke, Tsarevich, Crown Prince and first in succession to the throne of Russia.

Grand Duchess Olga was twenty-one and closely resembled her father. She was shy, blue eyed with chestnut hair and taller than her sisters and brother.

Grand Duchess Tatiana was twenty years of age. She was devoted to her mother.

Grand Duchess Marie was eighteen. She was enchanting, cheerful and a languorous young lady.

Grand Duchess Anastasia was sixteen. She was slightly built and had grown up rapidly. She was full of humour, eager in her movements and intelligence sparked through her beautiful eyes.

The Imperial Heir Alexis was thirteen years old. He was an auburn haired youth. He was officially Grand Duke Alexis Nicolaievich, heir apparent to the Russian throne. He was to succeed his father as the next Tsar. However, he was in poor health. He was suffering from a chronic disease which had impaired his health. As such, the Tsarevich's health was a source of constant grief for his parents. It was on account of his poor health that the Empress was very seriously given to the Orthodox Church. She deeply sought spiritual help for the health of the Tsarevich. The Tsar himself was inclined to seek spiritual help from one named Rasputin. In the eyes of the public, Rasputin was not what he posed to be, so he was hated by the general public. Indirectly the Royal couple was also disliked to seek Christian spiritual help from such a man. However, Rasputin was very close to the Emperor and Empress who constantly sought Christian spiritual help for the health of their dear son and in the matters of state affairs also. Thus Rasputin became one cause for the downfall of the Russian empire.

THE FALL OF THE TSAR

Tsarist Russia was in turmoil for quite some time. But the real danger arose when Germany declared war on Russia. It was early August 1914 (Western Calendar). In the heat of noon, next day, the Tsar made an official declaration from the Winter Palace. Russian crowds greeted it profusely and enthusiastically.

At Tannenberg, at the close of August 14, the Imperial Russian Army was besieged, attacked and defeated by the German army. Russia's manpower and casualty list was vast. Throughout the country hatred of all things connected with Germany had become unbearable. By Royal decree, the Tsar, changed the name of the capital St. Petersburg (German) to Slav Petrograd. (It has now been changed to Leningrad.) The Empress was assailed because of her German birth. Also, because she relied too much on Rasputin the so-called Christian man of God. However, during the war the Tsar was seldom away from his soldiers. The Empress devoted herself to the Red Cross. The Empress, Grand Duchesses Olga and Tatiana also joined the Christian Order as Sisters of Mercy, wore their required dress, habits, and all the time visited military hospitals in time of war.

Petrograd was threatened by advancing German troops. As a precautionary measure the State Treasury was removed from the Imperial Bank to another safe place in the city. Food was becoming scarce. In the freezing weather there was a shortage of fuel. The morale of the army suffered considerably. At that time the Parliament (Duma) went on record in the beginning of 1915 as stating:

"Our valiant army is retreating. Our army does not have the necessary equipment to fight the enemy. The enemy is bombarding lead and steel. But we are returning the fire with an inferior number of shells."

The Parliament called Duma expressed pessimism about the performance of the Russian army. Rasputin, the spiritual leader of the Tsar wrote to the Emperor in 1915:

"Dear Friend! I know that everything depends upon you. But the Russians who want the war do not understand that it is of no use. You are the Tsar, father of the people."

The Tsar frequently sought the advice of Rasputin the so-called man-of-God but the Russian revolutionary people did not like him. They did not like the Tsar seeking advice from Rasputin and having close relationships with him. However, there appeared no relief in sight for the people of Russia and the Tsar considered it a personal disgrace to end the war.

The Tsar dismissed the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army. He assumed that the army chief was planning to dethrone him by attacking the capital. So in the autumn of 1915, Emperor Nicholas II, pursuing what he regarded the sacred duty of Russian Tsar, assumed the Supreme Command of the Russian army himself. This act of the Tsar, however, did not please the members of the Parliament.

The life of the Russian people was not comfortable. In the capital city Petrograd, conditions of the poor were becoming deplorable. The bread shops were besieged with people in the harsh cold weather and after waiting

for about two hours, a customer would receive an insufficient quantity of bread. Sometimes people, broke down the doors of the bread shops. Unrest among the masses was growing and spreading. There was general discontent in all phases of life. The confidence of the people in the Central Government had expired. Civil liberties were curtailed with plain clothes police surveillance. Military dissatisfaction had grown. It appeared that a revolution was at hand. The British Ambassador warned Nicholas II of the seriousness of the situation; but the Tsar did not move. All he did was to return to Imperial Headquarters some five hundred miles away from the capital. The Romanov dynasty was about to collapse. Between February 23/March 28 and March 4/17 the February Revolution took a violent direction. There were general strikes, processions chanting revolutionary songs which met shooting from the troops. In one section of Petrograd, the Police were disarmed. Tension was growing. The army started taking sides with the people. The soldiers would not charge or shoot the rebellious crowds. Young soldiers of Petrograd revolted. Public buildings were set on fire. Attempts were made to free prisoners. As such, the Imperial Government appeared to have disintegrated. The Tsar was slow to react. A Provisional Government came into operation.

The Tsar did not appear to be disturbed. He did not take any action. Then he received a letter from the Empress on February 27/March 12, 1917 saying that concessions were inevitable, street fighting continued and many units had gone over to the enemy.

It was too late for the Tsar to take any constructive action. However, he wanted to reach Petrograd as early as possible but to his great disappointment, the direct train routes were blocked by the revolutionaries. So the Imperial train was diverted by way of a tedious, time wasting route through snow covered areas of the country. The Tsar arrived at an empty station away from Petrograd. It appeared that he was helpless and could do nothing. He received messages from his generals on various fronts on March 2/15, that he should abdicate. There was no alternative in sight and the Tsar gave in. That afternoon, he signed a document abdicating in favour of his son, His Imperial Majesty Alexis II. However, he was informed by his son's physician that the Tsarevich was too sick to assume the responsibilities and duties of Tsar, so he revoked the abdication document immediately. That evening, two representatives of the Provisional Government met him on the train. The Tsar told them that he would abdicate in favour of his brother Grand Duke Michael, second in succession. The Document was prepared and handed over to the delegates who returned to Petrograd. The Grand Duke, after some discussions, was confused and himself resigned. The Royal Throne became vacant and thus three hundred years of the Romanov dynasty came to an end in Russia.

Ex-Tsar Nicholas II is said to have written in his diary that all around him he saw treason, cowardice and deceit. On March 8/21, 1917 he surrendered

himself to the Commissioners of the Provisional Government. Early next morning, a car drove him to a place about a hundred miles away and eventually stopped outside a locked gate. The guard at the gate called out: "Who is there?" Someone said: "Nicholas Romanov." The guard instructed that he should pass through. At that time, the former emperor, Tsar, the autocrat ruler of all Russia, discovered that he had been disgracefully arrested and made a prisoner.

THE LAST DAYS

Ex-Tsar Nicholas II was made a prisoner from March 9/22, 1917, and kept inside the locked gates of what was called Alexander Palace. His family joined him. The Imperial Family had a restricted life. Telephone lines were cut; incoming and outgoing letters were censored. He walked in the park under watch. He was not permitted to go outside after dusk. Lunch was at 1 p.m. He would often work in the garden until three. Tea at four, dinner at seven and this was the routine day after day.

For months, during Russia's liberal attitude, the Provisional Government had considered plans to let the Imperial family go to England. The Bolshevik extremists had demanded that the ex-Tsar be executed. But the Minister of Justice of the Provisional Government firmly said "No" to that demand, because he said "The Russian Revolution does not take vengeance." The Bolsheviks were not strong enough, otherwise, they would have stormed the Alexander Palace where the ex-Tsar was leading the life of a prisoner. A period of three months elapsed. The British Government was willing to give asylum provided Russia would bear the expense of the Imperial family. Nevertheless, the Provisional Government told the Russian people that the Imperial family would remain in Russia.

The Provisional Government faced a threat from the supporters of Lenin who wrote a letter to his deputy from exile: "No support for the New Government." Lenin was forty seven at the time. He was given the name Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov. The Germans helped him to reach home from exile in order to create an internal turmoil in Russia already politically and generally weak. The Germans helped Lenin to enter Russia through Sweden and Finland. In Winston Churchill's words: "They transported Lenin in a sealed truck like a plague bacillus" (The world crisis: The aftermath, London, 1929). But his tactics did not work as he hoped and he had then to escape to Finland disguised as a fireman of a locomotive after the so named "July day".

For safety and security, the Provisional Government told ex-Tsar Nicholas II that it was time for the family to leave. The destination was supposed to be the Crimea, but instead they were taken to Tobolsk, a town of twenty thousand people in Western Siberia. Early in August 1917, the family was scheduled to move. In utter darkness, two days after the Tsarevich's

thirteenth birthday, the travellers were packed and waiting to travel. The ex-Tsar had turned fifty and the ex-Empress forty-five. No one guessed how long that stay at Tobolsk might last. The Provisional Government believed it should end when the Constituent Assembly met that winter.

The waiting was very tense. Grand Duke Michael, who turned down the offer of becoming the next Tsar, came to meet the family under close supervision. Because of the railway workers' irreconcilable attitude, the train ordered from Petrograd was delayed for some hours. The Imperial family — irritated and worried — sat about on suit cases and trunks in the semi-circular hall. It was day break and still there was no news of the train. At last, the travellers were alerted to move. It was still dark. They were driven through a park and village streets to a pair of trains displaying the placards of the Japanese Red Cross Mission, and decorated with Japanese flags.

The ex-Tsar was sombre that morning. Tsarevich was growing up to be a young man, but pale in appearance. The former Grand Duchesses were also pale, their hair had been cut too. The ex-Empress seemed to be crying. All the household things were to become part of the national museum. The trains were comfortable. In the main carriage travelled the Imperial family, thirty people or so from the household and a company of the First Regiment and some of the baggage. In the other compartments were servants and about three hundred soldiers who would mount guard at Tobolsk under orders of the Provisional Government.

The Imperial train remained unnoticed except by Siberian Railway officials. They did not maintain any schedule or timetable for the Imperial Train. Some people at the stations were surprised to notice that the blinds were drawn and that the compartments were heavily guarded. At one empty station some peasants wondered who the handsome bearded man was, and also the tall boy, who, along with a group of ladies, alighted away from the platform just for a short walk with a little dog. There was one brief alarm when the workers at Zvanko railway station did not want the train to pass through. However, the train moved on after all. After crossing the Urals towards the end of August, 1917, the Imperial family disembarked at Tyumen and were transferred to steamers named *Rus* and *Kormilets* for the voyage on the Tura and Tobol Rivers. It took the travellers about forty hours to cover the last two hundred miles. They passed by the village where Rasputin had lived and whose house could be seen. The sun was going down when the two steamers slid beside the wharf at Tobolsk. The passengers could see their temporary lodging on top of a hill that dominated the sprawling little town.

But the journey of the travellers was not quite over. They had to live on board for about a week while the Governor's House of Tobolsk Province was being properly furnished for the Imperial family. It was a two storey white house with a balcony and thirteen or fourteen rooms. The Imperial family

took the upper floor. To curtail their free movement outside the house, the guards erected a tall wooden barrier around the Governor's House.

Within a week or two, the Royal prisoners felt at home. People in Tobolsk, many of whom were descendants of former exiles to Siberia, were warm and loyal. For them the ex-Tsar was still the Tsar. They would eagerly watch the members of the Imperial family appearing at the window. The people would remove their hats as a gesture of respect. When the ex-Tsar and Empress walked through a public garden, they would kneel before them. From the town and round about, regular gifts of food came to the house. Also, nuns brought eggs and sugar.

Things went steadily until the end of September, 1917. Then another officer arrived to take over the control. He was a brutal person and constantly sought revenge for his previous exile to Siberia as a revolutionary. He insisted that the prisoners be photographed from head to foot for identification, as was required for prisoners. In those days of misery and also earlier, the ex-Tsar relied heavily on his wife Alexandra. By now the ex-Tsar had become quiet and reserved. However, he always appeared Royal in appearance and manner. The Empress took a very serious attitude at being a prisoner. Suddenly she started to age. She was overwhelmed with her religious beliefs and sometimes became hysterical.

The Provisional Government was losing control of affairs. The Bolsheviks were appearing everywhere. Lenin was still in Finland, hiding, and conveying messages such as "History will not forgive us if we do not take power now." Soon afterwards he returned to Petrograd in disguise. Soon the Provisional Government surrendered, Lenin came to power and the so-called Workers' State came into existence in Russia.

The regular delivery of mail and newspapers was interrupted at Tobolsk. The ex-Tsar was becoming exceedingly uneasy because he did not receive any factual news. He only heard rumours, and little of the truth. Sometimes he received distorted, cut down old telegrams attached to local packing papers. At times, he received a bundle of newspapers which terrified him completely. For a moment he would become incapable of saying or doing anything and was petrified for a short time.

The ex-Tsar began to realise the approaching danger, but, for the time being, the Governor's House remained without new instructions from the Bolshevik Government. It appeared that Tobolsk had been forgotten momentarily. The house was shivering cold in spite of fires in the rooms. The former Empress wrote to someone, "Everyone lives from day to day. God have mercy and save Russia." The ex-Tsar marched up and down the empty compound in the company of his daughters. Tsarevich Alexis sometimes suffered from severe pain and sometimes played alone or ran about here and there. The security of the family was very strict. Once a box of wine arrived for the ex-Tsar but was thrown into the river unopened.

The year 1918 started in the full grip of winter. The children would study and run around. The ex-Tsar built a platform on the roof of a greenhouse to keep himself busy and in health. The chief of guard at the Governor's House was altered when he found out that the local priest had prayed for the long life of the Imperial family. The Bolsheviks in the guard had taken control. The soldiers objected to anything the family was doing. Once the ex-Tsar wore a different kind of dress and he was searched completely by the soldiers. In the heat of the revolution, making everyone equal, the military officers were to remove their shoulder straps identifying their rank. The ex-Tsar wore the uniform of a colonel and he was asked to remove his shoulder straps. He started wearing a black sheepskin overcoat without any badge of rank. The soldiers had earlier decided that in case the ex-Tsar refused to comply with the revolutionary demand, his uniform should be removed. The chief of guard received orders from the Bolshevik Government that the Imperial family should receive the same rations as the soldiers, similar living quarters and the same amount of heating fuel. In order to comply with these instructions the servants were discharged. The food was reduced to soup and meat and no butter, cream or coffee was allowed. Lenin had assumed power and Moscow was made the capital instead of Petrograd. Lenin gave in to the German demands. The Bolsheviks signed away four thousand square miles of territory: Finland, Esthonia, Livonia, Courtland, Lithuania, Russian Poland. The ex-Tsar was shocked when the complete details of the treaty reached him.

The Imperial family was placed under further tight security. Frightening developments were reaching the family. The Regional Soviets were anxious to grab the Imperial family. They sent their demands to the Centre. At the same time, from a rival city, the Bolsheviks reached Tobolsk to take the matter into their hands. A new stern Commissioner from Moscow reached Tobolsk and took charge of the prisoners. To add to the misery of the Imperial family, the Tsarevich had become gravely ill and his foot was paralysed. With severe pain he cried aloud to his mother telling her he would like to die. He feared what the Bolsheviks might do to them. The new Commissioner told the ex-Tsar that the family had to move. As the Tsarevich was too ill to move, the family could wait, but the ex-Tsar had to move immediately. The destination was not disclosed. If the ex-Tsar wanted to take some family members with him he could. They would start at four o'clock the next morning. Apparently calm, the ex-Empress went to the sick Tsarevich and told him that she and his sister Marie, would accompany the ex-Tsar, and that when he felt better, the others could join them.

In darkness, early the next morning, horses clopped into the courtyard of the Governor's House. The horses were drawing peasant carts, bare, unsprung and unseated, tarantasses as they were generally called. The former Emperor and Empress said farewell to the rest of the family in the light of the stars. Ex-Tsar Nicholas had to ride with the Commissioners, while Marie sat

with her mother in another cart. The three daughters left behind were full of tears and Alexis had been weeping for a long time. Thus a sad little procession moved away from Tobolsk in the cold, chilly dawn.

It was a frightening journey to Tyumen railway station. Horses had to be changed many times. At the station, the prisoners were transferred to a special train. It was the Commissioner's personal decision that the train should take a longer route avoiding the regional Soviets who had earlier demanded to take hold of the Imperial family. The train left the Tyumen. In the meantime, the Ural Soviets sent a message to Siberian Soviets to block the railway line. Sixty miles from Omsk, the railway line was blocked by troops. The Commissioner, leaving the party to wait, went to town to get in touch with Moscow. He was told by the Moscow Chairman of the All Russian Congress of Soviets that he would have to hand over the prisoners to the Comrades at Ekaterinburg. Then the train started and entered Ekaterinburg railway station. A noisy mob was awaiting and shouting: "Show us the Romanovs!" The Regional Soviets formally took charge of the ex-Tsar, Empress and Grand Duchess. The ex-Tsar had expressed several times that he would go anywhere but to the hostile Urals, and now he was surrounded by them. That night, at one door, he was contemptuously greeted: "Citizen Romanov! You may enter." He and his family slept in the house called The House of Special Purpose. It was April 17/30, 1918. A formal deed was signed that the party would be kept under guard in the town of Ekaterinburg. Ironically, the document was signed with full names and exact formal titles of each captive.

THE TRAGIC END

It was a tiresome and rough period as well for the remaining members of the Imperial family at Tolbosk. A new red-guard arrived from Ekaterinburg. Also, a new vicious Commissioner arrived. His assignment was to bring the rest of the family to join their parents. The Commissioner insisted on a daily roll-call of the prisoners. He did not permit the young ladies — former Grand Duchesses to lock their doors at night. Tsarevich was very sick and confined to bed. By May 6/19, 1918, Tsarevich Alexis could just travel even though he could not walk. Tsarevich, almost an invalid, was carried from the river wharf to the steamer Rus. The Commissioner, however, insisted that Tsarevich's cabin be kept locked. But the young ladies were refused permission to lock their cabin door.

Having reached Tyumen, the steamer Rus came along the bank opposite a waiting train. The Imperial young ladies, called each by name by the Commissioner, walked slowly to the bank. Tsarevich Alexis, however, was carried by someone. The Imperial children were given an ordinary passenger coach on the train. The train reached the outskirts of Ekaterinburg after

midnight on May 10/23, 1918. It stopped briefly at the principal station for the Commissioner to submit his report. The train moved, sometimes forward, sometimes backward, halting for a while to change directions throughout the night. At 7 a.m. on May 11/29, 1918, it appeared that the train had come to a final halt. The members of the Imperial family were ordered to get off the train and climb into some local droshkies waiting close by. The young ladies moved first and the sick Tsarevich was then carried over to join them. The horses moved under the supervision of an escort. At last, the final stop came. It was raining at the time. The Imperial young people were carried to the Ipatiev House — named The House of Special Purpose. The rest of the party, servants etc. were free to go anywhere they liked. Now only the Imperial family was confined to imprisonment.

The House of Special Purpose stood upon the highest of hills in the town of Ekaterinburg now called Sverdlovsk, the town of miners and metal workers. The wealthy owner Ipatiev had been ordered to vacate the house. Before the Imperial family arrived, a wooden fence, close to the windows had been built. Later, another fence hid the building completely up to the top and enclosed also the front entrance and gateway. It was a two storey house. The upper floor was the prison and the lower floor was turned into offices and guard rooms.

The Imperial rooms were closely guarded. The ex-Tsar was rudely called Nicholas the Blood-Drinker. Family requests were denied. The guards entered any room they wanted. The Imperial family was under constant mental torture.

The orders for the murder of the Imperial family had been issued by the Bolshevik government. On May 19/June 2, 1918, and on July 1/14, 1918, priests were summoned to conduct services at the House. On the morning of July 3/16, 1918, the Commissioner assembled the guards and issued final orders that the Imperial family had to be shot.

Just after midnight on July 3/16, 1918, the Commissioner went upstairs to tell the family that they had to be moved immediately. All of them quickly washed and dressed themselves in preparation for another unknown journey. The Commissioner led them downstairs into the yard and to a vaulted unfurnished small semi-basement room. They were asked to wait there. The ex-Tsar requested chairs which were provided.

The former Empress was too weak to stand so she took one chair. The ex-Tsar took another supporting his son on his arms and shoulder as Tsarevich rested across the third chair. Behind them chairs were taken by the former Grand Duchesses. It was a scene of an Imperial group photograph to be taken. For a while, it was calm and quiet. Suddenly the Commissioner entered and appeared to be saying that we are compelled to shoot you. The ex-Tsar half arose, still holding Tsarevich. He was going to say something but the

Commissioner shot him in the head and he died on the spot. The Empress made the sign of the cross and was instantly shot. More shots were fired. Tsarevich moved his hand and was shot three times. One Grand Duchess screamed and she was immediately bayoneted and beaten to death. One Grand Duchess's play dog was beaten to death with the butt of a rifle. No one survived. The Imperial Russian family had mercilessly been murdered after prolonged agony and suffering. Rolled up in sheets, covered with mats, the corpses were packed into a lorry and driven into woods. There, the bodies were burned where it is said, they burned for three days.

Company of the Righteous

"O ye who believe! fear Allah
and be with the righteous."

(Quran 9:119).

To keep company with the righteous and the truthful is highly essential. It serves to remove moral and spiritual rust from one's heart, and exercises a very wholesome influence on it. It leads a believer to the fountain of purity and righteousness.

Truth and Justice

"O ye who believe! Be strict in observing justice and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both more than you are. Therefore follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably. And if you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that Allah is well aware of what you do."

(Quran 4:136).

Mission of the Holy Prophet

(Mostafa Sabet)

The mission of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him), was to establish Islam. Islam is the religion which he spent twenty-three years of his life planting firmly in this world. It is the religion which is believed by its followers to be the perfect universal and everlasting religion which God has chosen for all of mankind since the day it was revealed till the Day of Judgment. Thus, when I speak about the mission of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him), I would in fact be speaking about Islam. I shall endeavour to give a bird's eye view of what Islam means.

The real-meaning of the word Islam is to be in peace or to enter into peace. A Muslim is one who makes his peace with God and man. Thus Islam is the religion of peace and its purpose is to establish peace between man and God, between man and his fellow-beings and between man and himself.

Islam establishes peace between man and himself because it respects, promotes and emphasises freedom of conscience. A person may be forced or coerced in saying he believes or disbelieves but he cannot be forced to believe or disbelieve. The Holy Quran affirms:

“There shall be no compulsion in religion.”

(2:257).

Again it says:

“Proclaim: This is the truth from your Lord; then let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve.”

(18:30).

Islam brings peace to one's mind by acknowledging the fact that God has created man and bestowed upon him a mind and reasoning faculties. Accordingly, Islam does not demand that man should accept any doctrines which may be in direct conflict with reason. There are no mysteries or mysterious dogmas that man should accept but cannot understand.

Islam brings peace to man because its laws and teachings do not contradict the established laws of nature. The laws which regulate everything in nature

around us are the work of God. The Holy Quran which regulates every aspect in our lives is the word of God; and in Islam, the word of God goes hand in hand with the work of God without any contradiction or conflict.

Islam does not demand that man should follow and obey God's commandments blindly but the reason and the wisdom behind every commandment is also given. This also contributes to the peace in man's mind.

Islam emphasises that God does not burden anyone beyond his capacity. Thus it does not obligate man to follow any commandments which are beyond the capacity of human beings. It does not teach that man should pluck out his eye if it offends him but it teaches women not to expose their beauty and enjoins both men and women to cast down their looks. Therefore, the law in Islam can never become a curse or a stumbling block which may lead to a curse. It rather adds to the peace of mind by emphasising that God does not burden anyone beyond his capacity.

In addition, Islam does not ignore the physical needs of man. It does not teach that one should castrate himself or abandon the world or live in solitude or refrain from marriage in order to maintain chastity. Islam, on the contrary, encourages one to marry and raise a family, thus it channels and directs man's desires in the proper direction which brings peace to man's mind.

Islam also provides means for establishing peace between man and his fellow-beings. In order to establish peace between various religions, Islam recognises that God is not only the God of the Arabs or the God of the Jews or the God of the Gentiles but He is the God of all people and accordingly He sent prophets and messengers to all the people. It is an article of faith in Islam to believe in all the prophets. Further, a Muslim must respect the religions of other people and refrain from reviling what they worship other than Allah. The Holy Quran says:

“Reville not those whom they call upon beside Allah.”

(6:109).

In order to bring peace in the family Islam enjoins:

“Thy Lord has commanded that ye worship none but Him, and has enjoined benevolence towards parents. Should either or both of them attain old age in thy lifetime, never say Ugh! to them, nor chide them, but always speak gently to them. Be always tender towards them and pray: Lord, have mercy on them, even as they nurtured me when I was little.”

(17:24).

To bring peace between relatives and neighbours:

“Render to the kinsman his due.”

(17:27).

Again:

“Show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbour that is a kinsman and the neighbour that is a stranger, and the companion by your side, and the wayfarer.”
(4:37).

To bring peace between buyer and vendor:

“Give full measure and full weight, and diminish not unto people their things.”

Generally, Islam enjoins:

“Do not destroy your offspring for fear of poverty.”

“Do not destroy the life that Allah has made sacred save for a just cause.”

“Do not approach the property of the orphan during his minority except for the most beneficent purpose.”

“Do not tread haughtily upon the earth.”

“Fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you but do not transgress. Surely Allah loves not the transgressors.”

(2:191).

There are about seven hundred commandments in the Holy Quran which relate to all aspects of human life and provide the best course for man to deal and to live in peace with his fellow-beings. As Davenport sums it up:

“The Quran is the general code of conduct for the Muslim world; a social, civil, commercial, military, judicial, criminal, penal and yet a religious code: by it everything is regulated; from the ceremonies of religion to those of daily life; from the salvation of the soul to the health of the body; from the rights of the general community to those of the society; from morality to crime; from punishment here to that in the hereafter.”

Lastly, Islam means peace between man and God. In order to establish peace between man and God it is necessary to know God. True knowledge of God cannot be the product of man's mind. True knowledge of God can only be obtained from God Himself. Therefore, there must be a relationship between man and God whereby God may reveal Himself to man. To have such a relationship, man must recognise the True Living God. This was the prime objective of Islam: to establish the worship of the One and only One True Living God. Thus the Holy Prophet echoed the cry of Moses which he raised addressing the Israelites in the wilderness when he said: “Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is One God.” The same concept was explained by

Jesus, peace be on him, when he said: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." (John 17:3). In Islam, this principle of recognising the True God and the prophet of the time was entrenched in the first article of faith known as the Kalima of Islam which states: "I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger." This is the first creed a person would profess in order to become a Muslim. In other words, a person affirms that I have recognised and accepted the Only True God, whose name in the Arabic language is Allah, and through the message revealed to His chosen messenger Muhammad (peace be on him), I am now ready to establish a relationship with Him.

The essence of worship in Islam is to have a living relationship with God. It is not just mere dogmas that one must believe in or offer certain words of prayers that one must perform certain rituals. It is a living relationship in which doctrines, words of prayers and rituals are only means to help one in establishing such a relationship. It is in this sense that Islam emphasises that the purpose of creation of man is to worship God, i.e. to have a relationship with Him. The Holy Quran says:

"I have created men, high and low, that they may worship Me."
(51:58).

Misunderstanding of the true meaning of worshipping God, and misunderstanding the true purpose of worship, led some people to question the usefulness of such worship and hence many have abandoned worship completely. Usually one would ask; why should I worship God? Why should I give thanks to Him? What benefits God may derive out of my worship that He rewards me when I worship Him, and what harm do I cause Him that He punishes me if I do not worship Him? And what kind of god is that who needs to be worshipped and flares up in anger if man does not obey his commandments?

Islam provides the answer to all these questions by emphasising the fact that worship in the form of rituals is not the end in itself but rather is a means by which man may be able to reach the real end, that is to have a relationship with God. This relationship is expressed in the Holy Quran by the term "Mulaqat" or meeting with God. The Holy Quran says:

"O man! Thou art verily striving hard towards thy Lord until thou meet Him."
(84:7).

This meeting between man and God does not take place only in the hereafter but it takes place here also in this life. This meeting is the fruit and also a sign of establishing a living relationship with God. When man is graced

by meeting with God, he starts to experience true happiness and attain to real peace. The Holy Quran says:

“O ye who believe! remember Allah much and glorify Him morn and eve. He it is Who sends His blessings on you, and His angels call down blessings on you, that He may bring you forth from all kinds of darkness into light. He is ever Merciful to the believers. ON THE DAY WHEN THEY MEET HIM, they will be greeted with: PEACE; and He has prepared for them a noble recompense.”

(33:42–45).

This state of peace between man and God is called Islam, and this was the most important objective for the Holy Prophet to establish in his mission.

This, in a few words, is a bird's eye view of the message of Islam. This is the message which the Holy Prophet spent twenty-three years of his life planting firmly on earth. It is a message of peace; peace between man and himself, peace between man and his fellow-beings and peace between man and God. Yet, when we cast a glance at the world today we find no peace. When we look at the so-called Muslim World of today, we are horrified and terrified of the prospects. There is not a single Muslim country today which is not in conflict with another Muslim country. Most of the Muslim countries are ruled by totalitarian regimes or by military regimes. Democracy does not exist except in formalities. Freedom of conscience and basic human rights seem to have been obliterated from today's Muslim dictionary. One may sadly ask: Is this the destiny of the message of peace for which the Holy Prophet spent his life to establish on earth? The answer is an emphatic NO! We should not forget that the Muslims of today are far away from the true and peaceful teachings of Islam as are the Christians of today far from the peaceful teachings of Christ. There is not much difference between the Sunnis and Shaites killing each other in the Middle East and the Catholics and Protestants killing each other in Northern Ireland. The terrorist groups active in the Muslim world are matched and even surpassed by the terrorist groups active in the Christian world: The Red Brigade, Baader Hoffman and according to some the IRA, the Mafia and even the American Government, depending on which side of the fence you stand in Nicaragua.

This is not what the God of Peace wants for the inhabitants of this earth; and because Islam is the religion of peace, God has sent in our time His prophet of the latter days, the long awaited Mahdi, the Promised Messiah who came in the spirit and power of Christ thus fulfilling the prophecies about Jesus's second advent in the same way as John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah and thus fulfilled the prophecies about the second advent of Elijah before Jesus Christ.

The Promised Messiah has come and founded this Community, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. He came in the peaceful spirit of Jesus Christ

in order to establish peace once again in this tormented earth by bringing back the true teachings of Islam. We believe that ultimately the will of God shall prevail and peace will be established on earth, and once again all of us with the heavenly hosts shall sing together: Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will towards all people.

Existence of God

The religion that claims to be from God must show Signs of being from God and should bear the seal of God which should attest the fact that it is from God. Islam is such a religion. That God Who is hidden is known through this religion and manifests Himself to the true followers of this religion. A true religion is supported by the hand of God, and through such religion God manifests Himself that He exists. The religions that depend entirely upon stories are only a form of idol worship. Such religions do not possess the spirit of truth. If God is alive as He was, and speaks and hears as He did, there is no reason why He should continue silent as if He does not exist. If He does not speak in this age, then equally and certainly He does not hear either. In other words, He is now nothing. That religion alone is true which demonstrates that God hears and speaks in this age also. In a true religion, God attests His existence through His speaking. Search for God is a difficult matter. It is not an affair of worldly philosophers and wise men. Observation of the heavens and earth only leads to the conclusion that although orderliness indicates that the universe should have a Creator yet it is not proof that such a Creator in fact exists. There is a deal of difference between ought to be and is. The Holy Quran is the only book which sets forth His existence as a fact and not only urges the seeking of God but makes Him manifest. There is no other book which makes manifest the Hidden Being.

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad – the Promised Messiah).

A Real Life Drama

(Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry)

PLACE Ahmad Pur East, PAKISTAN

COURT Court of the Assistant Commissioner

DATE 17 March 1987

TIME 11 a.m.

(These are the proceedings of the Assistant Commissioner's Court on 17th March 1987, briefly recorded. Two Ahmadi Muslims namely Maulvi Ghulam Muhammad and Hakim Muhammad Afzal have been brought before the Court, the charges against them being "recitation of the Holy Quran" and "possession of Kalima Tayyabah calendars", respectively.)

The Assistant Commissioner enters the room, everyone present rises up. He takes his seat and the proceedings begin. RANA SARDAR AHMAD Advocate (Non-Ahmadi) presents the bail applications on behalf of the accused Ahmadis.

Asstt Commissioner: *(To Rana Sardar Ahmad, Defence Lawyer)*
What is the case?

Defence Lawyer: Section 298–C, Pakistan Penal Code, Sir. My client is charged with the recitation of the Holy Quran!

Public Prosecutor: He belongs to a minority sect — Non-Muslim minority. They have no right to recite the Holy Book.

Asstt Commissioner: What is Section 298–C?

Defence Lawyer: *(reads the Section loudly, and then comments)*
There is no mention in this Section that Ahmadis cannot recite the Holy Quran, Sir.

Asstt Commissioner: *(takes the Pakistan Penal Code in his hands and reads the Section himself)*
Well, yes. There is prohibition of preaching, of saying Azan, and they haven't done any preaching or called the Azan. If they read the Holy Quran and teach to their own people — this is not barred by this section.

- Public Prosecutor:** Sir, they preach and hurt the feelings of others. Maulvi Ghulam Mohammad is a Qadiani preacher. He recites the Holy Quran in a loud voice and thus the feelings of Muslims who pass by are hurt when they listen to the recitation.
- Asstt Commissioner:** Tell me, if a Muslim reads the Bible, will the Jews and the Christians be justified to bring about a case against him?
- Public Prosecutor:** Sir, the Bible is an ordinary book. If it becomes a law not to read it, we won't even touch it.
- Defence Lawyer:** May I remind my friend that there is no law in Pakistan which forbids the recitation of the Holy Quran.
(addressing the Assistant Commissioner)
Sir, the Holy Book is the word of God. It is for the whole mankind. No one has got any proprietary rights over it. If it were their own book, they could establish their right over it.
- Public Prosecutor:** Sir, Ahmadis are non-Muslims. When they recite the Holy Quran, our feelings are hurt. They have no right to possess the copy of the Holy Quran.
- Defence Lawyer:** Sir, the Public Prosecutor is hurting my feelings with those words! We have sacrificed our lives for Pakistan. We are patriotic Pakistani citizens.
(The Assistant Commissioner looks at both the Counsels and grants the bail, against fifty thousand rupees)
- Asstt Commissioner:** What is the second case?
- Defence Lawyer:** Sir, same section. The charge is that the accused Ahmadi had a calendar with Kalima Tayyabah printed on them, in his shop!
- Public Prosecutor:** No Sir, this case is slightly different. The accused had hung such calendars openly, to the view of all, in his shop. By seeing these calendars in an Ahmadi's shop, the feelings of those Muslims who pass by are hurt.
(The Assistant Commissioner accepts the bail, against fifty thousand rupees, without any hesitation, and both "Prisoners in the Cause of Allah" come out of Jail by 3 p.m. the same day).

Islam and Revelation

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

The Islamic conception of revelation is a subject of great importance because without revelation there would be no Islam. It is through revelation that one is assured of the existence of God and it is through revelation that God makes His will known to mankind. It is necessary, therefore, that the reality of revelation be established.

Definition of Revelation

Throughout the ages many righteous Muslims have been the recipients of Divine revelation. They have enjoyed verbal communication with God. It is this kind of revelation that gives perfect certainty of faith and proves that there is a God who does exist.

Revelation has often been misunderstood even by religious minded people. According to them any idea that flashes into the mind is a revelation from God. This is their conception of "God speaking". This is the view of Dr. Buchman the founder of the Oxford Group Movement which has now taken the name of Moral Re-Armament. Similarly it is the view of many others. Any inspirational promptings that come into the mind are said to be the voice of God. The truth is that everybody experiences inspired thoughts and ideas whether he or she is a believer or not. If such experiences are to be regarded as Divinely inspired then what test is there for judging which thoughts are revealed and which thoughts are not revealed or whose thoughts are Divinely inspired and whose thoughts are not Divinely inspired?

This theory of revelation is repudiated by Islam. According to Islam the recipient of Divine revelation actually hears the spoken word of God fall on his eardrum as clearly as he would hear the voice of his companion. There is no mistake about it at all. Sometimes the recipient sees the words before him in writing instead of hearing them or sometimes he finds his own tongue reciting them. It can be well understood what an impression such an experience will have on the mind of the recipient. He knows with certainty that his experience is not mere imagination but the result of direct experience of a higher source.

This is the highest form of revelation defined by Islam. Another way in which God reveals Himself is through symbolic language shown in dreams. Milk, for instance, indicates knowledge and likewise other things have their interpretations. There is yet another way in which God manifests Himself which is through visions. In such a state, while fully awake, one is able to see and hold conversation with the dead and sometimes one is shown things occurring at some distant place. This is an intriguing subject on its own.

Necessity of Revelation

It is only through revelation that one can attain certainty of faith. Reason is certainly a great blessing which is very essential in one's search to find out the reality of things. It is said by some people that reason has no connection with religious beliefs. This is not true for even the most dogmatic believer will bring to light one reason or another for his adherence to his particular beliefs. Reason is a blessing not to be despised for it plays an important role in the destiny of mankind. However, it is true that reason alone cannot lead one to a degree of perfect certainty. Reason alone cannot prove the existence of a thing though it can lead one to the conclusion that a thing most probably does exist or ought to exist. How many people believe in the existence of God because they have come to the conclusion that indications suggest there ought to be; but when asked to present conclusive arguments are quite unable to do so? There are millions of such people. This is because they have not reached that stage of certainty.

Reason always has a companion which enables a presumption to be proved a fact. For instance, if one sees smoke rising up in the distance reason leads one to suppose that there is a fire. However, certainty on the matter cannot be assured until one approaches and visibly sees the flames. Here the companion reason which brings about certainty is "observation". Similarly reason alone cannot prove spiritual truths but when associated with its correct companion then certainty in such matters can be attained.

Islam is not merely a theoretical religion but is a religion which has been established by God Himself. Its fundamental basis, therefore, is revelation. Hundreds of Muslims — particularly Ahmadies — experience Divine revelation in the manner related. What clearer sign could there be for the seeker after truth? Islam leads one to certainty of knowledge that God exists and that one is treading on the right path.

The Theory of Hallucination

We now come to an important aspect of the subject that cannot be overlooked. Opponents of Islam have time and time again charged the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) with being possessed of an unsound

mind and being subject to epileptic fits. His revelations, they say, were nothing but hallucinations. The people who make these charges do so to suit their own philosophy and make no intelligent investigation of the subject. Islamic history does not provide a single indication to suggest such a view. Their sweeping assertions are, therefore, not in accordance with historical evidence.

A person suffering from epileptic fits and mental delusions could not deceive a whole nation. The early Muslims underwent all manner of hardships and persecutions for the sake of their beloved Prophet. They were infused with love and loyalty which could not have been brought about by one subject to fits and delusions. He inspired the hearts of his followers with a genuine love because he himself was genuine in all he spoke and did. The ministry of the Holy Prophet continued for twenty-three years and within this period Arabia accepted the truth of his Divine mission. He was an embodiment of truth and righteousness and his purity of heart was acknowledged by all alike from his early childhood. It was not until he reached the age of forty that he proclaimed his Divine mission. Then, for twenty-three years he was the continual recipient of revelation from God. It was his truthfulness and unblemished character that won the hearts of his followers. He was acknowledged the wisest of counsellors and was the ruler of his people and today the wisdom of Islamic law is recognised by nearly one fifth of the world's population. Even George Bernard Shaw, one of the most renowned rationalists of his time, has written about Muhammad (peace be upon him):

“I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it, the much needed peace and happiness.”

It is indeed a mere fallacy to suggest that one possessing such a noble character and such profound wisdom was the victim of mental derangement. Even Gilman, a biased historian, has admitted concerning the contents of the Quran:

“These are not the ravings of an unbalanced mind, but the powerful cries of one in earnest for the good of others.”

(The Saracens by Arthur Gilman, M.A.).

It is true that there are people suffering from mental derangement who are deceived in imagining they hear voices and see visions; but they are medical cases and the likelihood of anyone being deceived by such people is most improbable.

Falsehood not identified with Truthfulness

Another objection raised against the validity of the revelations proclaimed by Muhammad (peace be on him) is that he was just a rank imposter. It is said that he pretended to receive revelation and deceived the people into believing

so. Such an objection only springs from those not truly conversant with the life of the Prophet and also with the Quran. This objection can be replied to from many lines of approach but at this stage one will suffice. It has already been mentioned that the character of the Holy Prophet was exemplary in every way. When a child he was always quiet and obedient and was given to reflection and meditation as he grew up. He always did whatever he could to help the oppressed and at the age of twenty joined a society which rendered help to those subjected to unjust treatment. The love of justice, righteousness and truth dominated his heart and people were so impressed by his nobility of character that he was named “the truthful one” and “the trusted one”.

At the age of forty he received his first revelation from God to the effect that he had been appointed a prophet with a message for all mankind. At first he was wonder-struck and doubted the validity of his revelation. It was not until he repeatedly heard the call that no doubt whatsoever was left in his mind. The majesty of the heavenly words impressed themselves on the very core of his heart. The moment came when he called a large gathering of people to make a public proclamation. Addressing them he said:

“Ye people of Mecca, if I were to tell you that a great army is advancing on Mecca and has arrived near at hand with the intention of making an attack, would you believe me?”

Such an event was most unlikely because not only was Mecca regarded as a sacred city to the Arabs, but also had such an army been approaching then certainly the news would have been quickly conveyed by the shepherds and agriculturalists attending to their duties round about the city. Despite this, the answer received to his question was:

“We would believe you for you have never been guilty of falsehood.”

The Holy Prophet then said:

“You testify that I never speak that which is not true. I inform you, therefore, that God has appointed me to deliver His message to you, and to point out to you the error of your ways.”

This is an instance of the implicit trust with which he was regarded and it is no wonder that he was given the name of “The Trusted One”. Another such instance is shown by the behaviour of his friend, Abu Bakr, who came to him and enquired whether it was true that he had put forth a claim to have been appointed a prophet by God. The Holy Prophet replied that it was true. Immediately Abu Bakr exclaimed:

“I swear by my father and my mother that you have never uttered a falsehood, and I cannot conceive that you would say that concerning God which is not true. I bear witness, therefore, that there is no God besides Allah, and that you are the Messenger of God.”

What a perfect exemplar of truthfulness and what trust he won in the hearts of the people! Critics endeavour to lead one to suppose that for the last twenty-three years of his life he masqueraded as a sheep in wolves' clothing and deliberately lied and deceived the public. Such a possibility is absolutely incompatible with the life of one who had for forty years never told a falsehood and who had lived an exemplary life of righteousness and purity. It is absurd to suggest that suddenly overnight such a pious and noble character would embark upon a course of falsehood, fraud and deceit. The charge is quite baseless and reveals the ignorance or bias of those who make it.

There is nothing, therefore, to warrant the supposition that the Prophet suffered from mental derangement or that he was an imposter. The arguments just discussed are just a couple among many which refute such objections; and others bearing witness to the truth of his revelations will be discussed further on.

The Criterion of the Bible

It is strange that while the Bible testifies to the truth of the Holy Prophet, Christians pay no heed to his call. They, along with the secularists, reject his claims and levy against him the already mentioned allegations. The criterion in the Bible for distinguishing a true prophet from a false prophet is of special concern for the Christian because it bears witness to the truth of Muhammad (peace be on him) and the revelations he received. The Bible states in more places than one that a false prophet will not succeed in his mission and will be subject to the wrath of God who will see that he is destroyed. The Bible states:

“If there arise among you a false prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder comes to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying: Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God.”

(Deut. 13:1-5).

“But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak or that shall speak in the name of other gods, THAT SAME PROPHET SHALL DIE.”

(Deut. 18:20).

These passages foretell the fate that will overtake a false prophet and the Bible shows that this was actually the fate of imposters.

“Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the (false) prophet. Hear now, Hananiah: The Lord hath not sent thee: but thou makest the people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold I will send thee away from off the earth; this year thou shalt die, because thou hast spoken rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the (false) prophet died in the same year in the seventh month.”

(Jer. 27:15, 17).

Again:

“For before these days rose up Theudas, a false prophet boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men about four hundred joined themselves; who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed, and brought to nought. After this rose up Joseph of Galilee in the days of enrolment, and drew away some of the people after him. He also perished and, all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered.”

(Acts 5).

According to the testimony of the Bible had Muhammad (peace be on him) been a false prophet he would have met the fate due to false prophets and his work would have been brought to nought. This, however, was not the case. He succeeded in his mission and he died a natural death and not until the whole of pagan Arabia had accepted Islam. Today nearly one fifth of the world's population bears witness to his truth. Success surrounded his mission on all sides. All this proves, according to the Bible, that he was a true prophet and Christians, in denying this truth, are in fact denying the testimony of their own scriptures.

Revelation the Experience of Many

Revelation has been and still is today the experience of many people. It is because the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be on him) was the founder of the religion of Islam that his life has been given particular attention in the preceding pages. The truth of Islam entirely depends upon the truth of his claims to revelation. This is why the way has been made clear in the beginning by dealing with the most common objections.

If the Holy Prophet had been the only claimant to revelation then one could be justified to some extent in doubting his truth. But this is not so. Throughout the past thirteen centuries there have been many Muslims who have had personal experience of revelation and who do also today. In this age

God has demonstrated His attribute of speech by pouring down revelation upon Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad — The Promised Messiah — and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community. His son — Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad was also very frequently the recipient of revelation and in his book “Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam” he states:

“By the Grace of God the writer (himself) of this paper has had personal experience of revelation and can confidently assert on the basis of his own experience that revelation is conveyed in words and is not a mere idea of the mind.”

A false prophet cannot lead men into the presence of God. A corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit. The very fact that Muslims enjoy Divine communion with God is a sure sign of the truth of the Holy Prophet because a satanic tree will not bear Divine fruit.

The Proof of Divine Revelation

At this point an objection may be raised that however reasonable may appear what has been said it is after all only hearsay. If the reader is not personally conversant with Islamic history or has no faith in history then this objection may at once come to his mind.

As already shown the beauty of Islam is that it is a living religion. Divine revelation did not cease with the Prophet but, as just mentioned, continues to be a distinguishing feature of Islam. History, therefore, is in no way a necessary medium for establishing the reality of revelation. The Bible records how in the Biblical days God used to speak with His chosen servants but today one no longer witnesses this attribute manifested among Christians in the same manner that it once blessed the Jews and early followers of Christ. Christianity depends on tales of the past to illustrate the subject of revelation. An Anglican Bishop openly admitted to me that he did not even believe in verbal revelation.

Today, Divine revelation is a distinguishing feature of Islam alone; and this very age bears testimony to the proof of verbal revelation without having to rely on tales of the past. It is not suggested that God never manifests Himself among the Christians but there is a vast difference between the degree of revelation manifested in Christianity and Islam. This point will be discussed further on.

An Illustration of Divine Revelation concerning 1914–18 War

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, claimed in the year 1889 that God had revealed to him that in his person was fulfilled the advent of the

Promised Messiah concerning whom prophecies are contained in Islamic, Christian and other religious scriptures. In his own words he said:

“The task for which God has appointed me is that I should by removing the obstacles which have been set between man and his Maker, re-establish in the hearts of men love and devotion to God, and by making manifest the truth, should put an end to all religious wars and strife and thus lay the foundations of abiding peace, and should acquaint the world with the spiritual truths which it had forgotten, and should demonstrate to the world the true spiritual life which had been displaced by material desires, and should in my own life manifest those Divine powers which have been endowed upon man but which can be manifested only through prayer and devotion; and above all that I should permanently re-establish that bright and pure unity of God free from all polytheistic ideas which had entirely disappeared from the hearts of men.”

Such was the Divine task which he claimed God had appointed him to fulfil. He claimed time and time again that God favoured him with verbal revelation and as the claims of the Holy Prophet depended on the veracity of his revelations similarly the claims of the Promised Messiah also depended on the truth of his revelations. The Promised Messiah demonstrated in his own person the reality of Divine revelation and literally hundreds of such illustrations could be cited.

In the year 1905 he proclaimed and published a mighty prophecy made known to him through revelations from God:

“God has warned me of a mighty earthquake: it shall make the young old, cities shall be ruined, rivers of blood shall flow, mountains shall be moved. Men shall go mad of shock, the whole world shall be involved and the Czar shall be reduced to a miserable and pitiable plight.”

When publishing this prophecy, the Promised Messiah stated that it indicated that some terrible visitation would occur. In the Quran the word “earthquake” is in many places used as meaning war. He also prophesied that fleets of the sea would encounter one another and the earth would be turned upside down. All this would occur within sixteen years.

How literally did the 1914–18 war fulfil this revelation! Indeed it has been named the world war. The devastation brought about was unprecedented and what was the ill fortune of the Czar of Russia? He lost his throne and later murdered after seeing his wife and daughters humiliated and disgraced in his presence. In accordance with the prophecy all this happened within the stipulated period of sixteen years from the date of the publication of his revelations.

Distinction between Divine and Intellectual Prophecies

Though this is a clear and wonderful illustration of the reality of Divine revelation it may not convince the sceptic who raises the objection that similar kinds of prophecies have been made by personalities such as Mr. H. G. Wells. There is a distinguishing feature between those who prophecy on the basis of revelation and those who do so as a result of their own theories. In the first place Mr. H. G. Wells has nothing to lose if his prophecies are not fulfilled but he who prophecies in obedience to revelation knows that the world is waiting and watching for their fulfilment upon which rests his integrity and truthfulness. Furthermore, Divine prophecies are consistent in their fulfilment but this is not the case of the prophecies made by those who proclaim future events which are merely the outcome of their personal conclusions. Sometimes, no doubt, their theories prove to be true but as often as not they do not. This is not the case with revealed prophecies because all of them are fulfilled. Again, events that are generally made known through Divine revelation are quite beyond the ingenuity of the human mind to conceive and they relate to things beyond human deduction.

Divine Revelation concerning the Procreation of Children

It is not within the knowledge of any person to say whether children will be or will not be born to certain individuals. Some women, despite their desire for children, pass the whole of their lives childless. Usually, however, married women bear children which shows the wonder of the following revelation received and published by the Promised Messiah.

There was a man living in India by the name of Maulvi Saadullah who was an enemy of the Promised Messiah. In his talk and writings he used to abuse the Promised Messiah and he stated that when the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community died his community would come to an end because he would have no offspring to continue it. The Promised Messiah then received a revelation to the effect that Maulvi Saadullah's line of descent would become extinct and that consequently he nor his then existing son would have any children. The words of the prophecy are these:

“Thine enemy who says concerning thee that thou shalt die childless, shall himself be cut off and his line will become extinct.”

Though Maulvi Saadullah was still comparatively young and there was no reason why he should not have any more children, he lived for another fifteen years without further issue. In due course his son also died without begetting any children even though he married twice.

This was a remarkable prophecy which was fulfilled to the very letter. No imposter would dare venture to publish such a prophecy to establish his claims. The odds would be all against him. The Promised Messiah, knowing

that the revelation he published was from God, boldly proclaimed it to illustrate the truth of his claims and that there is a God who exists and speaks to whomsoever He chooses.

The Promised Messiah received numerous revelations in which he was foretold matters of the future and each was as wonderful as the other. Their consistent fulfilment establishes without doubt that they were of Divine origin. There is no other course of explanation left open and the more one studies them the more firmly is one convinced of their truth.

The Promised Messiah received other revelations concerning a son who would be born to him within a period of nine years. He published these revelations in the year 1886 and the revelations quoted below are some of those describing his promised son:

“Thus I give unto thee tidings that a handsome, pure and righteous son shall be given thee who will be thine own offspring. He will possess high intelligence and a keen intellect and will be clement of heart. He will progress rapidly, and will be known unto the ends of the earth, and nations will find deliverance and be blessed through him.”

After some time a son was born but shortly afterwards he died. Some people endeavoured to explain that the death of his son falsified his prophecy. The Promised Messiah reminded them, however, that he would be born within the period of nine years and so it was wrong to suppose that the son who had died was that particular son. Again he confirmed the revelations he had received. Accordingly, on the January 12th 1889, he was vouchsafed another son whose birth had been foretold. This son was the late Head of the Ahmadiyya Community in Islam, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad who was renowned for his piety, learning and wisdom. It was through him that missions have been established throughout the world and his name was more and more known daily. Sovereigns and rulers have been presented with his books. In paying tribute to his unique personality Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan writes in his booklet “The Head of the Ahmadiyya Community”:

“He is a prolific writer and indefatigable speaker. His writings and speeches range over a very wide field and comprise almost every aspect of human activity . . . Those who have been privileged to listen to his public speeches will bear testimony to the power he is able to wield over his audiences through the sheer force of his reasoning, the aptness of the illustrations employed by him, his appeal to the nobler sentiments of his audience and the ideals that he persistently holds up before them. He is the unsurpassed master of exposition and interpretation and often holds huge audiences spellbound for hours at a stretch while he proceeds to expound at leisure and in detail the thesis he has chosen for the occasion.”

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad was a living sign of the truth of Divine Revelation and of the Promised Messiah to whom his birth was revealed. How wonderfully he fulfilled the prophecies concerning himself. As it has already been stated it is beyond the knowledge and power of a person to say that he will be blessed with a son and furthermore to give details concerning him.

The Value of Prophecy in Revelation

Revelation is a blessing of God which uplifts the soul of the person who receives it. He tastes the joy of direct communion with God which quickens his faith and love for his Creator. It is spiritual water which comforts his soul and establishes certainty of faith in his heart. The revelations of the Promised Messiah that have been mentioned contain prophecies but all revelation need not do so. Personal revelations revealing words of comfort and encouragement are experienced by many.

The reason why God very often reveals prophecies to His chosen ones is that people other than the actual recipient may also be able to witness the Word of God. He who actually experiences these revelations is filled with a positive knowledge of the truth and the fulfilment of the prophecies also guide the hearts of those who witness them being fulfilled.

Revelation of the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community

Islam teaches and shows that revelation is a reality and not only an experience enjoyed by people in past ages, but one that has been enjoyed throughout all ages and is even in this very time. Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad frequently had Divine revelation many of which were given world-wide publicity. Maulvi J. D. Shams, a former Imam of the London Mosque, published several leaflets and booklets in which he informed the British public of some of the former's prophetic revelations. In his own words he writes concerning one amazing revelation:

“By way of illustration I will mention briefly some of the visions and revelations in which he was shown all the turning points of the second world war, and which he disclosed to the public before they actually happened and were published in the *Sunrise* (Lahore) and *The Daily Alfazl* (Qadian). In August 1939, before the war broke out, he was shown in a vision, the confidential correspondence of the British Government. In one of those letters the British Government urged the French Government to effect a union with her, as Great Britain was in great danger, that Germany was contemplating invasion and was near to subjugating her. When he read it he became very anxious, and being on the point of waking, he, all of a sudden heard a voice saying: ‘This was a matter of six months ago’.

“When the time of the fulfilment of this vision drew near, God showed him, three days before it happened, King Leopold’s unconditional surrender and abdication by default, in a figure of an abdicating king. His capitulation was a major cause of the Dunkirk disaster. Britain then became so weak that she urged the French Government for a union. Thus was fulfilled literally in June 1940 what he was shown in the vision in August 1939.

“He then interpreted what the voice had said that six months after the date of the proposed union, the circumstances would be more favourable to Britain and that the misfortune would abate.

“Exactly six months after the declaration of union, when the first advance of the British Armies into Libya began, the Prime Minister, on December 19th 1940, in the House of Commons, revealed that, compared with the position of May and June, they had grown stronger and were well prepared. He said: ‘It is only six months since we were fighting what seemed to many of our best friends a desperate fight for bare survival.’”

In another vision, published in June 1940 the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community was informed by God that 2,800 aeroplanes would be dispatched to Great Britain by the Government of the U.S.A. This prophecy was brought to the notice of eminent government officials who witnessed its literal fulfilment a few weeks later. He is therefore, a living sign of the existence of God and the truth of Islam.

Revelation and other Faiths

Islam does not teach that revelation is a peculiar feature of Islam alone and that people of other faiths never experience it. Islam acknowledges that God, being All-Powerful, can speak to whomsoever He chooses and that He does. If God altogether refrained from revealing Himself to His creation then faith would gradually become dead. Islam teaches that God does sometimes send down revelation upon those who may not be treading the true path for revelation revives the spiritual side of man and gives light to hope. God, in all His wisdom may even have reason to reveal Himself to one who is the worst of criminals or a prostitute.

Islam, however, more than any other religion, lays much stress and importance on the truth and reality of revelation. Christianity, for instance, does not appreciate the significance of revelation as explained and demonstrated by Islam. The leaders of the churches are sceptical on this subject and many of them have gone as far as to deny verbal revelation altogether and give some theological interpretation to those chapters of their scriptures which record God conversing with His servants. The reason is

because they no longer witness God's attribute of speech being manifested among Christians and consequently they have lost faith in its reality.

The attributes of God do not change. If God spoke in the past there is no reason to suppose He no longer speaks in the same manner today. No one who believes in God would for a moment suggest He has lost His attribute of hearing. He hears the supplications of His servants today as He has heard them from the very beginning. Similarly it is just as true that He speaks today in the same manner as He has done from the beginning; and it is in Islam that this attribute is to be witnessed in abundance.

Here it may be objected that if it is agreed that people of other faiths are not debarred from revelation then how can Islam claim that revelation distinguishes its truth over other religions? If people of other religions also receive revelation then why should it not be said that revelation equally proves the truth of those religions?

Revelation in Islam descends in Abundance

The superiority of one fruit tree over others is judged by the quality of the fruit that it produces. In a similar way the excellence of Islam can be judged by the quality and quantity of revelation experienced by Muslims. This is not in any way a boastful statement. It is a fact that can be shown to be absolutely true. Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, former Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, made the following suggestion to Church leaders for the purpose of determining which of these two religions God favours with His Word.

“We invite the attention of all lovers of truth, to whatever religion they might profess allegiance, to the golden principle that a tree is known by its fruit . . . The world would be materially assisted in its search for truth if Christians could persuade the Pope or other high Church dignitaries to put forward the revelations received by them as against those received by me for the purpose of determining which of them are the true manifestations of God's power and knowledge . . . If they were inclined to accept, or could be persuaded by their followers to accept this invitation, it might prove an effective means for healing the spiritual ills from which mankind has so long suffered. The Majesty and power of God would then manifest itself in an extraordinary manner and would help to establish the faith of man and guide his spiritual development.”

This invitation was printed and re-printed. It has been widely circulated among Christians including the highest dignitaries of the Churches. The claim that revelation is experienced in abundance in Islam is not, therefore, a mere assertion. It is a fact and it is for those who deny it to accept or persuade their religious leaders to accept the invitation.

Islam and its Relation with other Faiths

Before dealing with a second answer to the objection concerning “Revelation and other Faiths” it would be better to explain the fundamental teachings of Islam regarding the position of other faiths. Islam does, in fact, acknowledge the truth of all revealed religions. Islam recognises the truth of all the prophets who preceded the Holy Prophet of Arabia. A Muslim does not say that all religions other than Islam are false. Islam, while testifying to their truth, at the same time explains that they are not universal in character but religions meant for a particular people at a particular age to suit the needs of those people for whom they were intended. Moses, for instance, was a prophet of God whose teachings were meant to suit the needs of the Israelites of those times. Moses was not a universal prophet but a prophet for the Israelites. Similarly the mission of the founders of all other revealed faiths were confined to a particular people for a particular age. The Gospels confirm that the mission of Jesus was also solely confined to the Israelites. Jesus is reported to have described the object of his mission in the following words:

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
(Matthew 15:24).

On another occasion he is reported to have instructed his disciples in the following words:

“Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
(Matthew 10:5, 6).

It is not intended here to deal with the various lame explanations with which Christians endeavour to hide the meaning of these verses and show that the mission of Jesus was universal on the Bible text which states that he ordered his disciples to go and preach to the whole world. Suffice it to say the word “world” has been used in various places in the New Testament giving the meaning of a territorial kingdom or tribe of people (Luke 2:1) which is in harmony with the above words of Jesus. If a literal meaning is to be placed on the word “world” then Jesus is represented as making contradictory statements concerning his mission.

Islam, on the other hand, is a universal religion embracing a Divine code of laws suited for the needs of all people and for all ages to come. At the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam the world had advanced in many ways and communications between countries was fast improving. Prior to this time the world was not ready for a universal teaching because knowledge of other countries and the means of communication were not sufficient to create world unity. However, as time advanced and the countries of the world began to know more about one another and have closer contact, God raised a universal

prophet with a Divine message for all mankind and to establish a universal brotherhood in the world.

Islam, therefore, while recognising the original truth of all revealed religions is exclusive in the sense that it is a universal religion established by God and not a religion meant for a particular people and for a particular age. The teachings of other religions consequently became abrogated by Islam on the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Revelations Confirming the Superiority of Islam

The second distinction showing how revelation establishes the truth of Islam over other religions even though, as it has been said, it is possible for people of all faiths to have the experience, is one of particular importance. The recipients of revelation in Islam frequently receive revelation testifying to the fact that Islam is the True religion revealed for the guidance of mankind at large. Such kinds of revelations are not received by people of other faiths conveying similar words of confirmation about their respective religions. This again, may sound a very boastful statement but in fact it is no more so than what has been said about the abundance of revelation witnessed in Islam. It is a fact.

If Islam truly is all that it claims to be then it is apparent that revelation to the effect mentioned above could not also be the lot of other faiths because God does not contradict Himself. It is out of the question that God would tell people of different faiths that they are all on the one and only true path, for such an idea is absurd.

The element of prophecy in revelation again comes in as a matter of great importance. The fulfilment of prophecy is a sign and guide for everybody. Already several prophetic revelations have been mentioned along with the remarkable manner in which they were fulfilled and showing without doubt that those persons to whom they were revealed were surely in communion with God. Only such kind of revelations can be presented to the world as a challenge to those who disbelieve in God and also in Islam. Revelations not of a prophetic kind and solely appertaining to oneself cannot be spoken about in order to establish some truth. An objection has been raised that if somebody of another faith claims that he had been told by God in a revelation that he is following the true path then on what grounds are we to challenge the integrity of his statement? This question could be discussed at considerable length but at this place just one clear and straightforward solution will be given from the Islamic point of view. God has manifested the truth of Islam by countless heavenly signs and some revelations have been quoted to establish the fact. As long as the truth of Islam is maintained then it is impossible that the revelation advanced by the person could be true. If he can refute the Divine claims of Islam then some consideration may be given to his statement.

If he cannot do so then there arises no need to give serious attention to his words.

God, has through revelation, emphatically made it known that Islam is the one and only true path. Those who have received revelation to this effect have published them, many of which contained prophecies so that their fulfilment may be a sign to the world of the truth of the revelations.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community claimed to have been raised by God to rejuvenate the love of Islam in the hearts of mankind. God spoke to him saying:

“Thy word shall be established and victory shall be manifest.”

In short, the Promised Messiah publicly proclaimed that God had revealed to him the truth of Islam. He did not merely assert that he had received revelation but he made known certain prophecies revealed to him so that the fulfilment of the same might serve as a sign to all. Leaders of other religions have not been vouchsafed such special revelations and should anyone claim to have then it is for him to come forward, as do the Muslims, and proclaim them to the world. The account of the leader of a Christian sect who falsely published Divine claims is worthy of mention at this point because the sad outcome that overtook him testified to the truth of Islam and the Promised Messiah.

The Fate of Dr. Dowie of America

An American, Dr. Alexander Dowie, claimed that in his person was fulfilled the coming of the fore-runner preceding the advent of Jesus. He founded a city and named it Zion and claimed that his movement was Divine. He succeeded in gaining a large number of followers and proclaimed that Islam was a false religion and would be destroyed. Knowledge of Dr. Dowie's boastings came to the ears of the Promised Messiah who wrote to him and challenged his claims. The Promised Messiah said let God judge which of the two of us is the true claimant. He told Dr. Dowie that let them both pray that whoever was the imposter might be destroyed in the life time of the other. In his letter to Dr. Dowie he wrote:

“I am about seventy years of age while Dowie is about fifty five and therefore as compared with me he is still a young man. But since the matter is not to be settled by age, I do not care for this great disparity in years. The whole matter rests in the hands of Him who is the Lord of Heaven and earth and Judge over all judges, and He will decide it in favour of the true claimant.”

The Promised Messiah went on to say that even if Dr. Dowie did not accept the challenge then still death would overcome him within the appointed time.

He wrote:

“Though he may try as hard as he can to fly from the death which awaits him, yet his flight from such a contest will be nothing less than death to him; and calamity will certainly overtake his Zion for he must bear the consequences either of the acceptance of the challenge or of its refusal.”

(Vide the New Commercial Advertiser of New York).

The challenge was published in many of the American newspapers and after a considerable period of time Dr. Dowie, on account of critical pressure from the public, referred to the challenge of the Promised Messiah in his own newspaper. He wrote:

“There is a Muhammadan Messiah in India who has repeatedly written to me that Jesus Christ lies buried in Kashmir, (the tomb of Jesus has been discovered in Srinager, Kashmir — B.A.O.), and people ask me why I do not answer him. Do you imagine that I shall reply to such gnats and flies? If I were to put my foot on them I would crush out their lives. I give them a chance to fly away and live.”

Almighty God did not withhold His judgement. In accordance with the knowledge He vouchsafed to the Promised Messiah, punishment and death descended upon the imposter. His own people turned against him including his wife and son. He was reduced to a miserable condition and his plight was worsened by an attack of paralysis which disabled his feet with which he had vainly boasted he would crush the Promised Messiah. Soon afterwards death overtook him and a mighty sign illustrating the truth of the Promised Messiah and Islam was manifested for the guidance of mankind at large. Commenting on Dr. Dowie's death the Herald of Boston remarked:

“Dowie died with his friends fallen away from him and his fortune dwindled. He suffered from paralysis and insanity. He died a miserable death, with Zion City torn and frayed by internal dissensions. Mirza (the Promised Messiah) came forward frankly and states that he has won his challenge!”

Conclusion

The purpose of this treatise has been to deal with one particular aspect of Islam — revelation. No doubt it may have given rise to other questions which have not been dealt with as it would have meant deviating from the theme of subject. The subject, also, has not been dealt with as fully as it merits. It is just an introduction to this vital subject and readers are therefore encouraged to give deeper and a more thorough thought and investigation to this Divine truth. They will never regret doing so and will find that it will be to their own spiritual advantage.

The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

The Review of Religions is the oldest magazine of its kind published in the English language in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent. Its first issue was published in 1902 and it has been continuously published since.

It bears the distinction that it was initiated under the direction of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah himself.

During more than eighty-three years the message of Islam has been conveyed through this magazine to hundreds of readers and many fortunate persons have recognised the truth of Islam and accepted it through studying it.

The articles published in it deal not only with the doctrines and teachings of Islam but also set forth a comparative appreciation of the teachings of other faiths.

One of its outstanding features is the refutations of the criticism of Islamic teachings by orientalists and non-muslim scholars.

It also presents solutions in the light of Islamic teachings of the problems with which the Islamic world is from time to time confronted.

A study of this magazine is indispensable for the appreciation of the doctrines of the Ahmadiyya Movement and the teachings of its holy Founder.

