



# THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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## THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world reformer and the Promised Messiah whose advent had been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). 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.



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## 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.*

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## EDITORIAL

### DRUGS AND TOBACCO

The world is beset with a huge drug problem which effects not only the lives of countless individuals but even nations on the whole. It is undermining regions of the world politically, economically, socially and, above all, spiritually: Despite the fact that Western countries feel that their culture and way of life is superior and more civilised than that of the less developed and third world countries, nevertheless America, and to a lesser extent other Western countries, have stigmatized themselves by having the highest rate of drug abuse. However this does not absolve other countries where it is fast becoming an unwholesome epidemic. The Director of the Pakistan Narcotic Control Board is reported to have said: 'It is in every town and every social strata. It is completely out of hand.'

Every one is aware of the havoc and disastrous effect of cannabis, cocaine, marijuana, opium etc. They are ruining and destroying the lives of millions of people all over the world. Illegal trade of drugs is a full time operation and in some South American regions there would be wide unemployment were the trade to cease. Police and Custom officials are on constant alert and have in recent times discovered large quantities valued at millions of pounds; but the illegal traffic continues unabated.

We do not feel it necessary to dwell on the damaging effects these drugs wreak on mind, body and soul. Nevertheless we would like to draw attention to the adverse effects of tobacco which are now being publicised far more than they used to be in the past.

No one would dispute the fact that smoking is harmful to health and is the cause of cancer and so many other diseases. That is why a warning against the danger of smoking appears on every packet of cigarettes produced in Britain. A former Chief Medical Officer of the British Ministry for health declared 'We can be certain that many more than 50,000 deaths a year in England and Wales are directly due to cigarette smoking.'

No doubt the sickening and deadly effects of smoking are in themselves reason enough to avoid this unhealthy and obnoxious habit. How often people exclaim that good health is one of the greatest blessings in life and how much more is this realised by the sick and suffering! We would like to go a step further and state that what is of even greater importance is that smoking is an impediment to spiritual health in as much that to a greater or lesser extent it stunts spiritual growth and development. We are not asserting that there are no pious and devout smokers; but we do say that it is a

handicap in the spiritual field for that person eager to soar higher and higher in purity, righteousness and service to mankind which should be the aim of every religious and devout servant of God.

Smoking is contrary to the teaching of Islam and it is also disapproved and even forbidden by various Christian denominations such as Pentecostals, Methodists, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists and others. The Holy Quran states:

“O ye who believe, eat of the good things We have provided for you.”

(2:173)

Commenting on this injunction we read:

“ The injunction contained in the words, ‘Eat of good, pure and wholesome things (Tayyibat) indicates that Muslims are not allowed to use things which may, in any way, injure their physical or moral or spiritual health, though they may be allowed by the Shari’ah (Law).”

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

As the blood conveys the nourishment in food to all the cells of the body so likewise does the blood convey the poisonous contents of tobacco smoke to each and every cell of the body.

Addressing the 13th Annual Conference of the U.K. Ahmadiyya Community in London on 31st July, 1977, Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan said: “Out of these I shall first draw attention to the evil and filthy habit of smoking. Some of our younger people say that smoking is not prohibited in the Holy Quran. That is not correct. The Holy Quran prohibits certain things specifically by name and prohibits certain others by definition, and smoking falls in several of the categories which are either prohibited or condemned in the Holy Quran. For instance, with regard to eating and drinking, there is not a single verse in the Holy Quran in which we are told that we can eat and drink all that is halal, that is lawful. For instance, I have heard the first Khalifa, Hazrat Maulvi Nuruddin Sahib, say that pulao, which is a pleasant and agreeable dish for a person in health, is Ghair tayyab (not good) for one who is suffering from malaria, because in his case it would not promote his health. So how could it be tayyab?.....” Smoking is a habit which is described in the Holy Quran as munkar which means something which is unpleasant for other people. The aim of a Muslim should be to make himself and his presence agreeable to other people. He should be a magnet; not a repellent. Who likes to be near to a person puffing out poisonous and nauseating fumes and whose breath is most unpleasant? The smell of tobacco even clings on to the clothes of one who has been in a smoky atmosphere.

In the field of preaching a Muslim has to expound and manifest the beauties of Islam which includes the persuasion of others to discard and avoid wrong

and sinful habits. If he himself is chained to a bad habit - smoking - then how can he guide and inspire others to abstain from their injurious and offensive habits? There is the story of a boy who was reprimanded for smoking only to reply that his father smoked!

A Muslim should strive to master himself rather than allow unsalutary habits to master him.

#### **DEDICATION**

*If your life, your death and your every movement, and your gentleness and your resentment, will be only for the sake of Allah, and at every trial and tribulation, you will not try Allah and will not break your contact with Him, and instead, will keep your pace up, then I say truly that you shall become a special community of Allah. You are also human beings as I am a human being, and my Allah is the same Allah as is yours. Do not thus waste your noble energies. If you really turn to Allah completely, then I say unto you, in accordance with Allah's Will, that you shall become an honoured community of Allah. Let the glory of Allah impress upon your hearts, and affirm His Unity not only with your tongue but in deed so that Allah may also shower His affection and grace on you. Refrain from malice and treat human beings with true sympathy. Follow every path of righteousness for no one knows which path may lead you to salvation.*

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)  
(The Promised Messiah)

## GUIDE POSTS

### TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

“And we will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and fruit, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who when a misfortune overtakes them, say ‘Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. It is on those on whom descend blessings from their Lord and also mercy, and it is those who are rightly guided.’”

(2:156-158)

The question may well arise how can one find paradise and solace in this world when one is perpetually burdened with afflictions and problems of one kind or another? The passage from the Holy Quran quoted above teaches that such occasions are blessings in disguise for they offer opportunities for one to demonstrate the extent of one’s faith in Allah and the calibre of one’s character. Furthermore if one meets them with patience and fortitude one gains the reward of Allah both here and in the hereafter. Allah again says in the Holy Quran:

“And We will surely try you until We distinguish those among you who strive for the cause of Allah and those who are steadfast. And We will make known the facts about you”

(47:32)

“Verily the steadfast will have their reward without measure”.

(39:11)

Allah has made it perfectly clear in the Holy Quran that life’s journey is not intended to be one of ease:

“And We have created man to face hardship”.

(90:5)

One should never moan or despair over tribulations and privations for this is an indication of weakness and ingratitude to Allah. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said that life is always full of blessings for those who understand:

“For a Muslim life is all full of good and nobody but a true Muslim finds himself in that position, for if he meets with success he is grateful to God and becomes the recipient of greater favours

from Him. On the other hand, if he suffers pain or tribulation he endures it with patience and thus again makes himself deserving of God's favours"

Hazrat Mirza Mahmood Ahmad has truly stated:

"Burdens are not always burdens."

Napoleon Hill - the renowned American writer of inspiring books - has said that in every adversity there lies the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit. This truth has already been confirmed by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace be on him). The same American author has also testified:

"I am thankful for the adversities which have crossed my pathway, for they have taught me tolerance, sympathy, self-control, perseverance and some other virtues I might never have known."

Helen Keller suffered an affliction which is impossible to imagine. At the age of nineteen months she became deaf, dumb and blind. She was almost unhuman in her behaviour until, when still a child, a brilliant teacher came into her life who, through the sense of touch, taught her to make sounds and eventually to speak. She learned to read braille by touch and even went to university where she excelled in her studies. She travelled through out the world, delivered public addresses and wrote books in eloquent English. She acquired many other accomplishments although throughout her life she remained deaf and blind. She was cheerful and happy and would express her gratitude for the blessings she enjoyed. She won the admiration of everybody with whom she came in contact. She was an example and a witness to the truth that in every adversity there lie the seeds of advantages and blessings. She has been an inspiration to countless thousands of sufferers and will continue to be so for all future generations. She lived a life of successful achievement despite her dreadful handicaps. Although she is now dead her name will remain inscribed in golden letters throughout the world for all times to come.

Charles Darwin - scientist and author of 'The Origin of the Species' said with reference to his ailing health:

"If I had not been so great an invalid I should not have done so much work as I have accomplished."

The Holy Quran teaches that one should endeavour to be patient in times of adversity and not to despair or become unduly frustrated. Then only can one enjoy the sweetness of paradise amidst the storms of life. Misfortunes are



inevitable. One must learn to bear and cope with them successfully. This is one of the important battles of life in which one must seek victory. One should not weaken under adversity but resolve to remain poised and strong in character during the darkest night as one would during the sunniest day.

One should welcome every adversity as a challenge and opportunity to demonstrate the correct attitude. It is the wrong attitude towards a problem and not so much the problem itself which causes one to fret and fume even over minor incidents. Take two people with identical problems. One becomes distracted while the other remains cool and calm. Their problem was one and the same but their different reactions were caused by their different attitudes and not by the problem itself. When one substitutes a negative attitude with a positive attitude the troubles seem to fade away. One should be patient and seek the good in everything. Allah has decreed that no one will escape hardships and misfortunes. One should expect them; and when they come to make the best of them without complaint or grievance.

#### PATIENCE

Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, of what ever kind they may be; for you yourself have many failings which others have to bear. If you cannot make yourself as you want to be, then how can you expect others to be as you would like them to be?

(Thomas A kempis)

## FRIDAY SERMON

(Delivered by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV, Head of the Ahmadiyya Community in Islam, on October 16th, 1987, at Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.)

28. The Chiefs of his people, who disbelieved, replied, We see thee nothing but a mortal like ourselves, and 'We see that none have followed thee but those who, to all outward appearance, are the means of us. And we do not see in you any superiority over us; nay, we believe you to be liars.'

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا تَرَى إِلَّا  
بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَ مَا تَرَى إِلَّا تَبْعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ  
أَرَادُوا بُادِيَ الزَّأْنِي وَمَا تَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ  
بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. He said, 'O my people, tell me if I stand on a clear proof from my lord and He has bestowed upon me from Himself a great mercy which has remained obscure to you, *how will it fare with you?* Shall we force it upon you, while you are averse thereto?

قَالَ يَقُومُ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي  
وَ أَتَيْتَنِي رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَغَيَّبْتَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
أَنْزِلَ مُكْمُوها وَ أَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَرِهُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. 'And O my people, I do not ask of you any wealth in return for it. My reward is only with Allah. And I am not going to drive away those who believe. They shall certainly meet their Lord. But I see that you are an ignorant people;

وَ يَقُومُ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَا لِي أَنْ أَجْزِيَ إِلَّا  
عَلَى اللَّهِ وَ مَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُلْقُوا  
رَبِّهِمْ وَ لَكِنِّي أَرِكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. 'And O my people, who would help me against Allah, if I were to drive them away? Will you not then take heed?

وَ يَقُومُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتَهُمْ أَفَأَنْتَ  
تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. 'And I do not say to you, I possess the treasures of Allah nor do I know the unseen,' nor do I say, 'I am an angel.' Nor do I say concerning those whom your eyes despise, 'Allah will not bestow any good upon them' — Allah knows best whatever is in their minds. Surely, in that case I should be of the unjust.'

وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَ لَا أَعْلَمُ  
الْغَيْبَ وَ لَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَ لَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ  
تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ  
أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

These verses from the Holy Quran, which I have just recited, do not merely narrate an ancient historical episode, but along with other Quranic verses and historical evidence are meant to describe a permanently established psychological phenomenon. Time and again, conditions of Noah's era are repeated, and every time human response to them remains the same. As indicated by the Holy Quran, a great civilization and rich culture flourished in Noah's time. The Promised Messiah has elaborated in detail that a rare and magnificent civilization existed in the age of Noah. One of the arguments put forward by the people to reject Noah was, as described in these verses:

وَمَا تَرْكُ أَتْبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِادِّىَ الْوَارِثِ

In our view, we find only low and insignificant people as your followers. None of our learned, rich and honourable persons follows you. What superiority, if any, do you have over us? How can we accept him, who is a leader of the poor, the weak, the low, and the distressed and also says his followers are superior and greater than us?

وَمَا تَرَىٰ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِن فَضْلٍ بَلْ نُنَظُّكُمْ كَذِبِينَ

Under the circumstances, we are compelled to conclude that you are a liar. Were you a truthful person, people with honour and dignity, the powerful leaders and great nations on earth would have followed you.

Noah's response to this objection is recorded in the Holy Quran:

قَالَ يَقُومُ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَأَتْلُو مِن رَّحْمَةِ رَبِّي  
عِنْدَهُ فُتِّيتُ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ إِنَّكُمْ لَمَكُونَا قَوْمٌ كَاذِبُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

“O my people, do you not realise that God has sent me with cogent arguments and bright signs, and He has bestowed upon me a great mercy. If you are unable to recognize this mercy, and are unable to see my closeness to the Creator and His love for me, then how can I cure your blindness! Things which you value as great are insignificant in my eyes and the great blessings which God has bestowed on me remain obscure to you. How can I impose these favours upon you? His love and bounties are supreme over everything. And one who enjoys the blessings of our Lord, he alone is indeed to be counted as great.”

وَيَقُولُوا لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ

“And o my people, I do not ask of you any monetary reward for my services to the nation. My reward is due from Allah alone. I

teach goodness and I give you advice day and night without demanding an favour in return. If your wealth was of any value to me I would have asked for money in return for my good works.”

Here the Holy Quran has given us a sound criterion based on great insight and wisdom which always makes a distinction between the truthful and the liars. People who work in the name of goodness can be one of two kinds: Those who spend out of their own pockets and make personal sacrifices prior to preaching, or those who receive millions of dollars from big governments before providing guidance or service to humanity. In this latter category, service is conditional on receipt of money. If the flow of funds ceases, so does their service to humanity. Obviously, such people give real value only to money and not to the service.

If the history of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat (community) is studied from this point of view, it becomes clear that the Jamaat embarked on its mission to spread the message of goodness to nations in the West as well as in the East even when it was utterly poor and without any resources. There was no one in the world to financially help the Jamaat. At the time when Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was sent to give the message of guidance to the great and mighty nation of America, Qadian (Jamaat Headquarters in India ) was in such an impoverished condition that sometimes the Jamaat's functionaries could not even be paid their meagre allowances for more than six months and their families even faced starvation. As he could not bear the pangs of the suffering of the Jamaat workers, Hazrat Musleh Maud (second Khalifa - may Allah be pleased with him) would make special appeals to some well-to-do members of the Jamaat for a loan or trust money which would be refunded in due time. In response to his pathetic appeals, God would show mercy, and some members would send generous donations while others presented refundable trust money. A study of the Ahmadiyya Movement would reveal that for years financial constraints were of such great magnitude that the functionaries were paid their meagre allowances out of loaned and borrowed funds. Allowances given to the present day devotees bear no comparison with allowances paid at that time. The allowances paid in those early days were hardly enough for survival, and as I have said, the Jamaat barely managed to give them after several months. Under these strained and desperate circumstances, a dervish devotee was sent by the Ahmadiyya Jamaat to the United States with the message of Islam. This indeed was the point that Noah was trying to explain to his people. He was least interested in their wealth. He and his followers were making sacrifices even before giving any advice or guidance to others. Why did not Noah's people understand that greatness was not in being wealthy! Real greatness lies in man's nobility and his relation with God. Noah's nation wanted him to notice and honour the rich. How could Noah honour the rich and turn away from the poor who were ready to offer

everything for the sake of God and who came to him to serve God's true religion? Should he throw them away because they were pennyless, or because they had no worldly status, or discard them because the colour of their skin was black, or because they were slaves? Even at that time, powerful and rich nations had slaves which not only included blacks, but all other races also. Noah told his people that in their eyes those who had neither wealth, nor worldly status, nor national superiority were a despicable lot and should be ignored. He further told the people that they were wrong in asking him to adopt their criteria before they agreed to listen to him. This dialogue between Noah and his people also indicates that Noah himself belonged to an elite ruling class which enjoyed a high status and authority, and people of his class felt embarrassed and disgraced when Noah started embracing the low and poor. The elite, therefore, wanted nothing to do with him. They would have gladly accepted him if he had confined his work to the elite group and excluded the poor and the lowly. By not adopting their course, they claimed Noah had disgraced his class of people. In response to this, Noah said:

إِنْ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“You are unaware of the greatness granted to my followers by God. My reward is due from Allah alone. In no case will I reject or drive away those who believe in God.

إِنَّهُمْ مُلَقَّوْنَ رِزْقِهِمْ

They will surely attain closeness to and love of God. And none has a greater status than those who have found nearness to their Lord.

وَلَكِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ

As a matter of fact, I consider you extremely ignorant and foolish. You do not realize at all how many blessings were to be bestowed upon you, which you have forfeited by being involved in matters low and mean.”

He further said:

“Not only do I love those poor people who become servants of Allah, but I would also like to make you aware of another truth. Those who do not have a natural inclination to love the poor, and choose to regard them low and mean, will not be spared of God's punishment, and no one will be able to help them.

وَيَقُولُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتَهُمْ أَفَآ تَذَكَّرُونَ

If I reject and repel these poor people, who is going to safeguard me from Allah's chastisement? Why then you do not understand and heed?"

وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ

Then reverting to the matter of wealth, he said:

"I do not claim to possess any worldly treasures, and I cannot give you any wealth. Neither do I claim to have the secrets of the unknown, nor do I claim to be an angel.

وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدِرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا

Yet I cannot say that God will not bless the poor people whom you despise due to your wealth and status."

This is a way of expression used in Arabic and in English as well. In a sentence with a double negative, the intent is to give more force to the idea of the positive. It means that Noah was saying that he did not claim to be an angel or to have the knowledge of the unknown or to possess wealth. Rather he was merely a human being who was a recipient of many blessings from God - yet he was absolutely sure that his followers would also receive "KHAIR" - wealth and prosperity of the world.

The word "KHAIR" means worldly wealth, as "HASANAH" initially means spiritual and moral blessings. Worldly blessings also are included in the meaning of "HASANAH" but as a secondary meaning. Fundamentally, "HASANAH" indicates virtues, excellences, spiritual and religious blessings.

The term "KHAIR" in the Holy Quran fundamentally means wealth and material possessions, although other related meanings are also implied. This matter indicates that Noah was giving the message inspite of his limited knowledge and resources. He was certain God would grant in abundance even worldly wealth to his followers and to their coming generations. In other words, if his nation was interested in matters of material wealth and status, then they were being warned that they would become poor and low, and likewise the poor followers of Noah would become rich and progressive. At the end he says:

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

"God looks into the hearts and bestows His blessings and glory on the basis of real intentions nourished by people in their hearts. God knows best what is in their hearts, and how much they love Him in their hearts, and to what extent they are willing to offer sacrifices.

Though they do not have much in material possessions, they are ready to offer whatever they have for the sake of God. God values and loves what is in the hearts, and if I do not treat them in a manner ordained by God, then I would be a great loser and may become one of the transgressors.”

إِنِّي إِذَا لَبِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

From this brief interpretative translation of these verses, it is clear that although Noah's period is far back in history, the subject matter still relates to the present day condition in America. Here too lives a race which is looked down upon by others. Their own countrymen who are of white colour mistreat them. Although the law of the land establishes some rights and liberties and gives equal opportunities, in actuality these people remain impoverished. They are seen doing the lowest jobs in the streets and in factories. The fact is that the actual power and authority are still in the hands of the whites. Consequently, the blacks live in an agitated state of extreme distress. As far as Islam is concerned, it is a universal religion which does not discriminate between races. It forbids mistreatment of people due to their race or colour. Yet at the same time it does not allow the discriminated to take revenge or act unjustly. Islam is a religion of balance and does not allow any injustice. Therefore, I am making it clear that Ahmadiyyat does not take sides or discriminates between people. According to Ahmadiyyat, all human beings are equal and enjoy the same status.

If Ahmadiyyat makes any discrimination, it is between the oppressor and the oppressed. Discrimination is not based on the colour of the skin. At the moment I do not intend to go into the details of this subject. At present I would like to say a few important things in the light of these Quranic verses to all Ahmadies regardless of their colour — be they black, white, or any other colour.

The fact of the matter is that immigrant Pakistanis who have settled here are victims of a type of complex, namely, the inferiority complex. In fact, this inferiority complex has nothing to do with shade of colour — may it be pure black or lesser black. This complex develops due to narrowness of heart and mind. Narrowness of heart and mind of a person, regardless of his colour, always expresses itself in a feeling of inferiority. Many ills of human society grow out of this complex, but the consequences are extremely devastating if people become its victims in the realm of religion. These verses of the Holy Quran tell us that truth and inferiority complex cannot exist together. The two are in direct opposition to each other and cannot flourish together. Truth suffers greatly at the hands of this complex. Like a thing destroyed by termites, one loses faith due to an inferiority complex. It preys upon truthfulness and nobility of character. However, at times, it may be temporary. For example, immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, or any Arab country may feel that they are financially better off as compared with the blacks, and further may feel that their colour is lighter. Thus, unconsciously they tend to become a part of the social set-up of the whites. By

making closer relationships with the whites, they may feel a kind of superiority over others. In my opinion, this is not a consciously developed attitude in most cases. For if it was a conscious effort, they could not remain true Ahmadies. They would immediately become untrue and faithless because they would contradict the Holy Quran's fundamental teaching. However, as I have stated, man is a victim of a thousand deceptions. He does not realize his own weaknesses throughout his life. Sometimes, at his death-bed, he is amazed to realize how he has spent all his life in ignorance. Therefore, it is necessary that after a thorough analysis of the situation, he should be made to face the reality in such a way that he is helped to understand what and why he is doing something wrong. It should then be explained to him why he should stop what he is doing wrong. However, I am not blaming all the immigrants for making a conscious mistake; nevertheless, this is happening due to a lack of understanding, and a vast majority of them do become a prey to such ills. Quite a long time ago, when there were not many Pakistanis in America, one person told me that in his opinion, the greatest problem in America was, God forbid, that our missionaries had made a blunder by first preaching to the blacks. Consequently, the blacks were joining Ahmadiyyat in great numbers, and thus the doors were being closed for the whites to join Islam. This statement depicted the same inferiority complex which existed in Noah's nation. It was foolishly being implied that people with relatively lesser social status remain disregarded even though they had accepted God. Religion would be honoured only when the whites would join it; and without the whites, the religion would not be honoured. I felt nauseous after hearing such rubbish and foolish talk. The Holy Quran explains that even thousands of years ago, God's intelligent servants possessed such brilliant understanding that they realized where true greatness lies. They knew when God blesses the poor and those wrongly perceived to be insignificant, they gain the highest position and status in the world. Religion is honoured by them for coming into it, and if they leave the religion, it would be a disservice to the faith of God. Those who do not give any importance to religion do not dishonour the faith by not joining it. How can the doors of religion be closed to those who are honoured by God? If they strive to grow in righteousness and to offer greater sacrifices, they cannot be stopped because of their colour, their nationality or their financial standing. These doors are not closed outwardly but the hearts are locked. Attitude is changed. They are being looked upon unkindly. Instead of embracing them with love, they are kept at a distance. A curtain is drawn. Obviously, no one ever saw that doors of any mosque were physically closed to any Ahmadi who came from these people. His entrance was never forbidden. Nevertheless, if you really search your hearts, it is possible that you may find that unfortunately you had locked your soul's door to them. Or if you had not locked it completely, you had at least half closed it to them. You did not desire to keep it wide open so that they could gladly enter into it. Due to this attitude, the Jamaat Ahmadiyya



suffered a tremendous loss beyond your imagination. What a truthful statement Noah had made:

“If I drive them away, this would be such a great sin in God’s sight that none among you would be able to help me when Allah’s decree would be enforced.”

What a glorious time it was - full of glad tidings - when Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, first Ahmady Missionary to U. S. A. (may Allah be pleased with him) came here. He threw wide open the gates of Ahmadiyyat for those who are called the blacks, and received them warmly with open arms. In those days sending a telegram was a rare thing. Usually people would write letters. Telegrams were sent only as an exception. Even on an urgent occasion people would write a letter but ask the addressee to consider it as a telegram. It was a common practice to do so in the villages of the Punjab. In those days Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq got so excited that he started sending telegrams one after another to Qadian telling the Jamaat about a revolution here and there. People were joining in great numbers, and entire communities were being converted. The Khutbas (Friday Sermons) of the time of Hazrat Musleh Maud , the Khalifa of the time, (may Allah be pleased with him) were full of Allah’s praise that a representative of a very poor community, whose workers do not have food in their homes, goes to the richest country in the world and conveys good news that by the grace of God, the hearts of the people are opening up towards Islam. No one ever asked him whether they were blacks or whites who were joining Islam. No one ever asked Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Sahib what was his policy and approach. Was he converting only the black and leaving the whites behind? Whoever came forward to join Ahmadiyyat was a servant of God, and as such was greeted and embraced by the servants of God. Every newcomer brought with him blessings of righteousness. And every righteous person enhanced in his light of righteousness all the more. If the pace of progress of that time was maintained, it was not improbable that today, by the grace and mercy of God, a great number would have been in Ahmadiyyat - the true Islam. America would have been distributing blessings to the world instead of being a source of all sorts of evil. The world would have been receiving mundane as well as spiritual blessings from here. This country would have emerged for the rest of the world as a great benefactor. It is such a great and powerful nation that if it adopts true Islamic civilization and values, and links itself with Khilafat, it will definitely become the greatest nation on earth. No worldly intrigue or power will ever be able to subdue it. It will rise up with such a force that it will be impossible for the entire world to suppress it. The use of words ‘rise up with such a force’ should not be interpreted literally because Islam does not allow any aggression. It forbids revolt and teaches humility. It exhorts us to become humble human beings, and tells us that God loves meekness and humility. But still therein is a profound secret. In consequence, the nations that become humble in wake of God’s love, grow

and acquire attributes of God's power. Upon them God bestows His own greatness and glorious strength and thereafter no other nation in the world can suppress them. Therefore, I am saying that today the course of human history would have been different, today the sun of Islam would have risen from the land of America. You could have witnessed the prophecy that the sun will rise from the West.

It is unfortunate that some, due to their own sick mentality, feel themselves superior over servants of God who are less privileged, and treat them with arrogance. You may not be such an insolent one, yet you did not exhibit the desired love and affection for them. Later on, many false versions of Islam began to surface. Organizations came into existence in the name of Islam, and were financed to propagate Islam in America. Noah's statement proves them wrong since they did not come forward to propagate Islam until they received huge amounts of money. Therefore, their intention was not to help other nations through goodness but they were induced to undertake their work through greed of money and wealth. Nevertheless, people in great numbers turned to these organizations which gained significance and strength because the Ahmadiyya Movement left the field open for them. But as these organizations lacked true and righteous leadership, they started to use new converts for wrong purposes. For personal or political ends, they encouraged them to commit crimes and heinous deeds. They are given a wrong perception of righteousness, and are trained in any organized way to do things forbidden by Islam. Various people become Muslims under different labels, and each financier has his own personal or political axe to grind, knowing that they are a potent force. If this force had entered Ahmadiyyat, it would have become a much greater power because this would have been in the hands of God. A power in the hands of the people tends to be misused, but in the hands of God it becomes a source of countless and universal benevolence for the whole world. I cannot put the fault on anyone either of the past or the present. But I can say that in the narration of this incident of Noah's time the Holy Quran presents a universal truth. The Holy Quran, being the Word of God, looks at the hearts. Whatever is happening today already occurred during Noah's time and can be repeated again, therefore its truth can be tested by the results. I cannot attribute excesses to anyone, errors to any missionary, or faults to any newcomer. But I know for certain that a collective mistake has been committed, otherwise we would not have found Ahmadiyyat as it is today in the States. Therefore, change your attitude not because you want to gain the new converts but because you yourself will be annihilated if the present attitude prevails. It will be futile to plan your actions just to increase your numbers. If you are being driven away from God due to a certain behaviour, your main concern should be your own selves. If you take care of yourselves and become Godly, God Himself will take care of others and you won't need to devise plans to attract them. Open up your hearts towards God. Win His love by becoming righteous, humble and compassionate towards human beings and try to make them yours.

Beware of all kinds of arrogance in the same way as people are scared of touching a leper. Have a greater fear of arrogance than you fear a ferocious lion. There is nothing deadlier than insolence.

It creeps in imperceptibly through concealed openings and entirely overpowers you. More often the preachers of humility and claimants of meekness are themselves a prey to arrogance. Therefore, it is extremely essential for immigrants to modify their outlook. They should be thankful to God that He has given them the opportunity in a foreign land to make fortunes that can be diverted towards the service of their faith. If this cannot be done, their coming over here is useless. Then they have sold their souls and offsprings to this country. Therefore, if God has bestowed plenty upon you, bow down before Him expressing thanks that He has filled your heart's desire. You longed for the provisions so that you could offer them to God. You asked for the wealth so that you could spend for the betterment of mankind. When you were empty handed, you had a thousand desires. God has provided you with everything, now is the time to make your dreams come true, to attain all your wishes. With this feeling, your hearts will be filled with deep gratitude. Therefore, lift up your deprived brothers, these deprived people, and embrace them, for this is the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing of God be upon him). In a most magnificent way he embodied all that he learnt from the Holy Quran, and he left an unparalleled precept of extreme beauty for others to follow in this world. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) has shown such a great love towards the poor that 'ASHAAB-US-SUFFA' (people who spent their time in the mosque to be as much as possible in the presence of the Holy Prophet) came and started living in the mosque just for the sake of love for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him). It was indeed an expression of love in response to the Holy Prophet's initial love. Some people mistakenly think that 'ASHAAB-US-SUFFA' neither had any work nor any skills and they, like other indigents, flocked to a place where food was available. This is totally an untrue and baseless thought. They were, infact, men of knowledge and dignity. Many among them had skills to earn money, but they offered themselves in entirety to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) out of sheer love. They accepted poverty in exchange for his love because they knew they would earn more of his love if they were poor. Look at Abu Hurairah (may God be pleased with him). He had lived a life of great style but, after accepting the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him), he stayed constantly in the mosque so that he would not miss any loving talk of his beloved master, and thus compensate himself for what he had missed earlier. The only way he could think of attaining this object was that he should stay permanently in the mosque so that he could see the Prophet whenever he came, to listen to him whenever he spoke, and to be looking at his face all the time. Abu Hurairah, because of his desire to be constantly on the look out for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), did not move away from

the mosque and as a result used to faint because of hunger. This was the real cause of his poverty; and due to poverty he earned more love from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him). The Holy Prophet used to say, "If you wish to locate me, you will find me among the poor and the destitute." Moreover, he observed that on the day of Judgement, God would raise him up among the poor and the weak because he loved them abundantly. A companion asked the Holy Prophet to pray that he be raised up on the Day of Judgement in his company. The Holy Prophet enquired what specific quality he possessed. He replied that he loved the Holy Prophet and had nothing else but love for him. The Holy Prophet responded that on the Day of Judgement a person would be raised along with the one he loves. Thus the Holy Prophet's assertion that he would be raised up among the poor proves that his love for the poor was greater than their reciprocal love. This was the reason why the poor flocked around him. Even the rich forsook their wealth and assembled around him. Because of their great love for the Prophet, people preferred to remain poor for the sake of his company. Consequently, they gained great treasures and blessings from God, so much so that the richest among the Muslims, be he a monarch, remembers their names with great reverence and affection seeking God's blessings for them. These are the people that Noah talked about briefly. In short, to love the poor sincerely is an exemplary precept of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessing Allah be upon him). As far as race and colour are concerned, you know well the dignity bestowed on Hazrat Bilal. He was a black man and also a slave. When Hazrat Umar was Khalifa, he would address him saying "Our Leader, Bilal" and showed great respect by standing up in his honour. What a magnificent religion it is for which the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) was chosen to be its mirror who, in return eliminated his own self and presented the Holy Quran all in all. The love and compassion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) for mankind and, particularly for the poor, is reflected through the following incident.

There was a black person who was very poor and his features were so grotesque that he was counted among the ugliest. Some people would not look at him because of his repelling features. He was a poor labourer. Once he was standing alone and thinking with a heavy heart about his depressing life.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) happened to pass by and, approaching this man from behind like a mother would do to her own child, he covered his eyes with his hands to see whether he would recognize him. The man realized that no one except the Holy Prophet would be so loving to a miserable wretch like him. Seizing upon this rare opportunity, he started rubbing his sweaty body and malodorous clothes with that of the Holy Prophet, and started to touch and feel him with his hands. When asked by the Holy Prophet whether he had recognized him, he said that no one but the Holy Prophet would treat a poor person with such affection, and he was merely taking advantage of the good fortune to touch

him, to hold him close and to fondle his loving body with his hands. He said he was taking full advantage of a golden and rare opportunity. Afterwards he said, "O Prophet of God, who else other than you would be so much concerned about the down trodden? I am a wretched man of no value at all no one will buy me even as a slave in the market." No, not at all. God in heaven has owned you, you enjoy His love and respect."

This is Islam. This is what we have learnt from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him). If you go out in the streets of America with this Islam, then you will certainly be the winners. No power on earth can arrest the influence and attraction and charm of this Islam. People will come to you for this Islam because you will then be indeed the true ambassadors of the Holy Prophet rather than mere conveyors of a hollow message. The present day world does not care for envoys who indulge in lip-service only. Today many heads of states falsely pretend to be emissaries of peace and love. Should you truly endeavour to represent and reflect the moral excellences of the Holy Prophet, then you will see how much dignity and glory God confers upon you. Learn to love these people. When I meet them the thought of any distinction by colour never ever passes through my mind. I see them neither black nor white. I see them all full of God's light. I personally know that among them are those whose hearts are full of the love of God. They get up in the night to offer Tahajjud prayer. In spite of being poor they always come forward and are in the fore-front in matters of financial sacrifices. Their love of Ahmadiyyat is reflected in their faces and their eyes. Sometimes, losing control over their emotions, they embrace me crying, and between their sighing and sobing I cannot understand what they say. I see nothing in them other than God's light shining upon their faces. My heart goes out for them. My soul dances in their love. You have pledged allegiance at my hand and I have made a pledge at the hand of the Holy Prophet. You should become like this or you will not be true to your pledge of allegiance. Until you adopt this attitude you will not be able to bring a change in the destiny of America. Hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis, Arabs, Indonesians, Malaysians or Bengalies may come and settle down here, yet they cannot win this country until they come with the light of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The people you may think to be low or those who are taken to be low by the world are in fact real gems with great potent force. To win God's love, they are ready to advance faster than other nations because they have a strong sense of deprivation. Other people who are contented because they have everything become arrogant. As described earlier, Noah informed his people that their wealth had made them blind. How could he show and convince them that God's blessings were not attracted by material possessions, rather these descend upon the deprived and the meek. Because of their sense of loss, God had sharpened the insight of the poor to recognize His blessings and accept those blessings when they descend upon them. Therefore, let them take

advantage of this situation and you should not stand in their way. Convey to them the message of love, beauty and moral excellence of the Holy Prophet. You will then see how God changes their fortunes with His grace and bounty.

These are the people who are wasting away their lives in alcoholism, music and drugs. Out of the same people many will join Ahmadiyyat and you will see a dramatic change for the better in them. There is an Ahmadi who was a musician by profession and in a short time became well known throughout America. According to experts he was to become all time best. When he became an Ahmadi, he cared neither for music nor he craved for wealth which a musician's career would have brought him. He discarded all. He is now a Dervish. He offers Tahajjud prayers regularly. Tears flow from his eyes when he utters the name of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him). He loves the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) just as much as the Promised Messiah loved his Master, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He is an entirely transformed person. He is changed so much that the people cannot recognize what a gifted and talented man he is. I have known him for a long time and talked to him often.

God listens to his prayers and answers him, and treats him with love and affection. You know not how many magnificent gems of great value are hidden here. If, God forbid, we failed to appreciate their worth, God too will not care a bit about us. So transform yourselves and change the present state of affairs.

For those Ahmadies that I am referring to, who have transformed themselves and are very dear to me, because I know they are dear to God, my message is try to attain grandeur of character through practising real Islam. Learn to be self-confident. Islam teaches a very special mode of life. Islam tells you that you are free, — free from all complexes including inferiority complex. When you have found God with full conviction, there is no room left for feeling inadequate. Why do you become over sensitive if someone views you either in a peculiar way or neglects you. Why was Noah not over sensitive, and why did his followers who were poor and in a similar situation not take offence? These very verses of the Holy Quran are also giving you a clear message. Being God's glorious servant, Noah was extremely close to Him, and his handful of followers were so dear to God that for their sake He annihilated all the others in that land. The eminent personage of Noah and his followers were severely ridiculed and looked down upon by others. The Holy Quran records their plight: When they were building the ark, the chiefs as well as the vulgar people of the ill-fated nation contemptuously passed bitter remarks and constantly mocked at them calling them thick-headed, insane and paupers who, inspite of being constantly ridiculed, claimed that they would be saved and the rest of the nation would be destroyed. Nevertheless, these persecuted few never suffered from any inferiority complex because their faith was firm and true and they knew that they were one with God, and consequently they treated others with mercy.

If someone mistreats you, you do not have to feel frustrated and react in a negative way, but rather you should show mercy towards that person. If you react to someone's misbehaviour by withdrawing yourselves from doing good, then you will draw yourself away from your own Lord. You will turn away from what is good for you and you will display insincerity to yourselves.

Why then you do not understand that Islam belongs to you and God is yours. And if, in matters of morals and values, an outsider turns his back on God and Islam, what right have you and what sense does it make that you too should draw yourself away from God and Islam? You should have a strong feeling that God has become yours and you should not be concerned about what others think of you. When you inculcate this grandeur of character then you will become dominant in this country. Leaving aside religious values, I can say on psychological ground that for a nation to prosper it is imperative that it should get rid of its inferiority complex and it should advance on a straight path. It should be disinterested in the attitude of others towards it. It should not concern itself whether someone honours it or not. Such nations are born through Prophets of God who upbringing and train them in such a way that they not only survive but flourish while other contemporary dominant nations meet with destruction. You are the fortunate nation, and therefore you should not feel about the need of someone else embracing you. In fact, as God has chosen you for His favours and blessings, you are the one who should embrace others and show benevolence and graciousness by embracing others. Therefore, it is imperative that each and every Ahmadi should get rid of all sorts of inferiority complexes. Those who are of a comparatively lighter colour and who are financially better off, their feeling of inferiority complex can and will certainly destroy them if they do not deviate from the present course. And those who are apparently considered to be of a lower status, if they remain a victim of inferiority, this complex will also certainly destroy them. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) has already divulged to us all profound facts of human nature. The greatest psychologist ever born, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) knew God the best, and God — the Creator of human nature — taught him all about human nature. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is the only true source of understanding human nature. It becomes easy to learn man's nature if one looks at man free from all prejudice through the eyes of God. Therefore, I am saying with perfect certainty and guidance, that there is none more knowledgeable than the Holy Prophet in understanding human nature. No one before or after him can attain the height of his knowledge. Once he said that among those disliked by God are the poor who despite their poverty are arrogant. This explains what inferiority complex really means. The poor who are being despised by others, if they respond with pride and arrogance, then this is because of their

inferiority complex, for they begin to retaliate by looking down upon others. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said, Allah dislikes such people, too. In this case instead of winning the love of God, why to earn His wrath? If you are one with God, then by God you are great, because he who attains nearness to God, becomes great. Why then do you allow yourself to fall prey to false inferiority complex? Why do you allow satan to sow this harmful feeling in your hearts? Why do you give a chance to satan to infuse erroneous thoughts in your mind that the others are greater than you? If you enthuse the feeling of true greatness in yourself and adopt the qualities of the character of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him), I can tell you that no one can succeed in creating any disharmony in the Ahmadiyya Community. Today some hypocrites who are foolish or ignorant, and some planted by your opponents have infiltrated among you to create disunity and disharmony. Satan always tries to create such disorder. Remember, that no power on earth can bring disunity among true believers. Therefore, anyone who due to his inferiority complex or under satanic influence attempts to arouse ill feelings in your hearts against your brother, and consequently if you feel that your love for your brother, or your respect and sense of obedience to duly designated representatives of the Jamaat are affected, then beware that such a person is not from God. He is from satan. Reject this person with full force. If everyone follows this way, no satanic influence can ever harm Ahmadiyyat. But I am surprised that some people are easily influenced and they bring to me petty complaints. A teacher for example, gave passing grades to a student only because he was a Pakistani or had a fair colour or because he was rich, while our child was failed though he was more deserving to win in the recitation of the Holy Quran or in a poem contest. I look at them in amazement. Were it really the case, why do you forget that you belong to God and God will treat you with love. If a nation or a person sacrifices his right for the sake of God, he is elevated in rank in the sight of God. Even if you were mistreated in the manner described, you are still winners. Be merciful to that foolish person who undeservingly received some prize. He is unaware of what he is really getting. The Holy Prophet said:

“When two parties bring their dispute to me and one of them pleads the matter in a deceptively convincing fashion or in a cunning way so that I may give my verdict in favour of the undeserving party, do not think that the undeserving became deserving because of my decision. He indeed has earned merely a portion of Hell. He got nothing more than that.”

Therefore, if the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) could conceivably (God forbid) give a wrong verdict based on misinformation, — and my personal belief is that he would not do so, the story is by way of illustration only — then it is possible that other much



smaller people can also make a wrong decision because of lack of information. Therefore, when you react to such matters, you become guilty of two things. First, you entertained a suspicion against your brother; you do not really know why he made that particular decision. Secondly, you considered yourself inferior as if something was taken away from you. No one can take away anything from you. All these matters are based upon the pleasure of God and no one can snatch away from you the pleasure of God. When you are denied your deserving right, your status is raised in the sight of God. And he who wrongfully acquires someone else's share, then his status is lowered in God's sight. Islam is a well secured sanctuary. A true Muslim never feels any danger from any direction. Therefore, inculcate self-respect which is a definite outcome of a strong relationship with God. God walks with those who know how to live in humility. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) knew his exalted status and commanding respectability, yet he was extremely humble. This is the balance created by Islam. Humble as well as exalted, such attractive personalities manifest themselves and emerge on the horizon through Islam. May God bless America with such a community. All weaknesses may be removed by sheer grace of Allah. Try to examine your present condition by profound self-analysis. With compassion and love, after looking thoroughly into their condition, make your brothers understand. It is urgent. A great task is in front of us. We are far behind the pace of time and we need to correct our weaknesses immediately to become a foot soldier in God's army. If we do not measure up to the challenge, then in place of winning others over, we will lose our own children to satan. If you do not learn to grow and do not attempt to make your society dominant over the other society, then the other will definitely overcome you. You will become weak and less in numbers. Take heed from these lessons of history. These are immutable laws which are being taught to us by human history. You will not be treated differently. This is a nation's unalterable destiny — past and future. Therefore, re-examine the situation with prayers, seek forgiveness, and develop strength of character based upon humbleness. Anyone who apparently belongs to a specific group should resolve that he will attribute himself to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in such a way that superficiality of different colours disappears completely and there remains not even the thinnest veil in between brothers. May Allah give us the strength to achieve this goal. Ameen.

## THE WAY OF SEEKERS

(Hazrat Mirza Bahiruddin Mahmood Ahmad.)

Thus what do we gain by believing in a prophet if we remain the same old bunglers? We are a community who have seen a prophet and who have lived with him. We ought to change and change to a marked degree. We ought to feel we really have surrendered our hand of allegiance to a living model of spirituality; nay, to God Himself. If Ahmadis do not achieve this quality of spiritual achievement, then what have they achieved? The Promised Messiah has warned us; he has told us what he expects of us. Reflect how serious and important is the goal set for us. On the need to purify ourselves, the Promised Messiah is reported to have said in the clearest possible words: (I quote from Badr the leading journal of those days):

Only he has purified himself, who has set right his relationship with both God and man, his Creator and his fellow-creatures. We must discharge our obligations to both. God requires that we must live in practice every word we utter in affirmation of God. God is One, without associate. What we affirm with our tongues we must illustrate by our deeds, not ever reducing God to the status of man. We owe to our fellow-creatures that we harbour no malice, hatred, prejudice, rancour, desire to harm, or intent against them to injure. It is not easy to attain these virtues. You are still very distant from this spiritual station. Have you set right your personal relations with your brethren? I am afraid not. You have not given up complaints and counter complaints nor backbiting. You trample over other people's rights. God wants you to live like brothers and to function as parts of one organic whole. Thus alone can you attain spiritual bliss. If human beings cannot deal honestly with their own brothers, how can they with God? True, God's claim on our obedience is very great. But the measure of how pure your account is with God is how pure it is with His creatures. One who is not straight and sincere with men cannot be straight and sincere with God. To be straight and sincere is no small matter. It is something big and difficult. Sincere love is one thing, insincere and hypocritical love, quite another. When a believer falls ill, another believer goes and visits him to express his concern. If a believer dies, fellow-believers join his funeral. No questions should be raised over small matters. It is best if such things are ignored. God does not approve of your living at a distance from one another. Without true love, there is no Jamaat—it is the end of the Jamaat. Badr(1908)

I ask forgiveness of Allah, my Lord, for all sins and I turn wholly to Him.

This is the quality of Taqwa (Fear of God) the Promised Messiah inculcates in his counsels to the Jamaat. So it behoves us to cultivate Taqwa (fear of God in its true spirit). Only then shall we be able to fulfill the purpose of our lives, the purpose which underlines the coming of the Holy Prophet, the coming of the Promised Messiah, on both be peace.

# **Freedom of Conscience in Religion**

## **A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE**

(Professor L. W. Hurtado)

(We produce a collection of the abstracts of various papers read at the Inter-Faith Symposium organised by the Winnipeg Branch of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam Canada on September 28th, 1986)

The idea that people should be free individually to hold to their own religious beliefs and practices has not always been the order of the day, and its popularity is of somewhat recent vintage. As is the case in the history of some other major religions, the history of Christianity shows that the principle of full freedom of individual conscience on religious matters was often not observed. This was the case in periods and places where one or another particular form of Christianity was endorsed by the political powers and operated as an extension of the state.

Nevertheless, I wish to argue that certain ideas in the Bible justify and indeed require the freedom of individual conscience in religious matters. Thus, the current widespread endorsement of freedom of conscience among Christians is not only in keeping with the spirit of the modern Western world, but is also fully in keeping with the foundational scriptures of Christianity.

The fact that early Christianity emphasized the importance of deliberate conversion to the Christian faith, and made such conversion depend totally upon willing assent to the Christian message, mean that any coercion of allegiance to the Christian faith or any other religion would have to be seen as incompatible with the foundational principles of the Christian movement. That is, the evangelistic character of early (and traditional) Christianity logically requires a certain freedom for the individual to consider religious claims and act upon them as he or she sees fit. Assent to this or that religious faith (or to no faith at all!) should rest solely upon the persuasiveness of the religious position to which one adheres.

Christians consistent with the nature of their faith (and with their historical origins as a misunderstood and often persecuted sect in Graeco-Roman antiquity) must endorse the notion that people must be free to obey their own conscience in matters religious, and must also not be penalized socially,

politically or economically by any of the powers of the state as a result of exercising the right of conscience. Both the attempt to dictate religious belief and attempts to prevent people from considering and embracing new or different religious beliefs and associations must be rejected as counter to the early Christian emphasis that religious faith is a matter of decision. Religious polemics, debates and refutations, doctrinal arguments, all these are a normal and expected aspect of religion, especially in a "pluralistic" society such as North America. We should not try to prevent dissent or the attempts of religious groups to convert. Rather, we must work to establish and maintain societies where the advocacy and exchange of various beliefs and ideas, political, religious and others, are allowed and encouraged.

(Department of Religion, University of Manitoba, Fletcher Argue Building Winnipeg, Canada R3T 2N2)

## **Hinduism and Human Rights**

(Sr. Atish Maniar)

In order to understand the concept of human rights in Hinduism, some basic philosophy and history of Hinduism is mentioned below:

The word Hindu was coined by invaders who entered India from the North in early days before the entry of Europeans. The settlement and civilization surrounding the river Indus (real name is river "sindhu") was known as "Indus Valley Civilization". The word sindhu became hindu and the religion practised by these people became known as Hinduism. Hindus belong to the Aryan race. The religion and rituals practiced by early Hindus (Aryans) is known as "sanatan dharma" in the ancient language Sanskrit. Actually dharma has two meanings: 1. Religion and 2. Duty. For a Hindu, the religion is a way of life where an individual performs one's daily duty towards God as well as towards society

Hindus believe in one "God" but worship different aspects of God. For example, "God is the Creator" then for a Hindu, father and mother symbolize God (not a supreme God) and a Hindu will treat parents with reverence as his or her creators. "God is a teacher" then for a Hindu, a teacher and preacher symbolizes God (Guru), etc. Hindus also believe in re-incarnation. Hence they consider Rama, Krishna, Mohammad, Jesus, Budha, Mahaveer, Gru Nanak, to name few are all reincarnation of God.

Hindus have tremendous veneration for life of any kind. In the modern concept, Hindus fit well as environmentalists. They have sympathy not only for life but also for nature. Basic philosophy of Hinduism is love, non-violence and peace, so much so that a Hindu feels that Jesus Christ was a true Hindu as he revived the old maxim of love and peace. These ingrained features of love, non-violence and peace bring true awareness of justice and human rights towards mankind.

Hindus believe that the cow is sacred. Cows have played an important role in the socio-economis development of society. Cows gave life-giving milk to dying infants whose mothers died after delivery. Cows not only gave manure for newly acquired agricultural skills but were beasts of burden to cultivate fields. Cows also gave hide for foot-wear, belts, bags for fetching water and clothing. Cows also gave their flesh for eating. Why then do Hindus not eat beef? Hindus, at that time, rightly realized that by slaughtering cows, they would create scarcity of milk for babies and shortage of bullocks for ploughing fields. Even the ruling king felt that there would not be a sufficient number of youths available to recruit into his army if the babies did not have enough milk to survive. Orphans had to rely upon cow's milk (the death rate of mothers after deliveries of babies was very high) as wet-nurses were in acute short supply. The few orphans who were fed by wet-nurses considered them as their mothers. Similarly the cow represented a symbol of personified mother (a symbol of gratitude for nourishing a large majority of orphans). This is another example of the human right for babies to survive by prohibiting cow-slaughter.

Hindus pray for peace on earth. Actually the word peace (shanti) is repeated several times in Hindu prayers. Hindus consider that all religions are equal and they respect the rights of an individual to practise his or her faith. They respect and accept religious beliefs of other religions.

Some Hindu customs guarantee the human rights of women, children infants and the sick. For example, a husband cannot perform certain religious ceremonies without the presence of his wife. There is an episode described where a husband had to put an effigy of his wife to perform a religious ceremony because his wife was not available.

Hindus strongly believe in the rights of others. In order to assert this fundamental human right of others, Hindus will not support any violence, terrorism, holy-wars or spreading of hatred. For a person who believes in love, non-violence and peace, hurting and killing others for any cause is prohibited.

Om Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!  
Peace! Peace! Peace!

(Dr. Maniar is the past National President of the Canadian Citizenship Federation, past President of the Citizenship Council of Manitoba and currently its board member, past President of the Hindu Society of Manitoba and the current chairman of the U.N. Associations, Human Rights Committee in Winnipeg.)

### **Freedom of Conscience in Religion: A Sikh Perspective (Lajinder Singh Lamba)**

Sikhism right from its inception has advocated the idea of freedom of conscience in religious matters. The Sikh Gurus have repeatedly stressed at individual efforts in the direction of self-discovery. "Know thyself", for in the knowledge of the self lies the attainment of the Almighty" has been one of the cardinal teaching of the Sikh religion. A conscientious individual who freely follows the inner voice of his own conscience after it has acquired sublimation through the teaching of the great saints and saviours, or through the process of actual living can be a great human being. One only has to go within to understand the without. It is the individual who has been exalted to the level of the Supreme.

In Sikhism an individual is allowed absolute freedom of conscience. Yes, one can convert to the faith to join the ranks of the Sikhs if one chooses. However, one may remain a true believer of the faith he is born in and can still attain salvation. No individual in the history of the Sikhs has been forced to convert to the faith against his will. Religious persecutions perpetrated for the purposes of forcible conversion to the religion are alien to the Sikhs. The Sikhs have consistently abhorred and challenged such practices. Parochial religious fanaticism serves no end except to bring out the inhumanity of religious fanatics. Religious narrow-mindedness and intolerance breed misery, pain, revolt and strife.

Sikhism emphatically advocates the philosophy of Karmas. No individual can be a good human being unless his Karmas are truthful, ethical, noble good and are guided by a free clear and humane conscience. To be born a Hindu is no guarantee that one would attain salvation. In order to attain it one has to make conscious efforts to become a conscientious Hindu. To be born a Muslim or a Christian is not sufficient reason to attain Allah's or God's presence. Instead the pre-requisites to be with one's Lord are once more the same: to be a conscientious Muslim or a conscientious Christian. Nothing matters except for a conscientious conscience.

For what purpose do humans inhabit the earth? Sikhism accepts life as an

opportunity allowed to an individual to lose his identity with the identity of the universe through noble actions and meditation. One must at the same time have freedom of conscience to wander in any spiritual direction one likes to choose for himself. Sikhism admits various options. The Sikh Gurus concede that they do not have the exclusive right to the Gates of Heaven. One has to open Heaven's Gates for oneself with the help of one's own conscience. In religion one must enjoy absolute freedom of conscience.

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## **Human Rights and Islam**

(Naseem Mahdi)

God has been appointing Prophets and Reformers at different times throughout the world. These God-sent personages swam against the current and tried to reform society and bring peace and harmony among human beings. They advocated equality among men and made efforts to stop cruelty by the strong over the weak.

History is replete with instances where these reformers and their followers were persecuted for what they advocated. Civilization has seen that their human rights were violated by those who were socially, economically and politically strong.

After two world wars in which millions of human beings were obliterated, nations of the world planned a charter for mankind which was a serious and impressive effort to grant basic human rights to the citizens of the member states. Among many privileges, it granted freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, freedom of religion and freedom of speech, among a few of them.

A much more comprehensive charter of human rights was prescribed by the Holy Prophet of Islam more than 14 centuries ago. He once defined a Muslim as one from whose hands and tongue his fellow beings are safe and secure.

Our Holy Book, the Quran, stresses that the equality of mankind derived from the Unity of one common Creator who created man of one species and to whom all men owe allegiance and obedience.

Islam concedes no privileges on account of birth or nationality. True nobility proceeds from righteousness alone. According to Islam it is not the

wealthy, politically strong or socially elevated who are necessarily honourable in the sight of God.

The U.N. Charter merely gave rights and freedoms set forth in that document but the Charter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) has sanctified all aspects of various rights and liberties. In his farewell address to humanity he said, "Your properties and your honours are declared sacred". He further emphasized, "they are sacred like the sanctity attached to this day of pilgrimage, this month of Haj and this spot, that is, this House of God." Again he highlighted it and said, "let them not be violated."

The Holy Prophet of Islam further explained his charter. He said, "Allah has made you brethren one to one another, therefore, do not divide yourselves. An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab to an Arab nor is a white one to be privileged over the dark one, nor a dark one over the white one." This is the eternal message of Islam for all mankind on the subject of equality and human rights. It has no political and ideological boundaries whatsoever.

If the Islamic Charter is adopted today, human beings would cease to be victims of discrimination of all kinds, and will discard intolerance and cruelties of all sorts. Islam is the contemporary response to the problems which exist in the arena of freedom of thought and conscience. It guarantees full freedom of human rights in all endeavours of life, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

Missionary in-charge, Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, 10610 Jane Street, Maple, Ontario, LOJ 1EO.

### **Centenary Issue of the Review of Religions**

Readers will be glad to know of the proposal to publish a special Centenary Edition of The Review of Religions in March 1989.

To make it worthy of the august occasion we invite suggestions concerning its size, contents and other relevant points.

Literary contributions are also solicited for consideration which, along with proposals, should reach us before 30th July 1988.



## EIGHTY YEARS AGO

(The following is an extract from the Review of Religions dated Feb. 1908)

### THE MISSION OF MESSIAH AND MAHDI

In exact accordance with the teaching of Islam it is said of the latter days in the traditions of the Holy Prophet that when the Promised Messiah will make his appearance he shall bring the message of peace and put an end to wars; in other words, Jihad or religious wars which shall be associated with the name of Islam through the errors of the Mulla shall be declared by him to be illegal.

The tradition which contains this prophecy is contained in the Sahih Bukharee, which is the most reliable of all collections of traditions. The words of the tradition are:

يُضَعُّ الْحَرْبُ

This tradition contains the prophecy that in the latter days when blood will be shed under the cloak of religion and murderers will be called Ghazis, the Promised Messiah will make his appearance and declare in plain and emphatic words the illegality of such inhuman deeds and of fighting for the propagation of religion. No doubt can be entertained as to the correctness of this tradition, for it is a fact that our Holy Prophet did not undertake a single expedition to convert any tribe to Islam. His fights were all for the defence of Islam and the Muhammadans, being against people who had slain innocent Muhammadans and their children and wives. These were the people to punish whom the sword was resorted to, but leniency was shown even in their case, the extreme punishment being remitted when a person being convinced of the truth of Islam entered that religion. The reason of showing this leniency was that owing to severe hardship befalling those who accepted in those days, the acceptance of Islam was equivalent to the acceptance of death. Hence the person who openly accepted Islam chose a kind of death for himself, and his conversion was, therefore, regarded as equivalent to an execution of the sentence of death in a certain sense.

In short, all such beliefs and ideas as that the Messiah and Mahdi will appear at any time to convert the non-Muslims to Islam with the sword are utterly absurd and false, and the Holy Quran is sufficient for their refutation. The religion which can show heavenly signs at all times and which is full of truth and wisdom does not stand in need of earthly weapons for its propagation. It carries on its fight with the shining signs from God and not

with the sword. Had not the fanatics of Mecca taken up the sword to annihilate Islam, Almighty God would not have meted out to them a punishment with the sword. When, therefore, it is an established fact that our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessing of God be upon him, did not fight to make converts by compulsion, but only after long and continued suffering took up the sword to defend himself and his companions against the evil designs of his enemies, it is quite incomprehensible how one of his successors can make it legal to convert people at the point of the sword. In taking such a course, the expected Mahdi or Messiah would not only be going against the teachings of the Founder of Islam, but would also show the spiritual weakness of his cause by making it dependent upon the sword. Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that a matter to which the Holy Prophet did not resort, though he suffered the severest hardship, would become legal for the Mahdi and Messiah.

#### AUTHORS AND ARTISTS

The Children Book Committee which has been appointed by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih seeks the help of authors who have written or are able to write Islamic literature for children. The list of topics may be obtained on request. Any books already written may be submitted for consideration as well as any manuscripts.

The help is also required of artists and designers who can prepare cover designs and illustrations.

Please contact: Rashid Ahmad Chaudhary (Chairman),  
Children Book Committee, 16 Gressenhall Road,  
London. SW18 5QL.

## **THE MOUNTAINS: A SIGN FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE**

(Mikal Hamidur Rahman)

One characteristic of the Holy Quran is that it draws attention repeatedly to natural phenomena and argues from the physical and material to the moral and spiritual. This is possible because there exists a deep connection between the material and spiritual worlds reflecting One Creator who is Lord of all the Worlds. All things created by the Almighty can be seen to point to a great purpose behind this world and are Signs of His existence. It is mentioned that when the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam had occasion to go to Dalhousie, a high hill station at 7000 feet elevation and more than a hundred miles from Qadian, India, he was much impressed by the mountainous scenery through which he had to pass; and these views impelled him towards contemplation and appreciation of God's creation and his bounties. (Incidentally, he sometimes had to walk this distance when other transportation was not available). In these few paragraphs I would like to mention one part of creation — the mountains, and some of the Signs contained in them.

“ And the earth We have spread it out and placed therein firm mountains; and We have made to grow therein every kind of beautiful species, as a means of enlightenment and as a reminder to every servant that turns to God.”

(50:8-9)

Here, along with the growth of all the various plants Allah has mentioned mountains as a means of enlightenment and admonition. In many places the Quran mentions that Allah has placed in the earth firm mountains as a favour.

(41:11, 16:16)

Elsewhere we read:

“.... and He has placed in the earth firm mountains that it may not quake with you.....”

(31:11)

Geology has established the fact that mountains have to a great extent, made secure the earth against earthquakes. But is there something in the spiritual world which helps to secure and steady the paths over which our souls must travel? If we look for something with some characteristics of mountains we read:

“Verily, We have charged thee with a weighty word”

(73:6)

“It is surely a decisive word.”

(86:14)

Here the Quran has been referred to as weighty and decisive. That is to say something solidly sound, firm and which can not be displaced or moved. Grasping the Quran then, would help still any turbulence in our lives, as mountains help still the earth from shaking.

Mountains along with rivers are mentioned in the Quran as a means by which people can find their way. A mountain on the horizon or a chain of mountains has served as a way by which travellers have been guided to their destination. The Quran is also a guide pointing out the pathways that the spiritual wayfarer should follow:

“The path of those on whom Thou (God) hast bestowed Thy blessings, the path of those who have not incurred Thy displeasure, and the path of those who have not gone astray.”

(1:7)

“This is a perfect Book, there is no doubt in it; it is a guidance for the righteous.”

(2:3)

It is alluded in the Quran that high mountains serve as reservoirs of sweet water. (77:28). Similarly, within the Quran is contained a body of water, that is revelation, that not only is sweet but also gives life, as does water.

Mountains can serve as a sort of ladder as a means of climbing, as it were, up into the sky or heavens. In fact, this is being done today as can be seen by the building of telescopes on high mountain tops to get nearer to the heavens and obtain a clearer, unobscured view. Likewise, since the Quran is exalted and purified, those in whose hands it is and who pay heed to it will be raised up and start to see a heavenly paradise (80:13-17). The companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) and the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) were lifted towards the spiritual heavens by it.

Another special quality of mountains is their beauty, grandeur and majesty. One can not help but be impressed by certain sights of mountain scenery. Some people, in the past as well as in the present, have even gone so far as to worship the mountains. What is not realized by them is that the qualities for which they loved the mountains were there as a stamp or impression from the Creator. Though these created things have certain qualities of attraction they have short-comings with respect to satisfying completely the person attracted. For example, the mountains are subject to erosion and decay and cannot be taken with one when moving about or travelling. Here the comparison between the Quran and the mountains becomes a comparison of contrast rather than a comparison of similarity. The Quran contains “lasting commandments” (98:4), “In a well preserved Book” (56:79) which are not subject to erosion or decay with the passage of time.

In conclusion, there is in the Quran a comparison of greatness between a mountain and the Quran which furnishes a Sign for those who believe as to the status and message of the Quran.

“If We had sent down this Quran on a mountain, thou wouldst certainly have seen it humbled and rent asunder for fear of Allah. And these are similitudes that We set forth for mankind that they may reflect.”

(59:22)

**PRESS RELEASE****REGIME OF PRESIDENT ZIA DESECRATES  
AHMADIYYA MOSQUES**

The Home Department of the Government of Punjab, Pakistan has issued a directive to all district Magistrates in the province instructing them to remove the inscription, "There is none worthy of worship except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" from all Ahmadiyya Mosque. The circular says that an organisation of the anti Ahmadiyya Mullahs (Muslim religious leaders) called Majlis Khatme Nabuat held a meeting under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Religious Affairs in which they decided that these words should be removed from the Ahmadiyya mosques immediately and the members of the Ahmadiyya community responsible should be arrested and tried under section 298-C of Pakistan Penal Code. As a result the City Magistrate of the town of Kasur has ordered the police officer incharge of Gandasinghwala to comply with this order immediately in his area and report the action taken by him.

It should be noted that these sacred words were not written after the controversial Ordinance of 1984 but were there from the time the mosques were erected. In fact every mosque in the world bears these inscriptions and yet no person or Government has ever found them offensive or objectionable.

This clearly shows President Zia's Regime is committed<sup>†</sup> to the desecration of Ahmadiyya places of worship and shows total disregard for fundamental human rights. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association condemns this attitude of the Zia regime and hopes that the world would put strong pressure on the dictator so that he honours the U. N. theme to practice and profess their religious beliefs.

(Ahmadiyya Muslim Association U. K. Press Secretary: Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry, Press & Publications Unit, 16 Gressenhall Road, London SW18 5QL, Tel: 01-870 8517

**BOOK REVIEW**  
(Naeem Osman Memon)

**INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE HOLY QURAN**

Author: Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad

Publisher: London Mosque, 16 Gressenhall Road, London SW18 5QL.

Hard Bound; pages 446

The opening pages introduce briefly, the purpose of the book and then proceed to discuss the universality of the Quran as compared to the national character of other scriptures, namely the Judeo-Christian and Hindu Scriptures. It also discusses the extensive interpolation suffered by the earlier scriptures, examines contradictions in the content and explores the teachings of these books in the light of logical and rational acceptability.

The author also discusses at length, God's promise to Abraham as recorded by the Book of Genesis and several other prophecies contained in the Old and New Testaments are examined. The scholarly reasoning extend over several pages, conclusively establishes the fulfillment of these prophecies in the person of the Prophet of Islam.

The second part of the book is devoted to the life of the Prophet of Islam. It depicts the state of the Arabian society at the time of the Prophet's birth and then proceeds to record the life of the Prophet before and after his call. Some remarkable features of the Prophet's personality and character are also outlined at great length.

The later part of the book outlines the compilation of the Holy Quran, the committing of it to memory, its transcription and its standardisation and the closing chapters discuss some important Quranic prophecies.

A highly scholarly work, the author highly deserves compliments for his excellent treatment of such a wide range of topics in one book. The language is simple and plain and easily understandable. The book has to be read by not only students of religion but also by every average person who wishes to know about Islam. It is an excellent introduction to Islam, its Prophet and Scriptures.

## **Social Justice In Islam**

(Dr. Ijaz A. Qamar)

Islam can be described as the “holistic” world religion. This functional characteristic necessitates that, among other things, it should provide comprehensive social values and a system of justice to a wide section of the people. Otherwise its claim of providing guidance and teachings in every interacting sphere of human endeavour will be negated and nullified.

My thesis in this paper is that Islam, the religion of one-fifth of present day humanity, provides a specific social value system and thus provides a comprehensive system of justice which satisfies the needs of human beings in a fair and just manner. In other words, Islam lays down rules of conduct which serve as the foundation of society and which regulate the rights and duties of its members. These social rules of Islam encompass every segment of life from family relations to relations between and among nations.

It will not be possible to cover all of these areas in this paper. Therefore, I will take up three subject areas to illustrate the comprehensiveness of the Islamic teachings and how Islam deals with the multi-facets of human society.

The three areas I have selected are:

Justice in married Life (Family Situation);  
Criminal Justice (National Situation)  
Racial and Communal Justice (International Situation)

First a word on how the Holy Book of Islam the Quran, enjoins justice in all human affairs. “Tell them, my Lord has enjoined justice” (7:30); and “if thou judge, judge between them with justice, surely Allah loves those who are just” (5:43).

### **JUSTICE IN MARRIAGE POSITION OF WOMEN IN GENERAL**

First, it is important to stress that from material as well as spiritual points of view, Islam justly recognizes the position of women to be the same as that of men. A female is considered at par with a male. She can own property and earn money as he can do. “Men shall have a share of that which they have

earned, and women a share of that which they have earned” (4:33). She has full control over her property and can dispose it as she likes. “If they (the women), of their own pleasure, give you a portion thereof, then enjoy it as something pleasant and wholesome” (4:5).

Similarly, women can also inherit property as well as men, according to their designated shares. Good works bring the same reward without the consideration of gender.

“I will not suffer the work of any worker from among you, whether male or female, to be lost. You are from one another” (3:196).

Spiritual blessings are equal for both. For example, the Quran says:

“who so does good works, whether male or female, and he or she is a believer, such shall enter heaven” (4:125).

Revelation, which is God’s greatest gift for mankind in this worldly life, is granted to both men and women. The mothers of both were blessed with revelation. Can women get a just deal under any other dispensation except under Islam?

#### **MUTUAL RELATIONS OF HUSBAND AND WIFE**

By entering the married state, woman does not lose any of the rights she possessed as an individual member of society. Her individuality is not merged in that of her husband. She undertakes new responsibilities of life along with new rights. The Holy Quran states:

“Women have rights similar to those of men in a just and equitable manner” (2:229).

In one of the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) woman has been described as the ruler over the house of her husband and his children. Thus a wife is the ruler in her territory (home) which is a kingdom (Queendom) in miniature.

Islam, being a practical religion, does not close its eyes to the hard realities of life. Unless the husband or wife is given a leading authority in the home, there would be chaos in the household. Men being the stronger species are the maintainers of women in the Islamic system. Being entrusted with this responsibility of the family, it is only just and fair that he must hold the final authority.



The functions of the husband and wife are quite distinct and each is justly entrusted with the functions which are best suited for his or her nature. God has made men stronger in constitution and physique while women are endowed with the qualities of love and affection in a greater measure. Hence there is a natural division of work for the progress of humanity. Man is suited to face hardships and greater dangers, and woman is suited to bring up children because of the preponderance of the quality of love and warmth. No more just system of the division of labour can be devised.

Despite the managerial responsibilities of the household, the women are not totally excluded from certain other spheres of life, because otherwise it would be unjust in individual and certain specific situations. For example, when the situation arose in Islamic history women took care of the sick and the wounded on the battle field, and even joined soldiers in the field in carrying provisions etc. Women in Islam have helped husbands in the field work, carried on business and the like. A woman was appointed as the superintendent of the Medina market by Caliph Omar.

These instances go to show that the functions and responsibilities of husband and wife are not totally mutually exclusive, as some would interpret. The husband has certain basic responsibilities assigned to him as has the wife, but the family must be kept a going concern in mutual co-operation.

It is related about the Holy Prophet of Islam that he used to help in household chores, such as milking animals, patching clothes and shoes and cleaning utensils. Thus the greatest of the prophets has left a golden precept for us to follow.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Penal laws of Islam are called "Hudud" in the books of jurisprudence, which means prevention, restraint and hence a restrictive ordinance/statute of God respecting unlawful things. ("Hudud" are limited to punishment for crimes mentioned in the Quran and Traditions, while other punishments for those infractions not mentioned are spoken as "tazeer".) It should be stated, however, that all violations of Divine limits are not punishable by the society (in other words the state). The punishment is inflicted only in those cases in which there is a violation of the rights of others i.e. Neglect of one's prayers, being not a violation of others' rights, is not punishable by the state, while a murder and theft are.

The general law of punishment in Islam is found in chapter Al-Shura of the Holy Quran:

"the recompense of an injury (or evil) is an injury the like thereof, but whose forgives and thereby brings about an improvement, his reward is with Allah"

This golden rule is of wide application since it applies to offences against

individuals and against society.

The real object underlying the awarding of punishment to the guilty person, according to the Islamic teaching, is his moral reformation. If forgiveness is calculated to do him moral good, he should be forgiven. But he should be punished, if this punishment is likely to lead to his reformation. The punishment, however, should in no case be disproportionate to the offence committed. Islam does not teach us to turn the other cheek, nor the doctrine of 'an eye for an eye' under all conditions. Islam adopts the middle path. It should be noted that the Holy Quran generally adopts the same word for punishment as for the crime. In the verse quoted both injury and its punishment are referred to as "sayyiah". This indicates that punishment, though justified by the circumstances, should be treated as a necessary evil. A more just and fair system cannot be imagined.

Now I come to some specific crimes punishable in Islam.

#### **PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER**

"O ye who believe, equitable retribution in the matter of the slain is prescribed for you; the freeman for the freeman, the slave for the slave and the female for the female. But for him who is granted any remission by his injured brother, pursuing the matter for the realization of blood money shall be done with fairness and the murderer shall pay him the blood money in a handsome manner. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. Whoso transgresses thereafter, for him there shall be a grievous punishment. And there is life for you in the law of retribution, O men of understanding that you may enjoy security".

(2:179)

The word "Qisas" or retribution is expressly limited to murder and is not meant for other crimes. The duty of punishing the culprit devolves not on the heirs of the murdered person but the plural "alaikum" shows that it is the authorities who are responsible for maintaining law and order. The heirs have the option to forgive and they are not entitled to take the law into their own hands and inflict the punishment themselves. The authorities concerned are bound to punish the offender according to the requirements of law, having no right to pardon him of their own accord.

The provision of retribution in murder cases is followed by the words "the freeman for the freeman" and so on, which have sometimes been misunderstood to mean that if a freeman has been murdered, any freeman can or should be murdered in his place. This is not the correct interpretation of Qisas. The words in question were meant to abolish an old Arab custom which insisted that when the person killed was of noble descent, a person

other than the murderer could be executed. So it was made clear that whosoever it might be, a freeman, a slave or a woman, then the murderer himself was to be killed. Islam has made due provision for the suppression of crime. On the other hand it has also kept the door open for the display of the noble qualities of benevolence and mercy.

The fact that despite efforts to the contrary, the death penalty is still found on the statute books of most countries, in one form or another, constitutes sufficient proof of the wisdom of the Islamic injunction. The experts maintain that long term imprisonment is horrible and very expensive for society and is not an ideal substitute for capital punishment.

#### **PUNISHMENT FOR THEFT**

We read in the Holy Quran: "And for the man and the woman addicted to theft, cut off their hands as a punishment for their offence as an exemplary punishment from Allah and Allah is Mighty, Wise. But whoso repents after the transgression and amends, then will Allah surely turn to him in mercy; verily Allah is Most Forgiving and Merciful". (5:39,40)

The punishment prescribed for stealing may appear to be too severe, but human experience shows that punishment, if it is to be a deterrent, should be exemplary. He certainly is a good surgeon who amputates a rotten limb to save the whole body. In the heyday of Islam, however, there were extremely rare cases of the cutting off of hands of thieves because the punishment was a deterrent.

In order to fully understand the nature of this punishment, it is necessary to know both the literal and metaphorical use of the two words, "Qat" and "Yad". Taking the verse literally, the punishment of cutting off hands is the maximum punishment for extreme cases only. The lesser punishment is the adoption of any practical means by which the offender is deprived of the capacity of, or is restrained from committing the offence, taking into consideration the nature and scope of all the attending circumstances.

Moreover, the word "al-sariq" implies intensiveness, meaning habitual thief. Scholars differ as to the amount of money or property stolen for which the prescribed punishment is to be imposed. This disagreement shows that much discretion is left to the judge who awards the punishment.

The meaning of "Qat" and "Yad" in the metaphorical sense are worth considering. Yad, among other things, means the power and capacity to do a certain thing. Thus the phrase "Qata-a-Yadahu" means, he deprived him of

the power to do a certain act, or he restrained him from doing it. In view of this significance of the two words, the Arabic expression used in the verse may mean “deprive them of the power to commit or employ any practical means calculated to restrain them from committing theft.” Basically the object of Islamic punishment is reformation, that is why the Quran says whoso repents after transgression and amends, Allah turns to him in mercy.

A general direction of the execution of punishment in the Islamic system is that it should be inflicted irrespective of the status of the person. When, in the case of a certain woman who was guilty of theft, some people sought to intercede on her behalf as she belonged to a good family, the Prophet said “those before you went astray for when one of them committed a crime and he was a great man, they wouldn’t punish him. When he was a poor man they would punish him”. Leniency however was shown in the execution of punishment when the guilty person showed signs of repentance. Again a more just system cannot be conceived or devised.

#### Racial and Communal Justice

The concept and idea of the oneness of humanity is Islam’s unique contribution to human civilization and it came as a natural consequence of its cardinal doctrine of Tauhid or the Unity of God. This doctrine runs through all teachings of the Holy Quran and finds its most concise expression in chapter Al-Ikhlās :

“In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. Say, He is Allah the One, the Eternal, the Absolute. He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him.”

(112).

He, Allah, the One and Only, is Rabbul-Alamin (Lord of all the worlds) as He is called in the opening chapter of the Holy Quran. Being Rabbul-Alamin he deals with all of us alike, no matter to which race, nation, tribe or parentage we may belong for He created us all alike. The Holy Quran elucidates this in numerous verses, i.e. “Mankind is one single community.....” (2:214)

The whole of humanity is one family, and should ideally form one fraternity, the universal brotherhood of man. The differences in colour, complexion, languages etc. are not regarded as differences of quality, or as degrees of excellence, but as an expression of the diversity in nature. The Holy Quran says: “And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that surely are signs for those who possess knowledge” (30:23). Human progress is closely linked

with the diversity of tongues and colours. Underneath this diversity is the unity of mankind which leads to the inevitable conclusion of the Oneness of its Creator.

Thus we see an all comprehensive, all pervading brotherhood of man:

“O mankind, we have created you from a male and a female; and we made you tribes and sub-tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah is one who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is all Knowing, all Aware.” (49:15)

This verse constitutes the Magna Charta of human fraternity and equality and is the answer of Islam to racism, notions of superiority due to racial or national origin. All men are equal in the sight of God. The worth of a person is not to be judged by the pigment of skin, amount of wealth possessed, or by the rank or social status, descent or pedigree, but by his moral greatness and by the manner in which he discharges his obligations to God and to fellow human-beings.

On the occasion of the last pilgrimage to Mecca, a short time before his death, the Holy Prophet addressed a vast concourse of Muslims. He said, “O ye people your God is One and your ancestor is one. Ye people listen to my words and understand them. Know ye that all Muslims are brothers unto one another, Ye are one brotherhood. All are equal in Islam. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab; nor has the non-Arab any superiority over the 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 one discharges one's duty to God and men. The most honoured among you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you.”

These noble words epitomize one of Islam's loftiest ideals and strongest principles.

In spite of the lofty ideals of Western enlightenment, the West has not solved the racial problem until today. Kinds of racism exist. Biological racism in the shape of apartheid which is still allowed to be a state of policy at least in one capitalist country. In the socialist world, Marxism introduced its own type of racism, i.e. ideological racism which is as hateful and abhorrent as is the biological racism. I would say neither the ideals of the age of enlightenment, nor the United Nations Charter of Human Rights have been fully achieved, although some legislative efforts are being made in different jurisdictions with varying degrees of success.

Why has Islam succeeded while other systems or ideologies seem to have failed? What is the secret of its success? Actually, from the preceding discourse it is clear that the success of Islam vis-a-vis other systems is due to

the universality of its teachings and the Divine sanction on which the Islamic concept of brotherhood of mankind is based.

As Muslims we believe that Islam is an all-inclusive religion and that all great religions which preceded Islam have been revealed by the One and only God. It is the fundamental rule of Islam that a Muslim must also believe in all prophets who were raised before the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). This aspect of Islam is unique in that it unifies the followers of all religions under the leadership of the Holy Prophet and his message which was addressed to all nations on earth. The nature of God mentioned in the Holy Quran has surpassed the nature in all other religions as He is described as the God of all human beings, and not the God of a particular nation or country. The natural flow from this statement is that all mankind is one community and a single nation.

First and foremost Islam is an international religion and is not confined to a geographical area. The grand international ideal of Islam is the equality of all nations and races and the unity of all mankind, an ideal founded on the belief in the Unity of God. The curse of racism and narrow-minded nationalism which has been the cause of many troubles of the ancient and the modern world, and which can only be swept away under the flag of Islam and under the stewardship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him).

#### *SANDS OF TIME*

*Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.  
(Longfellow)*

*Lives of good men all remind us  
God can make our lives sublime:  
Otherwise we leave behind us  
Wrecks upon the sands of time.  
(J. Mackay)*

# What is Islam?

Islam literally means *Peace, surrender of one's Will*; and to be in amity and concord. The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God. The Quran — the Holy Book of the Muslims — interprets it to be the religion whose teachings are in consonance with human nature. Islam, as the Quran has stated (5:4), is the completion of the religion inaugurated by God in the beginning of the world, on His sending the Quran through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). As a child is taught his alphabet, so God taught the religion to the world gradually and little by little, by sending His prophets at different times and to different peoples.

When the world reached that stage of understanding when it was ready for the final lesson, He sent the last and complete Book through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). This Book not only corrects the errors which had found their way into various religions, but preaches the truths which have not been preached before, on account of special circumstances of the society or the early stage of its development. At the same time it gathers together in itself the truths which were contained in any Divine revelation granted to any people for the guidance of men (The Quran 98:4). Lastly, it meets all the spiritual and moral requirements of an ever advancing humanity.

This is Islam which is wrongly called Muhammadanism.

According to Islam, the object of man's life is its complete unfoldment. Islam does not support the idea that man is born in sin. It teaches that everyone has within him the seed of perfect development and it rests solely with a person himself to make or mar his fortune. *We created man in the best make* says the Holy Quran (95:5).

The cardinal doctrine of Islam is the Unity of Godhead. *There is none worthy of worship but the one and only God, and Muhammad is His Prophet.* He is free from all defects, Holy and Transcendent. He is All Good, All Mercy and All Power. He has no partner. He neither begets nor is He begotten, because these are the traits of frail and weak humanity. Furthermore, Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God and to realise Him during our earthly life as our Helper in all our affairs and undertakings. This Unity of God is the first and foremost pillar of Islam and every other belief hangs upon it.

Islam requires belief in all the prophets, including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucious and Zoroaster. We regard them all (and many more not mentioned here) as heavenly teachers born to reform and regenerate man and lead him to God. Adherents of some other religions may consider it an act of piety to use disrespectful words and heap abuse on the prophets of other religions, but if a Muslim were to show the slightest disrespect towards the founder of any other faith, he does so at the cost of his own faith. He has to utter the respectful benediction *Alaihis-Salam* (peace be on him) after mentioning the name of every prophet. Thus Islam establishes peace between all religions.

## **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-six 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.



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