



# THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS

VOL LXXXII

NO. 9

SEPTEMBER 1987

## IN THIS ISSUE

- GUIDE POSTS
- THE PROPHECY PLOT
- WOMEN IN ISLAM
- ISLAM AND RUSSIA
- REASON AND REVELATION
- AUDIENCE WITH ALLAH THE AFFECTIONATE
- PERSONAL STATEMENT

## EDITORIAL BOARD

1. M. A. SAQI
2. B. A. ORCHARD
3. A. M. RĀSHED
4. DR. Q. M. BARAKATULLAH
5. A. MAJEED CHAUDHRY

**Managing Editor**  
A. Majeed Chaudhry

**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. R. A. 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

# بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

## 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<br>(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)                        | 2  |
| 2. The Prophecy Plot<br>(Naeem Osman Memon)                     | 7  |
| 3. Women in Islam<br>(Selma Mubaraka Khan)                      | 21 |
| 4. Islam and Russia<br>(Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah)          | 25 |
| 5. Reason and Revelation<br>(Aziz A. Chaudhry, MD)              | 37 |
| 6. Audience with Allah the Affectionate<br>(Capt. M. H. Cheema) | 41 |
| 7. Personal Statement<br>(Ayaz ul Haque)                        | 48 |

# Guide Posts

## Book of Proverbs

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

Proverbs is the name of one of the books belonging to the Old Testament in the Bible. It's authorship has been ascribed to Solomon but this is not the consensus of most Biblical scholars. No doubt some of it's contents may have originated from the wisdom of Solomon but it is generally agreed that the book was composed by a number of authors who added their contributions during successive generations.

A proverb is a meaningful maxim or short sentence which embodies a moral lesson covering many qualities such as patience, humility, honesty, truthfulness, charity, character in general. The Book of Proverbs abounds with them and they are of inspiring value to all lovers of spiritual truths. The following selection has been taken from today's English Version of the Bible.

“Do good to those who need it, whenever you possibly can. Never tell your neighbour to wait until tomorrow if you can help him now. Don't plan anything that will hurt your neighbour; he lives beside you, trusting you” (3:27–29).

“The Lord . . . blesses the homes of the righteous . . . shows favour to those who are humble” (3:33, 34).

“The road the righteous travel is like the sunrise, getting brighter and brighter until daylight has come” (4:18).

“Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts” (4:23).

“Be faithful to your own wife, and give your love to her alone” (5:15).

“The Lord sees everything you do. Wherever you go, he is watching” (5:21).

“Son, do what your father tells you and never forget what your mother taught you. Keep their words with you always, locked in your heart” (60:20, 21).

“What you get by dishonesty will do you no good, but honesty can save your life” (10:2).

“Being lazy will make you poor, but hard work will make you rich” (10:4).

“A good man will be remembered as a blessing, but wicked men will soon be forgotten” (10:8).

“Sensible people follow good advice. People who talk foolishly will come to ruin” (10:8).

“A man who listens when he is corrected will live, but a man who will not admit that he is wrong is in danger” (10:17).

“Never get a lazy man to do something for you; he will be as irritating as vinegar on your teeth or smoke in your eyes” (10:26).

“Righteous men know the kind thing to say, but the wicked are always saying things that hurt” (10:32).

“The Lord hates people who use dishonest scales. He is happy with honest weights” (11:1).

“Proud men will soon be disgraced. It is wiser to be modest” (11:2).

“Good men are guided by honesty. Those who can't be trusted, are destroyed by their own dishonesty” (11:3).

“Riches will do you no good on the day you face death, but honesty can save your life” (11:4).

“People are ruined by the talk of godless men, but saved by the wisdom of the righteous” (11:9).

“It is foolish to speak scornfully to others. A smart man will keep quiet” (11:12).

“No one who gossips can be trusted with a secret” (11:13).

“A gracious lady is respected, but a woman without virtue is a disgrace” (11:16).

“You do yourself a favour when you are kind. If you are cruel you only hurt yourself” (11:17).

“Be generous and you will be prosperous. Help others and they will help you” (11:25).

“If your goals are good, you will be respected, but if you are looking for trouble, that is what you will get” (11:27).

“Those who depend on their wealth will fail like the leaves of autumn, but the righteous will prosper like the leaves of summer” (11:28).

“Righteousness gives life, but violence takes it away” (11:30).

“A man who loves knowledge wants to be told when he is wrong. It is stupid to hate being corrected” (12:1).

“A good wife is her husband’s pride and joy. But if she brings shame, she is like a cancer in his bones” (12:4).

“A man’s reward depends on what he says and what he does; he will get what he deserves” (12:14).

“A stupid man thinks he is always right. Wise men listen to advice” (12:15).

“When a fool is annoyed, he quickly lets it be known. A smart man will ignore an insult” (12:16).

“Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but the words of a wise man can heal” (12:18).

“The Lord hates liars, but is pleased with those who keep their word” (12:22).

“Worry can rob a man of happiness, but kind words will cheer him up” (12:25).

“A righteous man always examines his conduct” (12:26).

“Righteousness is the road to life” (12:28).

“A wise son pays attention when his father corrects him, but an arrogant person never admits he is wrong” (13:1).

“The righteous are like a light shining brightly; the wicked are like a lamp flickering out” (13:9).

“Refuse good advice and you are asking for trouble; follow it and you are safe” (13:13).

“A sensible man always thinks before he acts” (13:16).

“Stay away from foolish people; they have nothing to teach you” (14:7).

“If you want to be happy, be kind to the poor; it is a sin to despise anyone” (14:21).

“You will earn the trust and respect of others if you work for good” (14:22).

“Peace of mind makes the body healthy, but jealousy is like a cancer” (14:30).

“Righteousness makes a nation great” (14:34).

“A gentle answer quiets anger, but a harsh one stirs it up” (15:1).

“Hot tempers cause arguments, but patience brings peace” (15:18).

“Get all the advice you can and you will succeed; without it you will fail” (15:22).

“Smiling faces make you happy, and good news makes you feel better” (15:30).

“If you pay attention when you are corrected, you are a wise man” (15:31).

“You must be humble before you can ever receive honours” (15:33).

“You may think everything you do is right, but the Lord judges your motives” (16:2).

“Ask the Lord to bless your plans, and you will be successful in carrying them out” (16:3).

“It is better to have a little, honestly earned, than to have a large income, gained dishonestly” (16:8).

“Kind words are like honey — sweet to the taste and good for your health” (16:20).

“It is better to be patient than powerful. It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities” (16:32).

“Gold and silver are tested by fire, and a person’s heart is tested by the Lord” (17:3).

“A respected man does not tell a lie, any more than a fool says something worthwhile” (17:7).

“If you want people to like you, forgive them when they wrong you. Remembering wrongs can break up a friendship” (17:9).

“Being cheerful keeps you healthy. It is slow death to be gloomy all the time” (17:22).

“A man who stays calm has real insight” (17:27).

“Everyone talks about how loyal and faithful he is, but just try to find someone who really is!” (20:6).

“Children are fortunate if they have a father who is honest and does what is right” (20:7).

“Refuse to listen to the cry of the poor, and your own cry for help will not be heard” (21:13).

“If you want to stay out of trouble, be careful what you say” (21:23).

“If you want to choose between a good reputation and great wealth, choose a good reputation” (22:1).

“Teach a child how he should live and he will remember it all his life” (22:6).

“Be wise enough not to wear yourself out trying to get rich. Your money can be gone in a flash, as if it had grown wings and flown away like an eagle” (23:4, 5).

“Let your mother and father be proud of you; give your mother that happiness” (24:25).

“Don’t be glad when your enemy meets disaster. Your Lord will know if you are, and will not like it” (24:17).

“If you cannot control your anger, you are as helpless as a city without walls, open to attack” (25:28).

“People who set traps for others get caught themselves” (26:27).

“Let other people praise you — even strangers; never do it yourself” (27:2).

“Anger is cruel and destructive, but it is nothing compared to jealousy” (27:4).

## Care of the Soul

Let your own soul be the object of your daily care and attendance. Be sorry for its impurities, its spots, and imperfections, and study all the holy arts of restoring it to primitive and natural purity. Delight in its service, and beg of God to adorn it with every grace and perfection. Nourish it with good works, give it place in solitude, give it strength in prayer, make it wise with reading, enlighten it with meditation, make it tender with love, sweeten it with humility, humble it with penance. Keep it in the presence of God.

(William Law)



# **The Prophecy Plot (1)**

**(Naeem Osman Memon)**

(For nearly 2,000 years evangelical Christianity has furthered the cause of the Church on the basis of several Old Testament prophecies alleged to have been fulfilled with the advent of Jesus the Christ.

A thorough examination of these prophecies, with reference to the books of the Hebrew scriptures, not only shocks a reader but also shatters the very premise upon which evangelical Christianity has been based.

The candid results of one such critical study of the canonised prophecies is being presented in our present series, The Prophecy Plot.)

## **Birth of Emmanuel**

**“Behold, a virgin shall be with child  
and shall bring forth a son and they  
shall call his name Emmanuel.”**

(Matth:1:23).

Isaiah son of Amoz, an 8th century BCE Israelite prophet who lived in Jerusalem between 810 and 698 BCE<sup>1</sup> is believed to have been a man of exceptional piety and profound wisdom. He began to function as a faithful witness of the Lord Yahweh in around 758 BCE and he prophesied for nearly 60 years after his Divine call.

At the end of this exceptionally long and eventful period. Isaiah left behind him, an exhaustive book of oracles containing many prophecies in relation to the future of the Davidite kingdom of Judaea and its northern neighbours, namely, the kingdom of Israel in Samaria and the empires of Syria and Assyria.

1. These dates are mostly based on the National Illustrated Family Bible published by the Howard Press, London and edited by Rev. John Eddie, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Biblical Literature to the United Presbyterian Church.

Isaiah's book of oracles forms an integral part of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. It is held in reverence by the faithful adherents of both Judaism and Christianity and in the midst of its often long and sometimes vivid prophecies, there appears an oracle in relation to the advent of a great Israelite Deliverer, an Emmanuel<sup>2</sup> whose birth was expected to signal a sign of untold blessings to the estranged king and kingdom of Davidite Judaea. Announcing the birth of this great Deliverer, the Book of Isaiah declares:

**“Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse evil, and choose the good.”<sup>3</sup>**

### **Isaiah's Prophecy and Gospel of Matthew**

Some seven centuries after these words were first spoken or recorded by Isaiah, a Christian evangelist, the author of the Gospel of Matthew, quoted the Israelite prophet's oracle and alleged that the conception of a child by the virgin Mary fulfilled that:

**“which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying; Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”<sup>4</sup>**

For nearly 2,000 years, since the author of the Gospel of Matthew recorded Isaiah's oracle in the first canonical book of the Christian scriptures, Christian laymen of most denominations have been led to believe that the prophecy in relation to the great Israelite Deliverer, an Emmanuel, referred to the birth of Jesus, the son of virgin Mary, alleged to have been born at Bethlehem of Judaea in the year 4 BCE. Today, the Christian world not only believes but argues with conviction, its faith that Isaiah's oracle foretold the birth of the son of Mary.

Ironically, a closer reference to the actual oracle in the Hebrew scriptures indicates that the author of Matthew's gospel has taken exceptional liberty with the text of Isaiah's original prophecy as the 'words spoken of the Lord by the prophet' do not specify that the subject of this prophecy shall be conceived by a "virgin" woman.

2. God is with us.

3. Isaiah 7:14, 15.

4. Matthew 1:22, 23.

### **Distortion of oracle in Matthew's Gospel**

The Hebrew word used in Isaiah's original oracle is not "bethulah", a specific term for a "virgin woman" but "al-mah", a term which has a much wider reference to a young woman of marriageable age,<sup>5</sup> irrespective of whether she is or is not a virgin.

The word "al-mah" has been used elsewhere in the Hebrew scriptures, but, except for one particular instance in which reference has specifically been made to a "virgin",<sup>6</sup> the use of this term in relation to all the other maidens,<sup>7</sup> damsels<sup>8</sup> and young women<sup>9</sup> does not have any reference to virginity. In fact, when particular reference is made to a virgin, as in the case of Isaac's future wife Rebecca, the Hebrew scriptures do not leave any room for speculation:

**"And the damsel was fair to look upon,  
a virgin, neither had any man known  
her."**<sup>10</sup>

Matthew's translation of the word "al-mah" as a virgin is hence a distortion of Isaiah's original oracle as it gives the prophecy a totally different meaning from the one originally intended.

### **Background to Isaiah's Prophecy**

The significance or import of any Divine oracle cannot be understood or appreciated except through the realisation of the circumstances in which it has been issued.

This particular prophecy in relation to the advent of an Israelite deliverer Emmanuel, was "spoken of the Lord by prophet Isaiah" during the reign of the 8th century BCE king of Judaea, Ahaz son of Jotham. The young descendant of the great Israelite king, David, had hardly taken over the reigns of power from his deceased father when the king of Israel in Samaria, Pekah son of Remailah and his Syrian ally, Rezin formed a league and conspired against the Davidite kingdom of Judaea.<sup>11</sup> The joint Syrio-Samaritan conspiracy against the Davidite kingdom signalled disaster for the dynasty of the great Israelite king, David son of Jesse who established a united Israelite empire which extended beyond the confines of the Hebrew regions after some exceptional feats of valour. His successor Solomon consolidated his father's empire to such an extent that "he succeeded all the kings of the earth."<sup>12</sup>

5. The expression "al-mah" in the main text of Isaiah's oracle is now being translated as a "young woman" by most modern English translations of the Old Testament. Its incorrect translation in the Gospel of Matthew borrows from the Book of Isaiah.

6. Genesis 24:16.

7. Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8 and Songs of Solomon 1:3.

8. Psalms 68:25.

9. Songs of Solomon 6:8.

10. Genesis 24:16.

11. Isaiah 7:1 and Isaiah 7:6.

12. 1 Kings 10:23.

Ironically, after the death of Solomon, the united Israelite empire of David and Solomon fell in ruins when the 10 tribes of Israel withdrew their support for Solomon's son Rehoboam. The once great and formidable empire of the Israelites disintegrated into two separate kingdoms, the northern kingdom of Israel in Samaria and the much smaller two tribe southern kingdom of Judaea which remained in the possession of the posterity of David.

The secession of the northern kingdom resulted in the Davidites losing territorial contact with the remote regions of Ammon and not much later, a part of the southern kingdom was wrested away from Judaea by the mercenary Libyan king of Egypt, Shishak I. The fortunes of Judaea continued to change thereafter, sometimes for the better but more often for the worse.

In the 8th century BCE, the much reduced kingdom of David and Solomon witnessed one of the worst challenges of its history. The powerful king of Israel and his ally from Syria conspired to destroy the dynasty of David and put Judaea under the control of an Aramaean, a certain son of Israel.

The news of the joint Syrio-Samaritan conspiracy reached the king of Judaea. When Ahaz and the Judaeans learnt that the Aramaeans and the Ephraimites had formed an alliance against the house of David, they were shaken and distressed. But the Lord Yahweh was not about to desert the house of David yet. He commissioned Prophet Isaiah to "go forth to Ahaz and caution him to be on his guard but remain calm and not be frightened or unmanned by the rage of the two smouldering stumps of firewood who had taken evil counsel against him by saying:"

**"Let us go against Judaea and vex it,  
and let us make a breach therein for  
us, and set a king in the midst of it,  
even the son of Tabaal."**

Isaiah, the faithful witness of the Lord comforted Ahaz and assured the king of Judaea that the evil counsel of Rezin and Pekah:

**"shall not stand, neither shall it come  
to pass, because within three score and  
five years, Epharim<sup>13</sup> shall be broken  
and shall not be a people."<sup>14</sup>**

The Lord's assurance of security to the king and kingdom of Judaea should have sufficed to put their mind at rest. But Ahaz was a mere suckling when he took over from his father in Judaea. At the tender age of twenty, he was a

13. Reference is made to the ten tribe northern kingdom of Israel in Samaria but because the tribe of Ephraim became dominant over the other tribes, the people of Ephraim are being singled out to represent the whole nation.

14. Isaiah 7:2-9.

novice and a challenge of such magnitude from two well established armies of the region could have shaken many a mighty king.

Inexperience in temporal matters however, was the least of Ahaz's failings. The young king was a man of feeble faith also. As the Lord's assurance of security was hardly succinct, Ahaz was susceptible to doubt the faithfulness of the Lord but Yahweh invited him to seek a sign which the faithless king declined on the grounds that "he did not wish to tempt the Lord."

Nevertheless, the Almighty Lord declared a sign, a sign of Emmanuel:

**"Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."**<sup>15</sup>

After a detailed exposition of some incredible events expected to transpire in the future, Yahweh commanded His faithful witness to take a scroll and record His promise concerning "mahar-shalal-hash-baz",<sup>16</sup> the promised Emmanuel expected to come "quickly to spoil and hasten the plunder."

Isaiah recorded the prophecy and then "went unto a prophetess" who conceived a child. When the child was finally born, Yahweh commanded Isaiah to name him "Mahar-shalal-hash-baz":

**"For, before the child shall have knowledge to cry My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria."**<sup>17</sup>

The close affinity of the two oracles and the unbroken sequence of the narrative in the book of Isaiah suggests that Isaiah's son "Mahar-shalal-hash-baz" was the sign of Emmanuel promised to the king and kingdom of Judaea. The extension of Isaiah's earlier prophecy in much the same terms indicates that the sign of Emmanuel and the birth of Mahar-shalal-hash-baz cannot be divorced from each other as the birth of Emmanuel was expected to signal the destruction of the kings of Syria and Israel and the birth of Mahar-shalal-hash-baz was expected to realise the desolation of Rezin and Pekah's empires.

15. Isaiah 7:9-16.

16. quick, spoil, hasten, plunder.

17. Isaiah 7:17 to Isaiah 8:4.

### Summary of Isaiah's Prophecy

Isaiah's long prophecy, when summarised and studied without any pre-conceived notions, leads one to the conclusion:

- (i) That the prophecy was principally addressed to Ahaz, the son of Jotham.
- (ii) It was an assurance of God's faithfulness to the king and kingdom of Judaea.
- (iii) It promised the house of David, safety and security against the evil counsel of its enemies, namely, Pekah of Israel in Samaria and Rezin of Damascus.
- (iv) The Lord God had decreed against the evil counsel of Judaea's enemies.
- (v) The faithfulness of the Lord was expected to be realised through the conception and birth of a child by a young woman of marriageable age.
- (vi) The significance of the name Emmanuel was a symbolic assurance that "God was with the king and kingdom of Judaea".
- (vii) In the immediate infancy of this child who will be recognised as a sign of God's faithfulness to the king and kingdom of Judaea, the kingdoms of its enemies, Pekah and Rezin shall be destroyed and its wealth taken before the king of Assyria.
- (viii) Not much later, before the child has the wisdom to choose between good and evil, Israel in Samaria and Syria shall be forsaken of both her kings.<sup>18</sup>
- (ix) Within 65 years of the initiation of this prophecy, Ephraim shall not be a people any longer.
- (x) The punishment upon the enemies of Judaea shall be inflicted through an agent of the Lord, namely, him beyond the river, the Lord's instrument of Divine judgement, the king of Assyria.<sup>19</sup>

### Jesus and the Prophecy of Isaiah

Matthew's assertion that Isaiah's prophecy of Emmanuel was realised in the conception and birth of a child by virgin Mary is neither substantiated by the contents of the original oracle or the facts of Judaeon history at the time when Jesus was conceived and brought forth by the virgin.

Isaiah's prophecy is principally addressed to the Davidite king and kingdom of Judaea. In the year 4 BCE, when Jesus is alleged to have been born in

18. A child normally learns to cry "my father and my mother" before he acquires the knowledge of good and evil. There is hence a suggestion here that the desolation of Pekah and Rezin's kingdoms will precede the annihilation of both the kings.

19. Isaiah 7:20.

Bethlehem of Judaea, the Davidite empire of Judaea was already a subject of history. It was not being ruled by the posterity of the great Israelite king, David son of Jesse but by the Herodians, a family of Idumean Edomites, planted on the throne of Judaea by the Roman Emperors.

The kingdom of Israel in Samaria, one of the principal subjects of Isaiah's prophecy was also long forgotten in the annals of history. It was an integral part of the Herodian Empire and a vassal kingdom of the great Roman Empire of the Caesars.

Syria, the other principal subject of Isaiah's oracle was also a kingdom long forsaken by the Lord of the hosts. In the year 65 BCE, the great Roman commander Pompey liquidated the Macedonian Empire and reduced Syria into an insignificant province of the greater Roman Empire under the direct control of a Roman governor.

Assyria, the instrument of Divine judgement, through whom the Lord had decreed to inflict punishment upon the enemies of Judaea had also perished centuries before the son of Mary made his appearance in the closing years of the first century BCE.

### **Judaea after the Birth of Jesus**

The subject of Isaiah's original oracle was expected to usher a new era of relief and security to the king and kingdom of Judaea and the arrival of this great Israelite deliverer, Emmanuel, was required to signal a sign of untold blessings to the estranged posterity of David and its two tribe Davidite kingdom.

Ironically, the first century of the Christian era witnessed a reversal in the fortunes of the vassal kingdom of Judaea. Within less than a decade of the birth of Jesus, Judaea was deprived of its independence by the Roman Governor of Syria and put under the direct control of a Roman procurator.

The colonisation of Judaea in the year 6 AD was in sharp contrast to the expectations of Isaiah's prophecy. Whereas the supreme authority of Syria, its king Rezin, was expected to be forsaken after the birth of Emmanuel, the 1st century governor of this "abhorred land" became the instrument of Divine judgement against Judaea. Its status was reduced to a mere province of the heathen empire of the Caesars.

Isaiah's prophecy also suggested that within 65 years, every threat to the king and kingdom of Judaea would be effectively neutralised and the arch enemies of the Davidite Empire, particularly the Ephraimites would cease to exist as an independent people.

Ironically, in a little more than "three score and five years" after the appearance of the son of Mary, the people and the land of Judaea fell foul to

the wrath of the Lord of hosts. In the year 70 AD, the Roman commander Titus marched unto the holy city of the Judaeans. His powerful army managed a breach in the strong defences of the fortified city and the Romans defiled the sacredness of the holiest of the holy Hebrew temples. The sacred spoils of the holy temple were later transported to the heathen capital of Rome and exhibited as spoils of war before the heathen emperor Caesar.

The Roman expedition against Jerusalem devastated the city and Jerusalem was reduced to mere rubble. Titus massacred 1,100,000 Israelites and the remnant of the seed of Jacob was transported to and scattered all over the Roman Empire. The deportation of the Hebrew people signalled not only the destruction of Ephraim or the other nine rebellious tribes of the kingdom of Israel in Samaria but also the two tribes of the kingdom of Judaea, including the posterity of the great Israelite king, David son of Jesse.

### **Isaiah's Prophecy fulfilled in 8th century BCE**

The historical books of the Old Testament contain a treasure of evidence which not only suggests but establishes the fact that Isaiah's oracle in relation to the birth of a great Israelite deliverer, Emmanuel, was fulfilled within the restraints of its prophesied period of "three score and five years" — some 700 years before the conception and birth of the son of virgin Mary.

Ahaz, the king of Judaea to whom this prophecy was principally addressed took over the reigns of power from his father Jotham in the year 742 BCE. He had not yet consolidated his own position in the Davidite kingdom of Judaea when he began to hear of the evil designs of Pekah son of Remaliah and the king of Israel in Samaria's northern ally, Rezin king of Syria.

The mobilisation of the joint Syrio-Samaritan forces against the house of David distressed the Judaeans. The Lord, however, was not about to desert the house of David yet. In 741 BCE, Yahweh directed Isaiah to meet Ahaz at the "end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway to the Fuller's Fields" and assure the newly instated king of Judaea that he had nothing to fear from the evil designs of the Ephraimites and the Aramaeans as their counsel would eventually come to naught.<sup>20</sup>

Isaiah conveyed the Lord's message to Ahaz. But the young king of Judaea was a man of feeble faith and the Lord was not unaware of his failings. To strengthen his faith, Yahweh announced the conception and birth of a son by a young woman and declared that this child shall represent a sign of the Lord — a symbol of God's faithfulness to the king and kingdom of Judaea and an assurance that the Lord of the hosts was with the Davidites. The Almighty Lord also assured Ahaz that within the infancy of this child, the lands which

20. Isaiah 7:2-9.



the young and faithless king abhorred would be forsaken of both their kings, Pekah of Israel in Samaria and Rezin, head of Damascus and king of Syria.<sup>21</sup>

Isaiah, the faithful witness of the Lord was commanded to take note of the promise that the Lord “God was with the house of David”.<sup>22</sup> The Lord of the hosts also promised that the sign of His faithfulness to the house of David shall come forth “quickly to spoil and hasten the plunder.”<sup>23</sup>

The son of Amoz recorded the prophecy and then “went unto a young woman” and the prophetess conceived the promised child.<sup>24</sup>

While Ahaz and his subjects awaited the birth of the promised child, the Lord began to send against Judaea, the king of Israel in Samaria and the king of Syria.<sup>25</sup> The “two smouldering stumps of firewood” laid seige on Jerusalem but could not prevail against it<sup>26</sup> on account of the strength of its walls<sup>27</sup> previously fortified by the predecessor of Ahaz, Jotham king of Judaea.<sup>28</sup>

Rezin, king of Syria, unable to make a breach in the defences of Jerusalem, decided to venture further south. He marched his army towards the gulf of Aqabah in the land of Edom. With the help of the Edomites, he wrested the city of Elath from Judaea. He then banished all the Hebrews from the city and settled a colony of Syrians on the southern flanks of the Judaeian Empire.

Rezin’s expedition against Judaea was not without rewards. He filled his coffers, enough to sent a tribute demanded of him by the king of Assyria, and carrying away with him a great multitude of Judaeian captives, he returned to Damascus.<sup>29</sup>

When Ahaz, the king of Judaea learnt that the Syrians were returning home, “he supposing himself a match for the king of Israel, drew his army against the son of Remaliah.”<sup>30</sup>

But Pekah, not weakened by the untimely desertion of the Syrians, “smote Ahaz and slew one hundred and twenty thousand valiant men of Judaea in one day.” Ahaz lost one of his sons Maaseiah and the Ephraimites slew the governor of the royal Judaeian household and a close associate of the king of Judaea. The king of Israel in Samaria returned home with two hundred thousand Judaeian women and children as captives.<sup>31</sup>

21. Isaiah 7:10–16.

22. Emmanuel.

23. mahar shalal hash baz.

24. Isaiah 8:1–3.

25. 2 Kings 15:37.

26. 2 Kings 16:5 and Isaiah 7:1.

27. Josephus: Antiquities: Bk IX/Ch XII/Sc I.

28. 2 Chronicles 27:3, 4.

29. 2 Kings 16:5–6 and 2 Chronicles 28:5.

30. Josephus. Antiquities. Bk IX/Ch XII/Sc I.

31. 2 Chronicles 28:5–8.

The dynasty of David now stood on a dangerous crossroad of destruction and annihilation. Since the disintegration of the united Israelite Empire of David and Solomon, the posterity of David had remained in possession of a much reduced southern kingdom. Rezin's conquest of Elath reduced its territorial boundary still further. As the Judaeen army fared no better Pekah slew one hundred and twenty thousand valiant men of Judaea in one day and this encouraged the other enemies of Judaea. The Judaeans were "smitten" by the Edomites and the Philistines invaded and conquered the "cities of the low country and south of Judaea and all the villages thereof."<sup>32</sup>

Judaea was now surrounded by its enemies on all its frontiers. A large proportion of its army had been massacred by the forces of Pekah and Rezin and whatever remained was smitten by the Edomites and the Philistine. The morale of the remnant was shattered and the kingdom of Davidite Judaea found itself in a precarious situation. The disintegration of the remnant of David and Solomon's Empire looked certain and only Divine interference could now save it from total annihilation.

### **Birth of Emmanuel**

At this precise moment when the Davidite kingdom stood on the pinnacle of certain destruction, Yahweh began to deliver His promise to the house of His annointed, David son of Jesse. In 740 BCE, nearly a year after the prophetess conceived a child, the young woman brought forth a son, the sign of Emmanuel, whom the Lord named Mahar-shalal-hash-baz.

On the birth of the promised deliverer, the Lord reinforced His promise to the house of David and announced that in the infancy of Mahar-shalal-hash-baz, the riches of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.<sup>33</sup>

The fortunes of Judaea now took a turn for the better. Ahaz, fearful of another devastating attack by his enemies, solicited the assistance of the Lord's "hired razor from beyond the river", pleading:

**"I am thy servant and thy son. Come up and save me from the hands of the king of Syria and the king of Israel which rise up against me."**<sup>34</sup>

Tiglath Pileser, the king of Assyria through whom the Lord had decreed to bring relief to the Davidite kingdom of Judaea<sup>35</sup> responded to the plea of Ahaz and in 740 BCE,<sup>36</sup> the Lord's instrument of Divine judgement:

32. 2 Chronicles 28:17, 18.

33. Isaiah 8:3-4.

34. 2 Kings 16:7.

35. Isaiah 7:20.

36. Maclear, Rev. G. F.: A Classbook Of Old Testament History.

**“hearkened unto him, for the king of Assyria went against Damascus and took it and carried the people of it captive to Kir and slew Rezin.”<sup>37</sup>**

The Assyrians “transplanted the people of Damascus into the upper media and brought a colony of Assyrians and planted them in Damascus”.<sup>38</sup> The devastation of Syria and the assassination of its king Rezin, effectively fulfilled the Lord’s promise in relation to one of the two “smoking firebrands” who conspired against the house of David.

The Lord’s instrument of Divine judgement then ran riot in the kingdom of Israel in Samaria:

**“In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglath pileser, king of Assyria, and took Ijon and Abel Beth Maachah, and Jonoah and Kadesh and Hazor, and Gilead and Galilee and the land of Napthali, and carried them captive to Assyria.”<sup>39</sup>**

Assyria’s conquests constituted the greater part of the kingdom of Israel in Samaria. Pekah’s Empire was hence reduced to a tiny fraction of its former possessions which brought resentment against the son of Remailah and in the year 739 BCE:

**“Hosea, the son of Elah, made a conspiracy against the son of Remailah and smote him and slew him, and reigned in his stead.”<sup>40</sup>**

The assassination of Pekah fulfilled the Lord’s promise of immediate relief to the king and kingdom of Judaea. And the son of Isaiah, Mahar-shalal-hash-baz, born in 740 BCE could hardly have been more than a year old. He could not have yet learnt to “cry My father and my mother” and he certainly could not have yet acquired the knowledge of choosing between the good and the bad. But the son of Isaiah, the promised deliverer, an Emmanuel, accomplished the destruction of Samaria and Syria within his infancy and the lands which Ahaz abhorred were forsaken of both their kings, Pekah and Rezin. The threat to the house of the Lord’s beloved, David was hence effectively neutralised and the two smouldering stumps of firewood became a matter of history.

37. 2 Kings 16:9.

38. Josephus. Antiquities. Bk IX/Ch XII/Sc 1.

39. 2 Kings 15:29.

40. 2 Kings 15:30.

The remnant of the shattered kingdom of Israel in Samaria could not be a threat to Judaea as its army had been effectively crushed and the morale of its people was at the lowest ebb. Its new king, Hosea son of Elath did not dare go against the “servant and son of Tiglath pileser” as he himself ruled the northern kingdom of Israel with the blessings of the king of Assyria.<sup>41</sup>

### **The destruction of Ephraim**

Hosea’s honeymoon with the king of Assyria was not about to last beyond a decade. He formed an alliance with the king of Egypt and refused to pay the tribute demanded of him by the king of Assyria. He was summoned to Damascus by his masters and he was “shut up and bound in prison.”

The king of Assyria then went up to Samaria and laid seige upon it for three years. In 721 BCE, the Assyrian king Shalmaneser finally occupied Samaria. He divided the kingdom of Israel in Samaria into four Assyrian provinces and:

**“carried Israel away into Assyria and  
planted them in Halal and Habor by the  
River Gozan and in the cities of the  
Medes.”<sup>42</sup>**

The captivity of the Israelites brought to an end the legacy of the northern kingdom of Israel in Samaria and its dominant tribe, the Ephraimites. The prophetic vision of the Lord’s faithful witness, Isaiah was hence translated into reality when:

**“within three score and five years,  
Ephraim was broken and it was not a  
people any longer.”**

HO.SHAH! Yahweh had saved the posterity of David. The enemies of Judaea had conspired against the house of His annointed but the Lord of the hosts had decreed:

**“Take counsel together, and it shall  
come to naught; speak the word, and  
it shall not stand: for God is with  
us.”**

Isaiah:8:10.

Isaiah’s oracle was hence translated into reality within the 8th century BCE. The king and the kingdom of Judeae could now sigh with relief because Emmanuel was with them and the Lord of the hosts had proved His faithfulness to the estranged house of David. The birth of the Lord’s sign of

41. 2 Kings 17:3.

42. 2 Kings 17:6.

Emmanuel, Isaiah's son Mahar-shalal-hash-baz had "quicken the spoil and hasten the plunder."

The events of history hence proved the Divine nature of Isaiah's own claim:

**"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of the hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion."**<sup>43</sup>

## **Brotherhood through God**

True brotherhood can be established universally only through firm faith in the Unity of the Creator. That faith alone has the power to make our approach to each fellow being, of whatever race, colour, creed, religion or language, one of eager friendship and devotion. Each one of us must recognize every other as a creature and servant of the Lord of the universe Whom we acknowledge, accept and worship as our Creator and Maker, and to Whom the deepest devotion of our hearts and our truest allegiance are due. Through Him and for His sake, we can readily and truly accept each human being as a comrade and brother, a fellow traveller on the same path, a fellow participant in the same glorious adventure which is the seeking in all things the will and pleasure of our Lord and Creator, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful. This is the only way which the welfare of everyone of our fellow beings can become a matter of as grave concern to us as our own.

(Muhammad Zafrulla Khan)

43. Isaiah 8:18.

# **Women in Islam**

**(Selma Mubarak Khan)**

God in His wisdom has offered full equality to men and women. This does not mean, however, that our roles or functions are the same. The Holy Quran states that God has created all species in pairs:

“And of His signs is that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that, surely, are Signs for a people who reflect.”

(30:22).

Islam teaches that various faculties and capacities bestowed by God are a Divine bounty and must be beneficently employed:

“And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you ears and eyes and hearts, that you might be grateful.”

(16:79).

Some religions have laid the responsibility of man's fall upon woman and declared her to be an instrument of the devil and have claimed celibacy to be more exalted than conjugal life. This belief and attitude is not upheld by Islam which has raised women to a position of spiritual equality with men. It teaches that men and women complement one another and are the means of mutual fulfilment. It teaches that the rights of men and women produce a harmonious whole emphasising the equal importance of both sexes. At the same time it does not ignore or overlook their different capacities and therefore their different roles in life.

Islam does not encourage living in a state of unreality or wishful thinking. The teachings of Islam are practical and fully take into account the biological and emotional facts of life.

Almighty Allah obviously knew all the controversies which would take place in our time concerning the equality of the sexes and so provided clear guidance on this matter to avoid misunderstandings. We read in the Holy Quran:

“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 and women who remember Him — Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward.”

(33:36).

There are also other verses in the Quran testifying to the spiritual equality of men and women. I would now like to refer to some aspects of Islam which are often made the butt of criticism in the West.

### **Emancipation of Women**

Criticism levied at the door of Islam in this respect is entirely the result of ignorance because its teachings emancipated women fourteen centuries ago by giving them their full rights. Islam has given women complete economic independence. Not only do they have the right to inherit property but even after marriage they have the right to retain it independently. Also it is part of the marriage contract that the husband should offer a substantial amount of dowry to his wife — according to his means — which becomes her sole possession.

Women may pursue a professional career, business or other kind of profitable activity. It should not be carried out (keeping in view, of course, her circumstances) at the expense of her marital or domestic obligations. Islam teaches that the family unit has priority and its safety and true prosperity in every respect should be considered sacrosanct.

We are a spiritual community. Nations are unable to advance if members of the younger generation are not of the right calibre. We have to train our children to observe the teachings of Islam if we wish to ensure that the Community continues to progress successfully. This task largely falls on the shoulders of the mother and, perhaps, this is why the Holy Prophet of Islam said “Paradise lies under the feet of your mother.” As a wife and a mother the primary and normal sphere of her activities is in the home.

A social system, based on the wisdom of Islamic teachings, brings about a perfect balance and accord between husband, wife and family. It is not a matter of equality or inequality. It is simply a matter of natural capacity as we are designed by nature to function in this way. A woman is naturally more caring and protective in nurturing her children. Also she is more vulnerable and needs man’s protection, strength and support.

Islam stresses the maintenance of chastity. It is unfortunate that in the West chastity is no longer considered a virtue. In fact it has become a reproach! Perversion and sensuality inside and outside of marriage are thought to be the true purpose and aim of sex. Woman has been degraded into a mere instrument for sexual indulgence. Thank God for Islam which treats the whole subject of conjugal relationships at the highest level of moral and spiritual consciousness. The Holy Quran likens a husband and wife as being garments for one another. They are a source of protection and dignity for each other. While on this subject I would like to add a few words on arranged marriages. First of all the validity of a marriage requires the public consent of both parties. The consent of the bride is vital otherwise it is not permissible to conduct the marriage. The forcing of a girl into marriage against her will is contrary to Islamic teaching. All marriages of any kind are arranged in one way or another but according to Islam the selection should go much deeper than mere physical attraction which is often the main reason in the West.

### **Education**

The Holy Prophet of Islam has said:

“The seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman.”

(Bukhari).

Women are not only entitled to education but it is essential that they be educated to the highest level. In some respects the education of women is more important than that of men because it is the mother whose influence most effects the next generation and is therefore of vital importance.

### **Purdah**

Veiling is an aspect of Islam which seems to meet with the disapproval of many people. The casting down of the eyes is a part of purdah but it is important to emphasise that this practice is not enjoined on women alone. The outer form of purdah is not meant to be a substitute for casting down one's looks and protecting one's senses — in the widest meaning of the word — but rather to nurture and develop this attitude of heart and mind.

Women should dress modestly and not exhibit their physical beauty which calls for the wearing of an over-garment or coat and a head covering. Purdah was never meant nor must it be allowed to stand in the way of education or to prevent women from playing their full and appropriate role in society. Basically purdah is meant to protect society from unnecessary and frequently dangerous or, at least, risky encounters between members of the opposite sex. I do not think much argument is necessary to prove the validity of this



Islamic viewpoint. The evidence is monumental and overwhelming. One has only to look at Western society which has indulged in unrestricted and unlimited mixing of the sexes to see the terrible damage it has wrought upon the entire fabric of society. It has led to the ever increasing incidence of broken homes, broken marriages, misery and unhappiness. One in every three marriages in Britain breaks down and approximately four hundred and fifty children are daily uprooted through divorces. This is just the tip of the iceberg. I do not think it requires much power of analysis or wisdom to reach the conclusion that the Islamic injunctions restricting the free intermingling of the sexes is a price too high to pay for conjugal harmony, contentment and for a happy, peaceful domestic environment in which to bring up one's family.

### **Polygamy**

Another oft repeated criticism against Islam is the subject of polygamy. I must confess that at one time I found this teaching difficult to accept until I gave it logical reflection. It should be well remembered that Islam is the only religion which has restricted to four the number of wives a man can have at one time. The scriptures of no other religion have put any restriction on the number of wives a person may have. Some of the prophets of God mentioned in those scriptures took unlimited number of wives. Monogamy, as imposed by law of the land, should be clearly distinguished from the teachings of the scripture accepted by the people of the land. No doubt the subject is a sensitive one but one should try to analyse it rationally without emotion.

Furthermore it should be remembered that Islam does not enjoin polygamy but simply permits it under certain conditions involving heavy restrictions. These conditions and restrictions ensure that Islamic polygamy may not be embarked upon merely for lustful purposes coupled with selfish indiscipline. The personal suffering and anguish engendered by lack of such provision is well illustrated, I think, in the famous English classical novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. Poor Rochester is married to a crazy wife who is kept locked up in part of the house and unable to fulfil the needs of a wife being attended all the time by a nurse. As a result he was unable to marry Jane. What a sensible solution they would have found in Islam which would have catered for the betterment and happiness of all three of them.

The desirability of polygamy is well illustrated by the conditions and circumstances which prevailed in Europe following the last two world wars. The absence of this safety valve led to moral degradation and promiscuity. Once morals are set on a lower peg it is extremely hard — if not impossible — to raise them without Divine help on a national level. The West is still living with these consequences even though the ratio of the male and female population has corrected itself with the passage of time.

## **Divorce**

The Holy Prophet of Islam declared that while divorce is permitted it is the most abhorrent of permitted things. It can be initiated by either husband or wife. There are detailed instructions regarding divorce. These are designed to ensure that proceedings are not pursued with in a mood of petulant emotions or in a carefree manner. The procedure is somewhat drawn out thus providing an opportunity for reconciliation before the divorce becomes irrevocable. A divorce cannot be gained, as often erroneously believed, merely by pronouncing "I divorce you" three times in quick succession. The minimum waiting time is three months which not only provides time for re-consideration but also gives time for any unsuspected pregnancy to come to light thereby safeguarding the rights of the unborn child. In any case divorce may not be granted during the period of pregnancy which is a very wise ruling decreed fourteen hundred years ago. Recently it has been discovered how hormonal disturbances psychologically effect women during pregnancy. During the period of waiting an arbiter is chosen to try to reconcile the couple. They endeavour to find a solution to patch things up. If unsuccessful then the intention to divorce is announced once a month. After the third announcement divorce becomes final and irrevocable. She is not permitted to re-marry her former husband unless she first marries someone else and he either dies or divorces her. If one reflects, this is a further protection for women in Islam. She may not be divorced and re-married by a man at will. The fact that she first has to marry someone else is a great deterrent to a husband acting in a frivolous way or holding his wife in a suspended state.

As half the population of the world is female, Muslim women have a great task to do regarding preaching and social work. In the end I would like to state that terrible treatment was meted out to women before the advent of Islam. No religion had come to their rescue. Where the status of women has been raised it has been due to public outcry and not by the efforts of religious leaders and the teachings of their respective religions. Islam did not wait for women to press their claims for freedom and for the recognition of their rights. It made provision for them fourteen hundred years ago for a balanced adjusted social order.

## **Islam and Russia (3)**

**(Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah)**

### **ISLAM AND EQUALITY OF MANKIND**

Islam recognises the equality of all people of all nations.

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

(Holy Quran, 49:14).

“This verse lays down the basis of an all-comprehensive all-pervading brotherhood of mankind. The verse, in fact, constitutes the Magna Carta of human fraternity and equality. It lays the axe at the false and foolish notions of superiority, born of racial arrogance or national conceit. Having been created from a male and female as human beings all men have been declared equal in the sight of God. The worth of a man is not to be judged by the pigment of his skin, the amount of wealth he possesses, or by his social status, descent, or pedigree, but by his moral greatness and by the way in which he discharges his obligations to God and mankind.”

(Commentary on the Holy Quran. Footnote 2797.

Edited by Malik Ghulam Farid).

The whole human race is but one family. Division into tribes, nations and races is meant to give them better knowledge of one another's national characteristics and good qualities. On the occasion of the last pilgrimage to Mecca, a short time before his death, the Holy Prophet addressing a vast concourse of Muslims said:

“O Ye men! Your God is One and your ancestor is One. An Arab possesses no superiority over a non-Arab nor does a non-Arab over an Arab. A white is in no way superior to a red, nor, for that matter,

a red to a white, but only to the extent to which he discharges his duty to God and mankind. The most honored among you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you.”

(Baihaqui).

“These noble words epitomize one of Islam’s loftiest ideals and strongest principles. In a society riven with class distinctions the Holy Prophet preached a principle intensely democratic.”

(Commentary on the Holy Quran. Footnote 2797.  
Edited by Malik Ghulam Farid)

Although all have been created equal, Islam also recognises diversity in human potential and achievement:

“And covet not that whereby Allah has made some of you excel others. Men shall have a share of that which you have earned, and women a share of that which they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Surely, Allah has perfect knowledge of all things.”

(Holy Quran, 4:33).

“The verse establishes the equality of men and women so far as their works and rewards are concerned.”

(Commentary on the Holy Quran. Footnote 595).

“And He has created you in different forms and different conditions.”

(Holy Quran, 71:15).

“God has endowed different men with different natural capacities and capabilities, and on this disparity of aptitudes and physical conditions depend the existence, growth and development of human society.”

(Commentary on the Holy Quran. Footnote 3133).

“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.”

(Holy Quran, 30:23).

“Human progress is closely linked with the diversity of tongues and colours. The diversity again points to a design and designer. That designer is the Creator of heavens and earth. Underneath the diversity of tongues and colours which has resulted in diversity of civilizations and cultures there lies a unity — the unity of mankind. This oneness of humanity leads to the inevitable conclusion of the Oneness of its Creator.”

(Commentary on the Holy Quran. Footnote 2279).

## RUSSIAN CALL TO MUSLIMS

The Muslims were subjected to the most savage oppression under the Russian Tsarist regime. Ivan IV had earned for himself a nickname “terrible” by ordering Russians to kill Muslims in the Kazan territory. By 1885 the entire western Turkistan was subjected to Russian tyranny. Kazak and Fargana were made a province of the Russian Empire while Bukhara and Khive became two Russian protectorates. As the Bolshevik Revolution broke out, the Muslims availed themselves of the opportunity to throw off the yoke of foreign domination. Idil-Ural and Crimea declared independence. Western Turkistan, North Caucasia, Azarbaijan and Bukhara also became independent.

The Bolshevik government sought the co-operation of the Muslims. It proclaimed:

“Tartars of the Volga and Crimea, Khirghiz, Kazakhs and Starts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tartars of Trans Caucasia, Checkens and Mountaineers of the Caucasus, and all those whose mosques and Oratories have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled under foot by the Tsar and oppressor of Russia. Your beliefs and usages, your natural and cultural institutions, are henceforth free inviolate. Organize your life in complete freedom. You have the right to do so. Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia, are under the powerful safeguard of the revolution and its bodies, the Soviets of Worker, Soldiers and Peasants, Deputies.”

(Declaration of Rights of the People of Russia—  
1st Legislative Act).

Muslims are under constant discontentment. During the Tsarists’ regime they were subjected to brutality under the “Cross”. Now during the Communist era the Muslims are continuously suffering under the “Hammer and Sickle”.

The Muslims are now becoming a growing concern for the Soviet Union because the Soviet Muslims are concentrated in the USSR’s strategic southern border regions and are maintaining ties with Muslim people in the neighbouring countries (Time Magazine, 12 January, 1987, p. 60).

## MUSLIM POPULATION

The Communist regime quickly broke its promise. Soon after the declaration, the Red Army was established and the Bolshevik regime trampled over the independence of the Muslim nations. The Muslims who believed that independence had dawned for them soon realised that the declaration was simply to prevent them from consolidation and possible close

contact with that world outside Russia. The independence of the Muslims which had been recognised earlier was quickly denied by the Bolshevik government.

The Muslim countries were brought under the control of the Communist government. In order to destroy that national entity of the people the Communist divided each Muslim country into small fragments. Thus the Muslim nation composed of people tied together with Common language, race, religion, culture etc. were divided into small units and each unit was made a separate nation.

West Turkistan was divided into six units and then given the name: Republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakistan, Khirghizistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikstan and autonomous province of Karakalpak.

There is a large population of Muslims under Russian spiritual oppression. This mass consists of the Muslims in Western Turkistan, Idil-Ural, Trans-Caucasia, Azerbaijan and Crimea. These countries adjoin one another. Besides, there are multitudes of Muslims in Siberia annexed to the Russian empire early in 1850.

Idil-Ural was divided into units: Republics of Tartar, Bashkird, and autonomous province of Murdar and two other provinces. Azarbaijan was divided into: Republic of Azarbaijan and autonomous provinces of Nakhchivan, Abkhazya, and Southern Osetin. Trans Caucasia was split into: Dagistan, Chichen, Engush, Osetiya, Kabartay, Bolkar, Karachay, Cherkes Edge, Kalmuk, and autonomous provinces of Grenzi, Maykeb and Karadeiz.

In solving the problems of nationalities, the Communist Government appointed "Advisors". These advisors were given the authority to actually run the affairs of the Republics as well as autonomous provinces of the newly created nations. Later on, some of the autonomous provinces set up in Idil-Ural were annexed to RSFSR — that is Russia proper. It was done so because apparently the indigenous population had become a minority. Similarly the provinces in Trans Caucasia, the Checen, Engus, Balkar, Krachay and Kalmuk Republics were annexed to Russia proper. And the entire indigenous population was deported to other places in Russia. One day in 1944 the entire Muslim population of Crimea was given a notice of twenty-four hours to gather at a specific place. On the spot, they were loaded in goods trains and deported to Siberia and North Russia under the supervision of the army. Similarly the Angus, Karachay, Balkar and Kalmuk tribes of trans Caucacia were also deported to Siberia and other places in North Russia having been served a notice to leave within twenty-four hours.

The Communist Regime thus put an axe on the solidarity of the Russian Muslim nations. The Russian Muslims were divided and annihilated completely. The bold Muslim people who resisted the Communists' tactics

were labeled as traitors and punished with execution or exile. Some devout Muslims, Muslim army officers, Muslim intelligentsia, who did not accept the Communist regime wholeheartedly were killed. Their families were deported to Siberia. Some Muslims were deported from their homeland to tundra regions under the control of the Russian army. They were asked to work in the mines. They died due to the extreme cold weather and starvation. The Communist regime thus disintegrated and annihilated the Muslim population of Russia.

As the Communists found themselves firmly in control they released the flames of irreligion which ran across the Turkmenia and enveloped the Asian extremities of the Czarist empire.

The Communists became successful and struck a fierce blow on Muslim unity. They created hatred by emphasising and flaring up the tribal differences of the Muslims of Central Asia. In the name of cultural affiliation the Communists dissolved the original boundaries and grouped the Muslims separately as Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkomans, Kazzaks and Khirghies. And in the heart of Muslim Central Asia the Communists built Stalin-abad with the distinctive feature of having no mosque.

#### RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

Christianity was the state religion during the Tsarist regime. It was in vogue in its deplorable form during the time of Tsar Nicholas II who was the supreme head of the Orthodox Church. Whereas the British Ambassador would address the Tsar as “Your Majesty”, the so-called man-of-God Rasputin, addressed him simply as “My Friend”. The Russian people hated Rasputin considering him a snob, so they also hated the Tsar and in turn hated Christianity. Christianity was very clearly identified with the Tsar. It was argued that religion was a product of the Tsarist rule, illiteracy and ignorance. (People Weekly, 6 April, 1987). The Russian revolution, therefore, could not attempt to change all Russian life without coming into conflict with the Orthodox Christian church.

It was observed that:

“Tsarist Christianity was at its worst. The monasteries enjoying large revenues were nests of miracle mongering. The priests were superstitious, illiterate and grasping. Throughout the vast Euroasian continent, indigenous pagans held their own magic and incantation amid Christian rites and such Christian doctrine as the peasant was taught. It is scarcely to be wondered that the Christian religion as it is practiced in Russia ought to perish forever from the face of the earth.”

(Webb: Soviet Communism).

The Bolsheviks thus identified religion with the most corrupt version of Christianity. They did not have any contact and experience of Islam as a pure and rational religion. Almighty Allah had just raised Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Promised Messiah and Mahdi to revive the religion of Islam. The Bolsheviks, however only knew Karl Marx who has said that religion was the “opium of the people”. At that time opium was known as a painkiller in Germany and thus brought happiness. According to Marx, therefore, “the first requisite for the people’s happiness was the abolition of religion”. Islam, in fact brings contentment and happiness not only in this world but also in the everlasting world to come. Lenin adopted the creed of Karl Marx which denied the existence of the soul, had no code moral ethics, and disbelieved in life after death.

The Revolution was therefore to be carried on the basis of militant atheism. Priests as well as devout Muslims were persecuted along with the landlords and the capitalists. In many places churches were converted into clubs and storehouses for grains. The Bolsheviks confiscated all mosques, madrassas and other Muslim religious private schools throughout Turkistan, which at one time was the centre of Muslim learning. The confiscated Muslim religious properties have been earlier demolished or converted into cinemas, theatres and stores. The Muslim religious institutions were closed and religious instruction outlawed. Some of the buildings of the Muslim institutions were converted into warehouses and clubs. The famous Muslim theological seminary of Registan, built by the grandson of Taimur was turned into a museum (Salisbury: Russian on the way).

A story concerning Joseph Stalin says that an archeologist opened the grave of Tamerlane to study the old ruler’s skeleton. Some people opposed the move saying that it would cause a war. No attention was paid to them. Three days after they had opened the grave, Hitler invaded the USSR. The war was going rough for the Russians. The superstitious belief reached the ears of Stalin that the invasion was a sort of curse for opening the grave of the great ruler. Stalin immediately ordered the body to be returned to its resting place called Gor-i-Amir. This occurred just when Russia achieved a great victory at Stalingrad. Some time afterwards Stalin permitted the re-opening of the historical Mir Arab Madrassa, Bukhara. Moreover some of the previously closed mosques were opened in Western Turkistan and in some other places. But the taxes levied upon Mosques in post war days were so heavy that they had to be closed again.

It is simply an irony that at the start of the revolutionary regime, the Muslims were allured to help the Communists. They were assured by First legislative proclamation:

“Muslims of Russia henceforth your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are proclaimed free and inviolate, organize your national way of life freely and unhampered.”



But soon afterwards Lenin declared:

“Marxism believes that places of worship and all other institutions of religion are tools in the hands of leaders of Believers to exploit the toilers.”

(Collection: Lenin’s Speeches, Moscow, 1947).

Stalin declared in 1927:

“The Party cannot be neutral in respect to religion, it wages an anti-religious propaganda against all religious prejudices because it stands for science. There are cases of party members interfering with the full development of anti-religious propaganda. It is good that such members be expelled.”

Mr. Gorbachev, the present Communist leader, gave a speech at Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. According to the Uzbek daily Pravda Vostoka, Mr. Gorbachev called for a “firm and uncompromising struggle against religious phenomena.” Then he said, “We must be strict above all with Communists and senior officials, particularly those who say they defend out of morality and ideals but in fact help promote backward views and themselves take part in religious ceremonies.” This was Mr. Gorbachev’s first pronouncement on Islam since he took office nearly two years ago. Indeed, according to Kremlin watchers, it is rare for a Soviet General Secretary to attack religion so directly. It has been noticed that Russia’s struggle against religion has not been going well. Moreover, the fact that Mr. Gorbachev chose Tashkent as the place to attack religion indicated that the Soviet leadership is specifically fearful about the currents of fundamentalist zealotry sweeping the Muslim world which might eventually infect the fast-growing Muslim nationalities of Soviet Central Asia.

It is expected that Mr. Gorbachev’s policy about Islam will become more clear in the time ahead. (Time Magazine, 12 January, 1987).

Since 1918 the Soviet Union has formally professed constitutional commitment to freedom of belief. In practice the Communist regime has placed strict restrictions on mosques and other places of worship. The government has actually waged a campaign of oppression against believers. The training of religious leaders is tight and restricted. The religious education of children under 18 is illegal and at the same time, all school children are exposed to the doctrine of atheism.

There are no reliable statistics regarding the number of Muslims in the Soviet Union. However, according to last year’s report of the 16th Congress of the Kazakhstan Communist Party “Islam is still strong and growing”. A Kazakh newspaper has reports of mullahs (Muslim priests) holding unauthorised prayer meetings. Simultaneously, another rival daily newspaper in neighbouring Uzbekistan has attacked local party leaders who

permit (Muslim) people to gather at traditional holy sites (mosques). An informal information suggests that the number of believers far exceeds the capacity of the country's 300 to 500 legally registered mosques. (There were about 24,000 mosques before the Communist take over.)

Some recent Russian newspaper articles contain evidence of Muslim religious activities growing. It has been suggested that Muslim workers are taking the holy month of Ramazan more seriously. However, according to one article, some who follow the "old reactionary rituals" now try to make the practices more acceptable to the Soviets by using coded terminology. Thus fasting is called dieting and five daily ritual prayers of prostration are termed calisthenics. (Time Magazine, 12 January, 1987).

It is said that ethnicity as well as religion lay behind the mid-December 1986, rioting in Alma-Ata (literally means full of apples), capital of Kazakhstan, after the Kremlin replaced veteran party leader Din Mukhammad Kunayev, a Kazakh, with a Russian. The ousted Kunayev was no believer, but he did little to suppress his people's religious practices. His removal served as a focus for Kazakh and Muslim resentment of postwar Russian newcomers who have made the Kazakhs a minority in their own Republic.

#### FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

Freedom of conscience is recognised in the USSR Constitution. It means the right to profess or not to profess any religion. Those who profess religion can worship but cannot communicate their beliefs to others. The freedom of conscience alludes to and guarantees atheism. Also, anti-religious and atheistic propaganda is encouraged and made lawful in the USSR constitution. Religious propagational activity is hampered, hindered and made unlawful in the USSR Constitution. A person can worship but cannot communicate his or her beliefs to others whereas an atheist can propagate his or her anti-religious beliefs openly. An atheist has the constitutional protection and freedom to intimidate, ridicule and insult religious worship. As atheist propaganda is legal, societies called God-less or no-God came into existence at the beginning of the October Revolution. A newspaper was also published by the Communist Government for the propaganda of atheism and to discourage religious beliefs and worship. (The paper discontinued its publication some years afterwards). However, devout Muslims were not influenced by the atheistic propaganda.

Further, in the early years of the Revolution, the schools were secularised. It was made unlawful to impart religious instruction to children and teenagers in State as well as formerly religious schools so the Muslim religious schools were closed forthwith. But atheistic, anti-religious education remained lawful

for minors as well as for teenagers. It was advocated “instruction in any type of religious doctrine given in schools to minors and under-aged is one of the forms of infringement of the ‘freedom of conscience’ granted by the USSR Constitution” (Training Commentaries Moscow, 1946). Thus the teaching of Islam in schools was made unlawful till the age of fourteen. Simultaneously Muslim children and youths were to receive compulsory anti-Islam “and atheist” education in schools. The upcoming Muslim generation is therefore being cut off from basic Muslim education which is imperative at that tender age.

The Muslims in Russia, from the very beginning, had adopted Arabic script and Arabic Muslim literature was produced in that land. But in 1928, the Communists ordered that the Arabic script should be changed. First, Latin and then Cyrillic (Russian) alphabets replaced the Arabic alphabets. In this way, the Russian Muslims were isolated from the rest of the Muslim world as well as from their own post religious and cultural information. Also, the rich Muslim Arabic literature thus became extinct for the coming generations.

Islam is still alive in Russia by the will of Almighty Allah. The older Muslim generation is shouldering the responsibility to bring up the oncoming generation. But the old generation of devout Muslims is continuing to dwindle and the upcoming generation needs to strive hard to hold fast to the kindled torch of Islam.

Education in Russian schools is strictly carried on under the principles of Communism. The textbooks are so compiled and courses of study so arranged that children and youth are indoctrinated into Communism from a very tender age. By the time they come of age, their intellects have been trained in such a way that they look at the solution of every problem of life with a Marxist point of view. This is the fruit of system of education devised by the Communist government. The Russian government granted privileges, exemptions, and even monetary compensations to Muslim parents to send their children to Soviet schools. A few teachers’ training schools were opened to imbibe the principles of Marxism in their teaching. Gradually communism came to hold a monopoly in the field of education and Muslim influence began to decline. The old Muslim schools in Russia have passed into oblivion. The old type of Muslim religious teacher called Mullah is no more there. Now the schools are modern, teachers, courses of studies are modern with the result that education imparted to the coming generation of Muslims is not only modern but also anti-Islamic.

The Communist government very systematically and strictly controls the administrative and instructional areas of education. Therefore, regardless of religious background, a Muslim student is brought up with the Soviet indoctrination of Karl Marx philosophy. Muslim teachings ethics and morals are therefore being crushed in Soviet Russia.

Muslim values have been subdued in home and family. Muslim family life has been completely shattered in the USSR. There are reports that every member of the family is asked to submit a periodic confidential report about other members of the family. Those who fail to comply with the directions are labelled as “enemies of the People” and punished appropriately by party authority. It is also said that numerous religious leaders are subjected to the same rigorous rules.

Muslim women have also been made a target of the Communist regime. Women clubs were established with the main purpose to draw Muslim women out of seclusion and away from Islam. Muslim women wore the veil until 1921.

It was a sustained and concealed effort on the part of the government to draw Muslim women to Marxism. Once in a while slogans were heard: “Down with the paranja (veil)”; “Long live the free women of Central Asia”; “Down with the groups of Mullahs”; “Long live the Soviet Government”. The Muslim women were invited to the club parties and paranjas (veils) were thus taken off under the encouraging eyes of the comrades. But the husband, did not accept their wives going out without veil in search of so called freedom. There were some unpleasant incidents in domestic life. Women themselves were insulted and hurt but in the torture of their souls and in the fires of their passion a new morality contrary of Muslim modesty was being modelled. One Soviet director of social affairs reports:

“. . . in the square, and all burned their veils. Almost like women liberation movement. My great grandmother burned her veil and told my great grandfather afterward. He was very concerned. He was very conservative.”

(McDowell, Journey Through Russia, USA, 1977).

In the name of cultural revolution, the Communists have started the battle of ideological aggression with all the planned vindictiveness it can command. Permission for religious worship is granted but Muslims being forced to work cannot leave the job to pray. Peasants who were seen praying in mosques were denied party memberships and privileges. In 1929 several Muslims were subjected to heavy taxes, while many were thrown in jail regardless of the dubious nature of the charges against them. Recently Mr. Gorbachev has warned the party leaders who, just for courtesy, have participated in Muslim festivals. (Time Magazine, 12 January, 1987).

#### MUSLIMS IN RUSSIA

But there is another side of the status of Muslims in Russia which has been made colourful and came through the Soviet press for the world outside. It is interesting to note that Russians are engaged in conniving propaganda to present a constructive episode for the people who actually are under duress

and strain to keep their faith alive. However, the narrative, with the caption, Muslims in the Soviet Union, was reported in the Soviet press as follows:

“Azerbaijan is one of the Soviet Republics whose population professes Islam. Since ancient times it has been the homeland not only of Azerbaijanians but also of Russians, Ukrainians, Tartars, and Kurds — in short, of several dozens of nations and ethnic groups. The Tsarist authorities exploited this diversity of language, morals, customs, and traditions to establish their rule over this region, as over other backward national outlands. In Azerbaijan the autocracy constantly provoked national and religious squabbles and sowed the seed of strife between Muslims and Christians between Azerbaijanians and Armenians. The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, which ensured the de jure and de facto equality of all nations and ethnic groups inhabiting the country put an end to this and paved the socialist revolution and also established religious inequality.”

Today, once backward outlands are equal union republics with a developed modern industry and agriculture. They have thousands of schools, dozens of higher and specialised secondary schools in which instruction is carried on in the national languages. Radios and TV programs are broadcast in national languages.

Control over the observance and correct application of the laws on religious cults throughout the territory of the Soviet Union is within the power of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, which has delegates in every republic and region. The religious life of Muslims in the USSR is supervised by four religious boards which operate independently of each other.

Tashket (Uzbekistan) is the seat of the Religious Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Bashkiria's capital Ufa (Southern Urals) hosts the religious Board of Muslims of the European part of the Soviet Union and Siberia. The Religious Board of Muslims of the Northern Caucasus is the Makhachkala, the Capital of Daghestan. And the religious Board of Muslims of Soviet Transcaucasia is in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. Each Board is headed by a chairman, elected from among eminent theologians by Congress of representatives of Muslim religious leaders and believers.

Religious boards of Soviet Muslims maintain broad international contacts with Muslims abroad through their international ties of Muslim organisations of the USSR which is based in Moscow. Soviet Muslims maintain contacts with 80 countries. Soviet Muslim leaders participate in International Islamic forums.

The Soviet Muslims are actively fighting for peace. On the initiative of their organisations, several forums of the followers of Islam have been held in the Soviet Union. They discussed such questions as the unity and solidarity of the Muslims of the world in the struggle for peace. In September 1980, Tashket hosted the jubilee Muslim Conference on "The Fifteenth Century of the Hegira, the Century of Peace and Friendship Between Peoples." An international Muslim conference devoted to the Peace struggle was scheduled to be convened in Baku in October, 1986 (Soviet Press: Reported in Socialism, August, 1986).

(The report of the Baku Conference will be brought to the attention of the readers of the Review of Religions as and when it becomes available.)

### **Importance of Friday Prayer**

Of all the obligations of a Muslim, the most important is prayer, and of all the prayers, none is so essential to be recited in congregation as the Juma (Friday) service prayer. The Juma is in fact the greatest Muslim festival. The Holy Quran regards it as a holiday. A whole chapter of the holy book entitled the Juma has been devoted to it. In that chapter Almighty God commands Muslims to quit all their worldly affairs when they are summoned to prayer of Friday, to assemble in mosques and to say the Juma prayers with due observance of all the requirements of the Law. The person who does not act in obedience to these injunctions is regarded by the Holy Quran as guilty of a deadly sin and almost outside the circle of Islam. Far more stress has been laid upon attendance at the Juma sermon and prayers than upon Id. It is on account of this importance of the Juma in the Muslim faith that Friday has universally been observed as a holiday among the Muslims from the very earliest time that Islam took its rise.

(The Promised Messiah)

# **Reason and Revelation**

**(Aziz A. Chaudhry, MD)**

(Summary of a portion of the book Braheen Ahmadiyya by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah)

## **Words of God and Man's Speech are not equal**

At this point, people who do not have the habit of deep thought, offer an objection that alphabet and single words are common in the words of God and words of man and so it shows association of man with God is necessary. The answer is, as we have explained in the main text earlier, that God has taught alphabet and single words to man which he has not invented by his own reason. Speech was taught to man in the beginning by revelation from God. What man has invented is the construction and sequence of sentences as his need may be. Speech and writing of God and man can never be equal, nor it should be otherwise man becomes an associate of God. Clay is a creation of God and man utilises it and makes pottery of many kinds but it does not prove the association of man with God. It might be proved so if man, using clay or dirt, could create animal and plant kingdoms and precious minerals. Man has no such power. Man also has power of invention and speech but it cannot be equal to the invention and speech of God. In some respects man can not compete with some insects which make silk or honey.

One should remember well that just like elements of the human body, elements of speech are also from God, by which we mean alphabet, single words and short sentences on which speech is dependent. Whatever man needed for the evolution of his nature was provided by God. A seeker after truth should not be deceived by elements of speech which are found both in the speech of man and God. The difference is that in the literal words of God these words and sentences occur in such a sequence, wisdom, suitability, balance and eloquence as in all works by God. Man can not compete with God in anything He can do. That is why all disbelievers, in spite of their claims of eloquence and being kings of poetry, became dumb when challenged by the Holy Quran.

There is another aspect to this subject. Certain hope for salvation depends upon perfect certainty in the existence of the Creator and in His promise of punishment and reward. In order to acquire such certainty, a revealed book is necessary which should be beyond human powers to imitate. It is now necessary to consider two points. First, why is salvation related to perfect certainty? Second, why can we not gain perfect certainty from the study of nature? Perfect certainty and salvation depend upon man's preference to God — the Exalted, and his love for Him above things of the world, its luxury, wealth, relationships and even his own self. But the trouble is that man turns to all these attractions. It is hard for him to turn to God with full zeal unless he has the same perfect certainty about the existence of God, pleasure in meeting Him, and His punishment and reward as he has about the existence of his wealth, property and experienced pleasures. A weak idea cannot overcome a strong idea.

### **A Study of Creation does not lead to certainty about God**

One cannot acquire perfect certainty of the existence of God from the study of creation, which is not such a book in which one may find it written that God has created this creation, that He really does exist, meeting with Him is real pleasure and that He will reward the faithful and punish the wicked. Reflecting upon creation and that an order and organisation exists in the universe, can only provide the conjecture that this creation should have a creator. There is a great difference between "should be" and "is". A person who says "should be" means he does not know any further and cannot say for sure whether God really exists or not. That is why people who only study creation never agree in their conclusions and never will. If it were written on any part of the sky with big and bright words that "I am unique and unmatched God who has created all things and will reward the righteous and punish the wicked" then in that case it might not be necessary for God to adopt any other method for creating certain faith. But this is not the case. In this respect all philosophers and wise men are agreed that a study of nature only provides a conjectural proof and not a real proof and even then only to those who think that nature is not self existing. But an atheist, who thinks that nature is self-existing will not agree and might say that no body has seen these natural things being created by a creator. Reason proves the necessity of the existence of God which it can not prove His actual existence. Many past philosophers who held conjectural arguments were involved in great mistakes and caused many conflicts without reaching a firm conclusion. After possessing thousands of doubts, the majority turned atheists, naturalists and non-believers. The paper boat of philosophy could not lead them to their destination because on one hand they were involved in love of the world and on the other they did not really know what would happen after death. Bereft of perfect certainty they passed their lives in great restlessness. The best that



reason can achieve is to help in reaching the conclusion that there is a necessity for a creator. Such philosophers remained prey to all sorts of doubts like unbelievers. Some denied that God is the all wise Controller. Some considered the sum total of souls to be co-existing with God, a view which is inherited by Arya Samajists. Some denied immortality of souls and the Day of Judgment. Some denied that God has knowledge of particulars and some worshipped idols. And many great philosophers denied altogether the existence of God — the Exalted.

### **Only revealed books provide certain knowledge of God**

Now returning to the earlier point we have to accept one of two things. Either that God has no intention to lead man to perfect certainty or else He has definitely produced some method to reach perfect certainty. The first proposition is so obviously false that every wise man will agree. If we accept the second proposition we have no choice but to accept that this method must be a revealed book which is unique and unmatched and in its expressions manifests all the beauties of laws of nature and further in it there is written testimony of its being from God and relates all religious matters. All these qualities will be found only in a revealed book which should be matchless and leads to perfect certainty in spiritual knowledge. An atheist may insist that nature is self-existent but after accepting that a discourse is beyond human powers, one will have to accept that God truly exists who has revealed such a book. He cannot maintain that this revealed discourse is self-existing like nature but will have to accept an author or a speaker for it. An atheist can argue and dispute the claim of a revealed book to be matchless but once he accepts that fact a seed will be sown in his heart to accept the existence of God. In addition this matchless revealed word of God contains what ever spiritual knowledge including life is needed for the perfection of self. This quality is not present in nature as its study does not reveal religious secrets. Without the matchless revealed word of God, salvation is not possible for unless there is perfect certainty about God, there cannot be any salvation. Those who think that it is not necessary that God's word should be matchless, think ill of God. Alas they do not think that God's laws of nature are so comprehensive that He has made even insects matchless, though they are not as useful. We reach the conclusion, which is in accordance to the glory of God and need of men, that God has certainly sent such a book for the salvation of mankind and perfection of knowledge which is matchless and leads to perfect spiritual knowledge, something which human reason alone could not accomplish. Such a book is the Holy Quran which has claimed perfection and advanced its proof.

Brahmo-Samajists have raised some objections, after great efforts, so that some excuse be found not to accept the book of God, so that matters relating

to religion may not be perfected, and so that they might not say that just as God has provided sun, moon and food for our physical development, similarly He has revealed His books for spiritual guidance. Because these people blame God — the Exalted with miserliness, lack of love and maladministration and because their ideas contain insults and ill thinking about God, it is necessary that we should answer their objections.

## Patience and Steadfastness

(Holy Quran)

“Have patience, then, as had the Messengers of strong determination.”

(46:36).

“And the gracious word of the Lord was fulfilled for the children of Israel because they were steadfast.”

(7:138).

“I have rewarded them this day for their steadfastness so that they alone have triumphed.”

(23:112).

“O ye who believe! Be steadfast and strive to excel in steadfastness and be on your guard and fear Allah that you may prosper.”

(3:201).

“And endure thou with patience; and verily, thy patience is possible only with the help of Allah. And grieve not for them, nor feel distressed because of their plots.”

(16:128).

“O you who believe, be patient and enjoin patience and be firm and fear God that you may prosper.”

(3:199).

“And We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives, and fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient.”

(2:151).

“Allah is with the steadfast.”

(2:245).

“And seek help with patience and prayer.”

(2:246).

## **Audience with Allah the Affectionate (2)**

**(Capt. M. H. Cheema)**

The second step of the Spiritual Ladder to climb in order to meet Allah, the Exalted, our Creator, is called Zikr-e Elahi (Remembrance of Allah). After performing Salat (the obligatory prayer) the very first step to be taken as commanded by Allah is, as mentioned in the Holy Quran:

“When you have finished the Salat, remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on your sides.”

(4:104).

“On completing the acts of worship prescribed for you, celebrate the praises of Allah as eagerly as you used to celebrate the praises of your forefathers, or even with greater eagerness.”

(2:201).

Salat (prayers), must be performed in a certain prescribed manner, and subject to certain conditions, within particular periods of time. As our body needs water to moisten it at brief intervals, and it begins to feel dry and tired without it, so does the soul stand in constant need of spiritual refreshment, for it is apt to be starved when one is engaged in material pursuits. Islam has taught, therefore, that we should, from time to time, in the midst of our pursuits and pre-occupations, recall and reflect over the different attributes of Allah so that our whole attention should not be engrossed in worldly affairs. The remembrance of Allah should continue to refreshen our souls. The benefits of Zikr are similar to those of Salat. (See Page 54, Ahmadiyyat Or the True Islam by Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad). Great stress has been laid by the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, on the subject of Zikr-e Elahi. I quote three references from his various writings on the subject:

- (i) “In short be clean in your doings and always engage yourself in Zikr-e Elahi. Do not be negligent. As a hunted animal becomes weary, and falls prey in the hands of the hunter, similarly one who slackens in the remembrance of Allah, falls prey to Satan.”

(Malfuzat, Vol. V. p. 303).

(ii) “The real purpose of Zikr-e Elahi is that one should never neglect Allah, the Exalted one, and should constantly deem Him in his presence, thus he will remain safe from the sins. It is written in Tazkiratul Auliya, that a merchant while engaged in the transaction of buying and selling his goods worth seven thousand rupees, did not remain away from Allah, even for a moment.”

(Malfuzat. Vol. VII. p. 20).

(iii) “It is mentioned in the Holy Quran, ‘O, My men, remember Me, and forget Me not, nor I shall forget you and shall look after you. Be thankful to Me and have values of the graces I have bestowed upon you and do not shun them’. This verse clearly shows that to give up Zikr-e Elahi or to ignore it, is a sin. It is an old saying that at the moment you ignore Allah then at that very moment you become an infidel. The five times for prayer is just a reminder otherwise one should always keep oneself engaged in the love of Allah and should never become negligent. To remember Him on all occasions is human and you can fully rely on him.”

(Malfuzat. Vol. V. p. 254).

It should be remembered that Allah is by no means in need of being remembered. He is the Lord Creator. It is beneficial for us to remember Him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have advised us that:

“Remember God in prosperity and in your good times; He will remember you in your difficult times.”

Allah, the Almighty advises us to remember Him and warns us lest our worldly affairs stand in between:

“O Ye who believe! let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does so — it is they who are the losers.”

(63:10).

There is no trade or bargain that should cause us to neglect the remembrance of our Lord, the Gracious. It is quite proper for a person to engage himself in worldly pursuits, but he should not neglect the remembrance of Allah. Giving the example of a person who remembers Allah only when he is free from his worldly engagements, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, says:

“Of what use is a pony which cannot carry a load though it can run quite fast when carrying no load? This kind of a pony cannot be admired by its owner, or for that matter by anyone else. The religious mendicant who sits down in a secluded place because he

finds himself unable to carry the burden of the worldly affairs, displays weakness. Islam does not permit monasticism. I do not say that you should put away or leave aside your wife and children or your professions. No, I do not say that. The one who is serving somewhere should carry on with his job and the trader should carry on with his trade; what I say is you must give preference to religion. The duties of a believer are inter-connected in worldly as well as religious matters. The relation of a person with Allah is, after all, a very natural one.”

Indeed, Zikr-e Elahi is the greatest virtue:

“Verily, the remembrance of Allah possesses the highest beneficence.”

(29:46).

Depressed persons visit their doctors who prescribe for them a variety of tranquilisers or sleeping pills. These drugs affect the minute fibres of the brain. By the intake of these drugs one loses one’s fine sense and thereby feels a sort of drowsiness and thinks that one’s depression has gone. Drugs are not a cure for anxiety or depression. The real cure lies in the remembrance of Allah:

“Those who believe and whose hearts comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Be sure, it is only in the remembrance of Allah that heart can find comfort.”

(13:29).

It is said that true faith in Allah and peace of mind are inter-linked. The wise realise that peace of mind lies in the remembrance of Allah rather than in the drugs and tranquilisers. Furthermore, Allah gives glad tidings to those possessing peace of mind:

“O, thou soul at peace! Return to thy Lord, thou well pleased with Him and He well pleased with thee. So enter among My chosen servants and enter My Garden.”

(89:28–31).

There are numerous other verses in the Holy Quran dealing with the subject of the remembrance of Allah:

“O Ye who believe, remember Allah much; and glorify Him morn and eve.”

(33:42–43).

“So remember the name of thy Lord and devote thyself wholly to His service.”

(73:9).

“Remember thy Lord morning and evening, and prostrate thyself before Him at night, and extol His glory for a long part of the night.”  
(76:26–27).

“And glorify thy Lord with His praise when thou art standing in Prayer, and during part of the night and at the time of the setting of the stars.”  
(52:49–50).

“Those who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on their sides and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth, which impels them to supplicate: Lord, Thou hast not created all this without purpose, Holy art Thou; shield us then from the torment of the fire.”  
(3:192).

“Remember thy Lord in thy mind with humility and fear, silently, morning and evening, and be not neglectful.”  
(7:206).

“By men whom neither trade nor traffic beguiles from the remembrance of Allah and the observance of Prayer and payment of Zakat. They fear a day on which hearts and eyes will be agitated.”  
(24:38).

One of the inherent qualifications of a believer is that whenever he is engaged in the remembrance of Allah or hears His name being mentioned, he pays full attention to it. The Holy Quran says:

“Is it not time that the hearts of those who believe should feel humbled at the remembrance of Allah.”  
(57:17).

“Believers are only those whose hearts are smitten with awe when Allah’s name is mentioned, and when His Signs are recited to them they increase their faith, and who put their trust in their Lord.”  
(8:3).

“And give glad tidings to the humble, whose hearts are filled with fear when Allah is mentioned . . .”  
(22:35–36).

Whenever false and derogatory statements are made against the believers, they turn towards Allah, the Mighty, the Wise, for His help and guidance in accordance with the teachings of the Quran:

“Be steadfast then under their calumnies and glorify thy Lord with His praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting; and

glorify Him in the hours of the night and in different parts of the day, so that through His grace thou mayest win true happiness.”

(20:131).

Allah, the Lord of the universe has created man and He wants to see him always remembering Him and glorifying Him to win His pleasure and nearness. Allah reminds the believers that under no circumstances should they slacken from the remembrance of Allah:

“O ye who believe! let not your properties and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. Whoever behaves in that way, it is they who are the losers.”

(63:10).

Allah explains to us that if we turn away from His remembrance, we would have a difficult time:

(i) “But whosoever will turn away from My remembrance, his will be a straitened life and on the day of Judgment We shall raise him up blind.”

(20:125).

(ii) “Whoso turns away from the remembrance of his Lord is subjected by Him to severe torment.”

(72:18).

Allah advises His noble Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to turn aside from those who turn away from His remembrance, thus:

“So turn aside from him who turns away from Our remembrance, and seeks nothing except the life of this world.”

I have delved deep into the ocean of the Hadiths (traditions) and managed to pick up some glittering rubies and gems on the subject of “Remembrance of Allah, the Almighty”:

(i) “The best Zikr (remembrance of Allah) is ‘There is none worthy of worship save Allah.’”

(Bokhari).

(ii) “There are two phrases that are easy on the tongue but are heavy in the balance and are loved by the Gracious One: Glorified be Allah and His is the Praise; Glorified be Allah, the Lord of Majesty.”

(iii) “He who recites ‘There is none worthy of worship save Allah, the One, Who has no associate, His is the Kingdom and His the Praise, and He has Power over all things’ ten times, is like one who sets free four persons from among the descendants of Ishmael.”

(Bokhari & Muslim).

- (iv) The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to celebrate Allah's Greatness in the following terms after every Salat:

“There is none worthy of worship save Allah, the One, Who has no associate; His is the Kingdom and His the Praise and He has power over all things. There is no strength to resist evil nor power to do good except through Allah. There is none worthy of worship, save Allah. We worship none save Him; His is the bounty and the grace and for Him is all excellent praise; there is none worthy of worship save Allah. We hold to Him with full sincerity of faith though the disbelievers may resent it.”

- (v) “He who recites after every Prayer: Holy is Allah; thirty three times and: To Allah belong all Praise; thirty three times; and recites: Allah is great; thirty three times; and completes the century with reciting; There is none worthy of worship save Allah, the One, Who has no associate; His is the Kingdom and His the Praise and He has the power over all things; will have his sins forgiven though they may be like the foam of the sea.”

(Muslim).

- (vi) “When a company foregathers for the remembrance of Allah, its members are surrounded by angels and covered by mercy, and comfort descends upon them and Allah makes mention of them to those around Him.

(Muslim).

- (vii) Abdullah ibn Busr relates that a man asked the Holy Prophet: Messenger of Allah, the ordinances of Islam appear to me a host, so kindly tell me something to which I should hold fast. He answered him: Let thy tongue be constantly occupied with the remembrance of Allah.

(Tirmidhi).

- (viii) Hazrat Anas relates that the Holy Prophet said: Allah says when a servant of Mine advances towards Me a foot, I advance towards him a yard, and when he advances towards Me a yard, I advance towards him the length of his arms spread out. When he comes to me walking, I go to him running.

(Bokhari).

- (ix) Abu Musa Ash'ari relates that the Holy Prophet said: The case of one who remembers his Lord and one who does not remember his Lord is like that of the living and dead (Bokhari). Muslim's version is: The case of a house in which Allah is remembered, and of one in which Allah is not remembered is like that of the living and dead.



(x) Abu Musa relates: The Holy Prophet said to me: Shall I inform you of some of the treasures of Paradise? I said: Certainly, Messenger of Allah. He said: It is: There is no strength to resist evil, nor power to do good except through Allah.

(Bokhari & Muslim).

I pray that Allah, the Gracious, enables us to remember Him much and glorify Him often so as to become the recipients of His grace and eligible for the reward promised:

“and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him much — Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward.”

(33:36).

And indeed, we have no power to attain to any good or to guard against any evil except with the help of Allah.

Ameen.

## Justice and Tolerance

“And when you judge between people, do so fairly and justly.”  
(Quran 4:59).

“Be strict in observing justice, and be witness for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against your parents or kindred.”  
(Quran 4:136).

“And let not a people’s enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness.”  
(Quran 5:9).

“And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but do not transgress. Allah loves not the transgressors.”  
(Quran 2:91).

“And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it.”  
(Quran 8:62).

## **Personal Statement**

**(Ayaz ul Haque)**

When a child I thought myself similar to any other Muslim boy in school. However, as I grew up, I realised I was different. Unlike my friends I could not go to the local mosque, I could hold no hope of becoming the President of Pakistan and no member of my family could entertain dreams of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. I often wondered why this was so. One night my father provided me with the answer. I belong to the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. Although members of the Community strongly believe and declare themselves to be Muslims being devout followers of all Islamic injunctions and teachings as expounded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), the mullahs or orthodox Muslim religious leaders think otherwise. Ahmadis believe that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was a prophet without a new law whereas the mullahs insist that a prophet of no kind can come after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). Twice in the history of Pakistan, 1953 and 1974, agitation against the Ahmadiyya Community has led to serious bloodshed. After the 1974 disturbances a constitutional amendment was introduced declaring members of the Community to be non-Muslims and an affirmation of belief in the finality of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet was written into the oath of office of both the President and Prime Minister.

Although I was never a direct victim of discrimination or religious animosity, my family certainly was. Once when I was supposed to be sleeping I remember my mother telling my brothers how her uncle had been brutally murdered by a group of tribesmen who had been incited by their local mullah. This story terrified me and every night before going to sleep I would cautiously peer under my bed expecting to find a bearded, fiery-eyed "maulvi", brandishing a sword. As I grew up, however, it was in this fear that I found strength and even confidence. I reached a stage when I no longer hesitated in declaring my beliefs and supporting them from books I had perused. However, in 1984 a Presidential decree hindered me from even doing that. Once again the Government initiated an anti-Ahmadiyya campaign branding us traitors and holding us responsible for the instability of the country. Many Ahmadis were arrested and tried in special military courts.

In school the only thing that caused me a certain degree of uneasiness was that a couple of my friends who had pretensions to ultra-orthodoxy on doctrinal questions were inclined to be facetious at my expense and indulged in sarcasm and ridicule. In sober argument I was more than a match for them, but I had no defence against ridicule. Indirectly, however, this type of pin-pricking helped me as it trained me to control my temper and subdue my sensitiveness. It also made me more appreciative of kindness whenever it was extended to me.

The promulgation of the Ordinance XX not only affected me as a person but also helped me to define certain values I have grown to cherish. In my opinion, as far as faith is concerned, a person is what he sincerely believes himself to be and not what others may brand him to be. A religious label forcibly affixed on one by others can be annoying, but it cannot by one iota, change one's personal belief. Faith and belief come from within and are not decreed from without. It is, therefore, idle to sit in judgement on someone's faith — this is a matter between the individual and his Maker. I also realised that one does not have to relinquish one's faith or compromise on one's principles in order to gain acceptance and recognition. Instead one should try to be accepted because of one's personality, morality and relationship with one's fellow beings and their accomplishments and not because of their beliefs or social strata. I learned the importance of being true to one's self and to one's ideals. To be "authentic" and honest is a natural and universal power which brings with it a cornucopia of blessings. This is the most important value I could have acquired — that of self-truth and instinctive honesty.

Pakistan's sole Nobel Laureate, Dr. Abdus Salam, is a devout Ahmadi Muslim who openly declares and propogates his faith. No one, however, threatens him with arrest; nor is he called a traitor or a non-Muslim. In fact he is heralded by the Pakistan Government as being the first Muslim to receive the Nobel Prize! The reason for this exceptional treatment accorded to Dr. Salam is, no doubt, due to his exceptional accomplishment. This attitude of the Government has made me define my goal in life which is to strive and excel in whatever I do so that my countrymen are proud of me and are willing to accept me into their fold in spite of my beliefs.

## 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.

