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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 and blessings be upon 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

FASTING

Fasting is one of the basic tenets of Islam and every able bodied Muslim is expected to fast daily from dawn till sunset during the month of Ramadhan. Like prayer it aims at self-purification. It helps a person to improve his moral and spiritual condition and through the practice of self-discipline and self-control helps him to face hardships, troubles and tribulations. If a person is able to abstain from lawful things in obedience to God's commandment then how much more important it is that he should abstain from those deeds and habits which are forbidden by God. According to the Holy Quran the doing of good deeds and maintaining good conduct should be practised only for winning the pleasure of God Who is always ready to bestow His favours on His devout servants. While fasting a person should carefully watch all his actions day by day. He should perform more charitable deeds and pay extra attention to offering prayers. During the month of Ramadhan a person can rise so high spiritually and become so close to God, that he is often blessed with His communion.

Commandments and recommendations to fast are to be found in all religions in one way or another. Moses fasted prior to receiving the ten commandments (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9). Jesus also fasted for forty days and nights (Matthew 4:2). He also advised his disciples to fast. On the subject of fasting the Encyclopaedia Britannica states:

By the greater number of religions in the lower, middle and higher cultures alike, fasting is largely prescribed: and when it is not required, it is nevertheless practised to some extent by individuals in response to the promoting of nature.

The Islamic method of fasting is quite different to the way observed in other religions. The person has not only to abandon eating and drinking but also, to a certain extent, keep himself aloof from worldly attachments. He should read and study the Holy Quran. The result is that his thoughts soar high towards spiritual ideals. It has been testified by people of all religions that a measure of detachment from worldly inclinations is necessary for spiritual development and has a holy influence on the mind.

FRIDAY SERMON

(The following is the gist of a sermon delivered by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV at the London Mosque on)

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih commenced by reciting from the Holy Ouran:

يُعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَأَيُّهَا فاعْبُدُون ۝

O My servants who believe! verily, My earth is vast, so worship Me alone.
(Holy Quran 29:57)

It may seem strange, said Hazrat Khalifatul Masih, that in this verse the believers are being admonished to believe. It should be understood however, that most people who claim to be believers are not believers in the true sense. They only profess their faith by word of mouth. This is not enough. It is necessary to adopt the spirit of faith and put it into practice ever seeking its fruits.

There are two types of belief – a formal declaration and a practical and devout demonstration of its teachings. Allah will bestow double mercy on the devout believer who would be illumined with the Divine light. Allah would help him and save him from stumbling. Everyone has the right in Islam to declare his faith and according to the Holy Quran those who are true believers would have the ability to experience the truth of their faith. Their way will be illuminated by the light of Allah and without it a believer would not derive much benefit from his faith. The Holy Quran has covered the subject of the light of Allah in detail.

Despite the fact that a believer may possess some light he is still liable to stumble and commit faults because of his hidden weaknesses. Allah forgives the unavoidable mistakes and weaknesses of a sincere believer because He is Most Forgiving and Merciful. I want to discuss this subject in connexion with spiritual training and preaching. It is not enough for a person involved in these activities just to talk about the teachings of his faith without absorbing the spirit of Islam and manifesting from within himself the light of Allah. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

[illegible]

And they do not make a just estimate of the attributes of Allah, when

they say, 'Allah has not revealed anything to any man.' Say, 'Who revealed the Book which Moses brought, a light and guidance for the people — though you treat it as scraps of paper, some of which you show while you hide much thereof and you have been taught which neither you nor your fathers knew?' Say 'Allah.' Then leave them to amuse themselves with their idle talk. (6:92)

Nations which fail to benefit from the light shown to them are unjust. They deliberately suppress it. There is forgiveness for those who continue to endeavour to avail themselves of the light. But for those who crookedly misrepresent God's teachings, they will be left in darkness.

It is necessary to develop inner light of the heart and not only theological knowledge which, on its own, is of little value. When the sun rises it lights up that part of the world from where it is visible. The rest of the world is in darkness. The Holy Quran repeatedly stresses that one should obtain light from one's own inner self and one should project this light when endeavouring to reform the world. This light comes as a grace from Allah and cannot be generated or attained solely by one's own efforts.

The Holy Quran teaches that one should seek and pray for light from Allah and at the same time have firm faith in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). The Holy Quran declares that he was an embodiment of Divine light in the same way that the Holy Quran is full of light. Some people misinterpreted the meaning of the Holy Prophet being an embodiment of heavenly light. They became involved in childish arguments as to whether or not he had a physical body or even a shadow. Another group, on the other hand, only considered his physical body ignoring the spiritual light although the Holy Quran tells us that spiritual light descended upon him in abundance from Allah through revelation. One should endeavour to absorb the light of the Holy Quran and thereby ignite the spark of light within to which one should always be giving attention. The inner light of the Holy Prophet was so bright that when united with light from Allah, it became a blaze of light.

The light attained by Prophet Moses (peace be on him) came to him in another way. The Holy Quran says:

[فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ وُجُودٍ مِنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ.]

And when Moses had fulfilled the term, and set forth with his family, he perceived a fire in the direction of the Mount. He said to his family,

'Wait, I perceive a fire; haply I may bring you some useful information therefrom, or a burning brand from the fire that you may warm yourselves'.
(28:30)

It has been mentioned that after Prophet Moses (peace be on him) fulfilled his term of contract with his father-in-law, he and his wife set out to return to his town. On the journey he saw a fire burning in the distance near Mount Sinai. He left his wife and went to investigate. This was, in fact, a spiritual experience. Nothing is mentioned of his wife or other persons on the journey seeing the fire. It was during this experience that the light of Allah descended upon him.

The Holy Quran teaches believers to pray that the light of Allah may descend upon them. It is not sufficient to possess only a spark of light. A believer should always pray for more and more light. It is the duty of every Ahmadi Muslim to search his heart for a spark of light and by care and attention increase it more and more as the smoker searches through the ashes of a dead fire to find a glowing cinder on which he would carefully blow until he created a sufficient glow or fire with which to light his pipe. If one does not endeavour to resuscitate the spark of light within one's heart then eventually it will become extinguished as also would be the case with the glowing ember in the ashes if no effort is made to rekindle it.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih told Ahmadis that they have to illumine the world and provide spiritual training for this and future generations. Unless the light of Allah glows in their hearts they will not be successful in their task. The teachings of their faith must become a part of them. It should be remembered that light rushes towards light. The light of Allah descends on a heart in which there is light. One has to keep one's inner light aglow. This may be achieved through prayers, development of virtues and holy aspirations. This is the method to set ablaze the inner spark of light. Particularly lay stress on prayers and the recitation of the Holy Quran. The light of those who neglect worship remains dim.

Lack of satisfaction or dryness in prayers should not make one feel that one's prayers are useless. Such dull feelings show that either one has not worshipped for a long time or else one has been worshipping only in a superficial manner with the result that they gain little from them. One should not despair. A believer is not permitted to despair. Those who despair gain nothing. One should improve one's manner of worship and analyse one's condition of piety by looking into every nook and corner of one's heart. Without attending to these points the quality of one's prayers will not improve. Earnest and devout prayer and the exercise of virtue are

prerequisites before one can expect to receive the blessing of the second manifestation of light from Allah which would not only be experienced by the recipient but it would also be observed by others.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih then recited the following passage from the Holy Quran:

[يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتِسِبَ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضَرَبَ بَيْنَهُمْ بَسُورًا لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ * يُنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ * فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَأْوِكُم النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ]

That is the day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to those who believe, 'Wait for us a while that we may borrow some of your light', it will be said to them, 'Go back if you can, and seek for light.' Then there will be set up between them a wall with a door in it. The inside of it will be all mercy and outside of it, in front, will be torment.

The hypocrites will call out to believers saying, 'Were we not with you?' The believers will answer, 'Yea, but you let yourselves fall into temptation and you hesitated and doubted and your vain desires deceived you till the decree of Allah came to pass. And the deceiver deceived you concerning Allah.

'So this day no ransom shall be accepted from you, nor from those who disbelieved. Your final abode is the Fire; that is your comrade, and an evil destination it is.'

(57:14-16)

It is not implied that the hypocrites would return to this world. What is meant is that those who remain deprived of light in this world will be without light on the Day of Judgement. It is necessary that the disbelievers should benefit from the light of the believers in this world otherwise they will be granted no light on the Day of Judgement. The glad tidings to the true believers is that they will be granted light in the next world as a result of their gaining light in this world. No blame rests on a believer if he conveyed the light of truth to others but if he neglected to do so then on the Day of Judgement the hypocrites will plea that they had no knowledge of it. In spreading the Truth by merely conveying the message in words is not enough. By absorbing more and more light you will have the capacity to illumine the hearts of mankind. One should, therefore, always pray

(continued on page 9)

STATEMENT ON SALMAN RUSHDIE

(The following statement has been issued by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, U.K. under the direction of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV, Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Community in Islam)

Salman Rushdie's ill conceived book *Satanic Verses* has deeply offended the entire Islamic world. It is not the disagreement with the Islamic doctrine, but the most intemperate and offensive language used and the defamation of the character of many highly revered and intensely-loved persons belonging to the first period of Islamic history which has hurt the Muslims as much.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at U.K. is dismayed and disappointed, on the one hand, at the failure of the Western leadership to condemn roundly this vulgar, indecent and totally unwarranted attack on the most highly revered holy personages of Islam, including the Holy Prophet Mohammad, peace be on him, his noble Companions and family members. On the other hand, it is deeply perturbed at the irresponsible and suicidal response of some Muslim leaders and communities to the so-called Salman Rushdie affair. Instead of redressing the wrong done to Islam by the abusive work of Salman Rushdie, their attitude has further damaged the image of Islam in the West.

As against its ill-painted image in the West, Islam is indeed an extremely tolerant religion. It advocates total freedom of conscience and promotes unrestricted dialogue. The Holy Quran categorically declares that there is no room whatsoever for coercion in matters pertaining to faith:

No compulsion in religion (Ch.2; V.257)

It repeatedly and unequivocally condemns all attempts to suppress freedom of expression, be it religious or otherwise. Even blasphemy, though strongly condemned as an indecent act, is not declared to be a crime cognisable by man.

The Holy Quran specifically mentions various categories of blasphemy such as committed against God (Ch.6; V.109; Ch.18; V.5 & 6), against Jesus Christ and Mary (Ch.4; V.157), and finally against the Holy Prophet of Islam himself, peace be on him (Ch.63; V.9).

Nowhere does the Holy Quran grant any right to any man to punish

the blasphemer, but leaves it entirely to God to exercise or not His right to punish.

At the same time, the Holy Quran strongly condemns the use of abusive or derogatory language against any human being. Extreme emphasis is laid on mutual respect and the promotion of healthy relations between man and man, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

Islam is the most tolerant religion. It is the only religion in fact which requires its followers to believe that truth is not monopolised by any one religion and that at the source every religion is true and fundamentally in agreement. Consequently, it is made incumbent on every Muslim to believe in the truth of all Messengers of God, wherever and whenever they appeared in the world.

We, the Ahmadi Muslims of U.K., sincerely urge that Salman Rushdie crisis should be examined in the light of the above principles, which are universally applicable to all similar situations.

Fortunately, there already exists a common law in Britain, which was primarily enacted only to protect Christian sensibilities. But because of its general nature there is no reason why it could or should not be extended to cover other similar sensitive areas. Its relevant text is as follows:

Every publication is said to be blasphemous which contains any contemptuous, reviling, scurrilous or ludicrous matter relating to God, Jesus Christ or the Bible, or the formularies of the Church of England as by law established. It is not blasphemous to speak or publish opinions hostile to the Christian religion, or to deny the existence of God, if the publication is couched in decent and temperate language. The test to be applied is as to the manner in which the doctrines are advocated, and, not, as to the substance of the doctrines themselves. Everyone who publishes any blasphemous document is guilty of the offence of publishing a blasphemous libel.

As is obvious from the above mentioned definition of blasphemy, its selective application is against common sense. There is no reason why it should not be applicable elsewhere. We believe that if our plea is accepted, it will pre-empt or resolve such occurrences in the future.

However, it must be emphasised that only a one-sided gesture of kindness and generosity on the part of a government extended to other communities will not resolve the problem universally. While this issue is still hot, we advise that responsible government should take the initiative of consulting such other countries as have a predominantly Hindu,

Muslim, Christian, Jewish or Buddhist population in order to explore the possibilities of broadening the application of the said British Common Law to all religions and beliefs. As this purpose cannot be achieved merely on a unilateral or bilateral basis, international forums like the United Nations will have to be involved ultimately. Thus, a broader and wider application of the British Law of Blasphemy, *mutatis mutandis*, should be agreed upon on reciprocal basis by all the countries with predominantly Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Hindu and Buddhist populations etc.

This is a very delicate matter and should be studied in depth. If, for instance, in any country a government of religious fanatics does not extend the courtesy of mutual respect to the founders of other religions or sects, the consequences of such misbehaviour are bound to reverberate in other countries where the sensibilities of a section of society have been injured on religious basis by the offence albeit committed in a different country.

Incidents of this nature have occurred in the past and the responsible civilised governments have also taken necessary steps to safeguard and protect the climate of peace and harmony among different communities. The problem as such is not an unfamiliar one.

We assure the British Government and its people that as Ahmadi Muslims, we shall continue to strive for peaceful co-existence with all communities of the world.

(from page 6)

to Allah for more and more light and never to loose it.

Spreading Divine light requires great struggle as people will try to extinguish it. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih hoped and prayed that with Allah's help Ahmādis would be able to light more lamps of virtue in their day to day way of living. He said that in order to deserve more light from Allah persons should develop light in their hearts. Only by radiating the light of Allah can the darkness of the world be changed into light.

GURU NANAK AND SIKH RELIGION

(Giani Ibadullah)

All the revealed religions which are practised in different parts of the world were founded by divinely inspired chosen people of God. These religions are known from each other by their particular articles of faith and their peculiar modes of worship which their holy founders laid down for their followers. We, the Ahmadi Muslims, who have missions all over the world, sincerely respect all these religions and believe that to deny or denounce the holy founder of any religion is a highly despicable act which can even prove fatal to one's own personal faith. The world has witnessed, and shall continue to witness, the spectre when *the critics went down and the faithful sailed across*.

Most of our Sikh friends believe that Guru Nanak who was born in a middle class Hindu family of the Punjab, India, in 1469 AD (1526 Bikrimi) and whose birth had been foretold by a Muslim saint, was the founder of the Sikh religion, (Sant Sapahi Nov. 1965 issue). No learned Sikh, however, can deny the fact that, though born and bred in a Hindu family, Guru Nanak was not a Hindu by faith; and that he had, in fact, refuted each and every doctrine of his ancestral Hindu faith. A Sikh scholar writes:

Guru Nanak had thoroughly read the Vedas and Shastras but he had rejected them all as useless.

(Nuskha Khabt-e Diya Nandian p.197)

Another Sikh scholar, Prof. Sher Singh M.Sc says that:

Guru Nanak never accepted and respected the authenticity of the Vedas as is done by the Vedic people. He did not believe the Vedas to be 'revealed books' nor did he believe the Vedic dogmas taught the whole truth.

(Gurmat Darshan p.91)

Another Sikh scholar, Pandit Kartar Singh Waka, has this to say on this issue:

The Guru sahib had rejected the Vedas calling them creators of discord, preachers of sin and a treasure of worldly greed that takes one away from God. And he had called the followers of the Vedas as selfish liars who shall be punished by angels of death

(Kharak Khalsa p.118)

He further says:

No doubt Guru Nanak came of a Vedic family but it will be highly absurd to consider him Vedic in faith only on this flimsy ground while we know that his heart was totally against the Vedas.

(Kharak Khalsa p.110)

The late Giani Lal Singh, ex-secretary *Punch Khalsa Diwan* had also commented on this issue. He said:

Most of the 'Gurbani' deals with the refutation of Hinduism. It preaches very effectively against the superstitious Hindu ideology.

(Sikh Kanoon p.257)

The above cited references make it abundantly clear that despite his birth in a Hindu family, Guru Nanak was not a Hindu at all. He refuted very boldly in his sermons each and every doctrine and rite of Hinduism. It was this very refutation of Hinduism that had made Pandit Daya Nand, the founder of Arya Samaj, criticise Guru Nanak.

(Satyarath Parkash class 2)

The Sikh community of our times believe that Guru Nanak was the Founder and the First Guru of *Sikhism*. They think that the Sikh ideology, as preached and practised by them today, is based on the teachings of Guru Nanak. A Sikh scholar has claimed:

The temple of 'Gurmat' was founded by Guru Nanak. This temple was later completed and given final and finishing touches by the tenth guru, Gobind Singh!

(Gurumat Darshan p.95)

A book named *Janam Sakhi Guru Nanak Dev Ji* has been published by Dr. Peyar Singh. On the title of this book it is stated that this text has been taken from the original hand-written text NO. PNJ B40, found in the India Office Library, London, and is being published with the permission of the Incharge of Records of that library. In this *Janam Sakhi* while introducing Guru Nanak it is mentioned that:

He came to be known by the name 'Baba Nanak' and ushered in his own new creed.

(*Janam Sakhi Guru Nanak Dev Ji* p.33)

But a well known Sikh scholar Dr. Surender Singh Dosanj, has expressed a different view on this topic. He says:

For a biography to depict the true features of any person it is essential that it should present the facts in the light of

contemporaneous events and circumstances. In this particular aspect every Sikh scholar has been very unfair to Guru Ji. A biographer of Guru Nanak, in our times, would assert in the very beginning that 'he was the founder and the first Guru of Sikhism'..... But to portray Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikhism is to present a very narrow view of his personality; and this is not expected of a good biographer (Guru Nanak barey sach de khoj, X)

The statement of Dr. Surender Singh, given above, hardly needs any comments. Two important facts are borne out by his statement.

1. To believe Guru Nanak to be the founder and first Guru of Sikhism is to do *injustice* to him.
2. To open the biography of Guru Nanak by introducing him as the *founder of Sikhism* is not a good biography.

Dr. Dosanj has further supported his observation by citing two historical facts. He writes:

1. *All that makes the Sikhs so different from others is undoubtedly an addition made after the days of Guru Nanak.*
2. *The present set up of Sikhism is not the work of Guru Nanak although it has adopted most of all from the person and preachings of Guru Nanak.*

(Guru Nanak barey sach de khoj, p.116,120)

So we see that it is an open secret that all that is peculiar to Sikhism and is used to prove that Sikhs are a community distinct and different from others, has been added to it long after Guru Nanak. He had nothing to do with it whatsoever, nor can we historically attribute all these later additions to his person. The important question in this context, which all the learned Sikhs should think about is how could Guru Nanak preach the dogmas and practise the rituals which did not even exist in his days?

In the pictures, painted by earlier Sikh (artists) Guru Nanak was not shown as a Sikh observing *five kakas*. Even Dr. Surender Singh agrees that in the pictures, prepared in those earlier days, Guru Nanak was shown like a Muslim saint. He says:

In earlier paintings Guru Nanak looks like a Muslim 'peer'

(Guru Nanak barey sach de khoj, p.59,138)

It may be noted that these ancient pictures of Guru Nanak were painted not by Muslim artists but by Guru Nanak's non-Muslim devotees. And the fact that these artists have shown Guru Nanak in their paintings dressed like a Muslim saint, proves that the concept of Guru Nanak dressed like a *five kaka* Sikh did not exist at that time. When there was no such thing as *five kakas* in those days, naturally Guru Nanak could not be shown to be observing them.

It has been mentioned by Sardar Tehel Singh that Guru Gobind Singh had some picture of Sikh Gurus which he had handed over to his Sikh disciples from Peshawar. *Among those pictures, he says, was a painting where Guru Nanak was shown as a Hajj ready to go to Mecca.*

(Rag Mala Mandal p.112)

Now it cannot be said at this stage that the picture where Guru Nanak has been shown ready to go to Mecca to become a Hajji, could actually be showing him as a *five kekar* Sikh because it is an established historical fact that Guru Nanak had undertaken that journey to the Holy city of Mecca dressed and equiped like a Muslim going for Hajj.

In this respect, a well known Sikh personality, Bhai Gurdas Ji has affirmed that:

Dressed in blue, Baba then went to Mecca, with staff in hand, book under the arm and holding a pot and a prayer mat. (Var 1-32)

Which *Book* the Guru travelled with, we need not guess because a Sikh scholar, Sardar G. B. Singh, Postmaster General Rtd. has mentioned it. He says:

Bhai Gurdas Ji has written 'a book under the arm', which can be a reference to a 'Hamail Sharief'. 'Hamail' is a copy of the Holy Quran, small in volume and fine in print, which the Muslims, finding light and handy, usually put in a satchel and hang on their shoulders (Pirachin Beeran p.30)

It may be noted that this copy of the Holy Quran which Guru Nanak carried with him on his journey to Mecca, was preserved at Guru Harsahai, District Ferozpur till as late as the year 1931. This was confirmed by a popular Sikh newspaper *Khalsa Smachar*:

At Guru Harsahai District Ferozpur, there is preserved a copy of the Holy Quran which is stated to be the same Holy Quran which Guru Nanak carried with him on his journey to Mecca and Medina. (Khalsa Smachar, Amritsar, Oct 8, 1931)

The above mentioned reference proves that that copy of the Holy Quran was there at Guru Harsahai, District Ferozpur, upto the year 1931. But it was removed from there and destroyed sometime in 1944–45; and a hand written copy of *Guru Garanth* was replaced instead. Commenting on this incident, Sardar G. B. Singh has remarked that:

It is indeed a miracle that a copy of the Holy Quran turned into 'Guru Garanth'; and it has been exposed after the Ahmadis carried out their investigations. And all this was brought about silently sometime between 1908 and 1944. But this 'miracle' has one big snag—that instead of using some other book as a substitute, a copy of Guru Garanth has been used; and it can never be said of any copy of 'Guru Garanth' that it could be book (Pothi) used by Guru Nanak.

(Pirachin Biran p.21)

It may be remembered that the compilation of *Guru Garanth Sahib* dates back to the year 1604 AD (1661 Bikrimi) while Guru Nanak Ji had passed away sixty five years earlier in 1538–39 AD (1595–96 Bikrimi). Now the important question in this context which all the well meaning Sikhs should ponder over is, how could the book which came into existence 65 years after the death of Guru Nanak, be the book (Pothi) used by Guru Nanak?

It also seems appropriate to mention here that in 1908 AD a delegation of Ahmadiyya Jama'at had visited Guru Harsahai to examine that copy of the Holy Quran. One of the honourable members of that delegation was no less a personality than Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad, the illustrious son of the Holy Founder of Ahmadiyya Community who was later chosen as the second *Khalifa* of this Community. Commenting on this delegation's visit, Sardar G. B. Singh, Postmaster General Rtd. observed:

All the members of this delegation were educated people, well versed in the Holy Quran. Having seen the 'Pothi Sahib', they could never be mistaken in declaring it to be a copy of the Holy Quran.

(Piracheen Beeran p.18)

Another Sikh scholar Kalyan Das Ji has related in respect of this visit as under:

On April 4, 1908 (Hazrat) Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sent some of his people to Guru Harsahai, district Ferozpur. They visited the 'Sodees' there and examined the 'Pothi' in the presence of Sodi Bishan Singh; and they discovered that it was the Holy Quran!

(Sachi Khoj part I, p.7)

And yet another Sikh scholar and our respectable friend, the late Sardar G. B. Singh, editor *Pareet Laree* commented thus on this visit by our delegation:

When the delegation of 'Jama'at Ahmadiyya' examined the 'Pothi', it presented to the press a convincing proof that Guru Nanak was a Muslim. It was publicised widely by the 'Sodees' of Guru Harsahai that 'Guru Ji' used to keep this 'Pothi' with him while travelling around.
(Pareet Laree, June 1945)

It is indeed very unfortunate that this *convincing proof* of Guru Nanak's faith in Islam has been destroyed and thus the world has been deprived of a very sacred and useful relic of Guru Nanak. And without considering the consequences, a hand written copy of *Guru Garanth* was substituted for it as if it could be the *Pothi* Guru Nanak used to keep with him on his journeys. Nobody bothered to reflect that *Guru Granth* which came into existence in 1604 AD (1661 Bik) could in no case be proved to be the relic of Guru Nanak who had died in 1539 AD (1596 BIK) and that too a copy of *Guru Garanth* which was written in the times of Guru Harsahai.

Dr. Surendar Singh has said in this respect that the Sikhs have adopted the teachings of Guru Nanak more than the others. But, looking on the practical side of it, they could not have cared less in putting those teachings into practice. Here are two examples, again from the same learned doctor, of their total neglect of Guru Nanak and his teachings. He admits:

1. *The present shape of Sikh religion is not the work of Guru Nanak.*
2. *It is true that to find the realities about the life of 'historical Guru Nanak' is a very difficult task but to find the 'historical features' of Guru Nanak is not difficult at all. These (features) are there in 'Guru Garanth' portrayed in his own words for every one to see and study. Millions must have chanted (his words) to keep their vows when their desired objectives were acheived but hardly anyone would have studied those words to look for the real features of Guru Nanak. That is why Guru Nanak which we believe in today, is the Guru Nanak of Sikh folklore and not the Guru Nanak of Gurbani.*

(Guru Nanak barey sach de khoj p.10)

In short, it is an open secret now that the image of Guru Nanak presented to the world by our Sikh brothers who claim to have adopted

the teachings of Guru Nanak more than the others, is the *self made* product of the imagination of the Sikh *tale tellers*. This fictitious image has nothing to do with the real Guru Nanak of *Gurbani* who was an entirely different and distinct personality. And what is most disturbing, even the pictures of this imaginary Guru Nanak are now being prepared and displayed.

Lamenting on this new trend, a Sikh scholar writes:

We have made a mess of the pictures of Guru Nanak Ji. The pictures that were there for the past forty years, have been completely altered; and we do not know what kind of conspiracy is operating behind this trend, who knows that in the pictures of Guru Nanak to be printed tomorrow, even his name may be changed; and instead of 'Guru Nanak' they may start writing him as 'Guru Nanak Dev Singh'.
(Sant Sapahi, Amritsar, August 1963)

It is true, indeed, that in the current pictures of Guru Nanak, his features have been noticeably altered so as to make him look like a Guru observing *five kekar*; and we are afraid, his name too will now be changed so as to read *Guru Nanak Dev Singh*. May God save our Guru Nanak from such followers! The fact of the matter is that, quite contrary to the general concept, Guru Nanak preached and practised entirely different doctrines. In this respect, Dr. Tarlochan Singh has affirmed that:

1. *Guru Nanak had accepted the Muslim faith in 'only one God'.*
2. *Guru Nanak believed Mohammad Sahib to be God's Messenger with singular status.*
(Jewan cherter Guru Nanak Dev p.300,305)

Both the above mentioned doctrines, namely faith in the unity of God and belief in the prophethood of Mohammad (peace be on him) are the essentials of the Islamic creed (Kalima) which reads:

*There is no God except Allah
and Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah.*

Anybody who sincerely professes this creed is a Muslim, and he needs no stamp or certificate to that effect from any Alfa, Mullah or any other self-styled custodian of Islam. Guru Nanak was evidently a true Muslim. In this respect, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, peace be upon him, expressed his views thus:

Our opinion about Baba Nanak Sahib is that he was undoubtedly a

true Muslim. Disgusted with the Vedas and blessed by the sacred 'Kalima' — There is no God except Allah and Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah — he had surely found that new life which no one can get without following the Holy Prophet of Allah, the Exalted
(Sat Bachan 31)

In pursuance of the above mentioned declaration by the Holy Founder of our Community, we, the Ahmadi Muslims all over the world, deeply respect and sincerely accept Guru Nanak to be our venerable saint whom we shall hold in high esteem throughout our lives. However, we dissociate ourselves completely from that imaginary *Guru Nanak* which is presented to the world by the Sikhs these days. We hope the Sikhs would appreciate our stand and would listen to the advice of yet another Sikh scholar who said:

We should not feel offended if the Muslims call Jagat Pir Nanak a Muslim. This in fact is an expression of respect, excellence and praise for our Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak belonged to the Muslims first and to us later. Apart from that, there were only two major nations (Hindu and Muslims) in the days of Guru Nanak; and the 'Khalsa Panth' came into existence some two hundred years later.

(Sacho sach p.72)

Obviously, therefore, it will be absolutely wrong for any of our Sikh brothers to connect Guru Nanak with the *Khalsa Panth* which originated two hundred years after the Guru Ji. There was no such thing as *Khalsa Panth* in his days nor can he be regarded as its architect.

This sorry state of affairs, evidently, needs our serious consideration without being emotional and partial in any way. To sort out and settle such sensitive and sacred issues that touch so deeply the spiritual sides of our lives, it is not the sentiments but the sober reflection and sensible appraisal that is required. Perhaps it is in view of these very noble considerations that some Sikh scholars have now made a bold and open confession that:

No new religion was ushered in by Guru Nanak and to say that he was the founder of any new religion is to do injustice to him

(Weekly — Guru Nanak Number 1967)

Dr. Kirpal Singh Nareng has said that:

A deep insight into the life and teachings of Guru Nanak would reveal that he did not intend to introduce any new faith; nor did he start any new religion
(‘Sant Sapahi’ Amritsar Nov. 62)

And again Dr. Tarin Singh Ji has explained:

Personally, Guru Nanak did not preach any new religion; nor did he aim at originating any new religion!

(Pothi.....? p.38)

All these references make it abundantly clear that as far as the teachings of Guru Nanak are concerned, there is nothing to prove that he founded any new religion. If any *Nanak* did introduce any such thing, it must be the fictitious Nanak of Sikh folklore and not the real Nanak of *Gurbani*!

We must not lose sight of the fact that for any real founder of a new religion, it is basically essential for him to clearly claim that he has been deputed by God to introduce that particular religion. And having founded that religion, it is also imperative for him to give his religion, and its adherents, a specific name, defining their particular doctrines and mode and manner of their worship. Now, in the case of Guru Nanak none of these basic requirements are met with. It is, therefore, absolutely baseless to think him to be the founder of any new religion.

Guru Nanak never made any sort of claim. Even the Sikh scholars agree to that:

From Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, no one called himself anything like 'the great, the prophet or the messenger'. No claim was made whatsoever!(Khalsa smachar, Amritsar, Nov 13, 1939)

and that:

Guru Nanak Ji never said he was the 'Guru' Nanak.

(Jagat.....? p.14)

Besides the above mentioned two scholars, there are many others who have accepted the fact that Guru Nanak did not make any sort of claim to any particular rank. (See *Guru mat darshan* p.35; *Pareetam* Delhi, Dec 1940; *Pareet Lari* Nov 1946.)

Sardar Gur Bakhsh Singh, editor *Pareet Lari* has even gone on to say that:

As the time passed by, the devotees made him (Guru Nanak) into a 'special Guru'; and on the throne of his 'Guruship' a new religion was built up.

(Pareet Lari..... 1948)

So the truth of the matter is that Guru Nanak neither made any claim to

any sort of rank or leadership, nor did he start any new creed, sect or religion. All these things are innovations introduced by the people in his name long after his death.

Moreover, it is also an established fact known to and accepted by the Sikh scholars that the *Gurus* are made not by people but by God; and that He bestows this honour upon whom He pleases as and when necessary. (Guru Garanth Sahib, shabdar p.929; *Gagat Rakh*, p.33; *Sant sapahi Amritsar* July, 1959)

And as we have seen above, Guru Nanak made no claim to the fact that he had been sent by God or that he had been deputed to start any new religion. And even the Sikh elite, scholars and other men of letters and learning have deemed it an act of injustice to call Guru Nanak to be the founder of any religion.

It is also a well known and widely accepted fact that in the days of Guru Nanak, there were only two main religions in India! One was Islam which was politically dominant and the other was Hinduism which enjoyed numerical superiority. In respect of this historical fact, here are some authentic statements of Sikh scholars:

1. *The only two major nations in the days of Guru Nanak were Hindu and Muslim. The 'Khalsa Panth' came into existence some two hundred years later. (Sacho sach, p.16)*
2. *Bhai Gurdas Ji, a well known Sikh scholar said: This third religion 'Khalsa' started on the orders of Guru Gobind Singh.*
3. *You started this third 'Panth'. Well done! Guru Gobind singh! You are the Guru and the disciple (both in one). (Var 41;16-17)*
4. *Guru Gobind Singh himself said in this respect: From Nanak to Gobind you see only one; we have started the third religion. (Tenth Garanth p.263)*
5. *From Nanak to the nine Gurus, no one started any new religion. It is we who, despising the Hindu Dharm, introduced this third 'Panth' of Sikhs. (Baje Sakat, p.303)*

To sum up the whole discourse, we can say that Guru Nanak was neither the founder of any religion, nor did he claim that he had been sent
(continued on page 42)

80 YEARS AGO

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

(Reproduced from the March issue of the Review of Religions, 1910)

The readers are well aware of our views about the crucifixion of Jesus. We quote the following from a New York weekly as strongly corroborative of our view.

Mr George Lowe, writing in the *Truth Seeker*, New York says:

According to the writers of the four Gospels – writers who are implicitly believed by all orthodox Christians – Jesus was crucified between two criminals on the sixth day of the week. The narrative tells us that Pilate was unwillingly forced to sign the death warrant, and that his wife urged him to refrain from such action. It was only when the Jews threatened him with political ruin, that the governor gave way to popular clamour, and consented to the execution.

Crucifixion caused a slow lingering death. The sufferer usually languished two or three, sometimes four, days before yielding up his life. On this occasion the result seems to have been different, at least so far as Jesus was concerned, for he is said to have expired some time before sunset on the same-day on which he was put upon the cross. We are informed that, when he died, all his disciples forsook him, and fled. They are, therefore, not qualified to give trustworthy evidence as to what afterwards took place. Nevertheless, the statement of theirs that the Jews requested Pilate to have the bodies removed from the crosses so that the next day, the Sabbath, might not be defiled, bears all the elements of probability. Would not the before-reluctant Pilate and his tender-hearted wife be likely to seize this opportunity to rescue Jesus from the very jaws of death? One would think so. We are told that the soldiers broke the bones of the two thieves, to hasten their death, so that their bodies might be buried without delay. The chronicler declares that not a bone of Jesus was broken. Why? Because Pilate had ordered them to give the Nazarene teacher every possible chance for his life. True, it is said that his side was pierced with a spear but we must remember that it was the purpose, of Matthew at least, to connect Jesus with every possible allusion to the Messiah found in the sacred writings of the Hebrews. Then, alas, there is nothing said as to the depth of the wound, which, if given, might, or might not, have been such as would prove fatal.

The body was laid in a tomb, and a watch set to guard the grave from dispoilers. These men who guarded the tomb were soldiers in the pay and under the orders of Pilate. Let us assume that the governor was a man of ordinary mould. Selfish, weak, yet humane, he apparently was. What course would be most natural for him to pursue? After night had set in, he would send his own physician to the grave with an order to the guard for permission to enter the tomb for the purpose of resuscitating the body. Strict secrecy would be enjoined on all concerned. There would be no meddling Jews prying around, for the Sabbath had begun at sunset, and as it was an especially holy day, none would defile themselves by remaining near a sepulchre, and thus cut themselves off from participation in the religious observances of the festival.

All the details of the Gospel narrative agree with this explanation. The soldiers were not punished for sleeping while on guard duty, as they accused themselves of doing. Jesus was alive and in the flesh many days after the crucifixion, for he ate a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb on the shores of Lake Galilee. No supernatural, or unnatural, or nonnatural being could have done this very natural thing. That he kept himself secluded from the public for the remainder of his life is quite consistent with the theory here advanced, as Pilate would be most anxious to prevent a knowledge of the facts coming to the ears of the emperor, and would for that reason persuade the Nazarene to remain in retirement. The appearance of Jesus when Paul was on the road to Damascus was most likely an actual personal appeal by the supposedly dead teacher for a cessation of the persecution of his disciples. One can well understand that Saul was deceived, probably unintentionally into believing that he saw and heard a spirit.

That Jesus himself for some time suffered the delusion that he had risen from the dead, is quite probable. The pains he endured while on the cross would be well calculated to unbalance his mind, therefore his own statement is not at all inconsistent with the view here expressed.

That the supposed death of Jesus was a case of suspended animation, and that the so-called resurrection was simply a resuscitation brought about by trusted servants of Pilate, is in the opinion of writer, the true explanation of what is generally believed to have been the greatest miracle of all ages.

ISLAM AND THE COMMUNIST WORLD

(Muhammad Khalil Sheikh)

This is a controversial topic which can only be fully grasped if one can perceive it in its fullest sense projected by the fundamentals of Communism and compare it rationally with the philosophy of the teachings of Islam. Why I emphasise on Islam rather than isolating Ahmadiyyat as an entity is simply because one has to understand all about Islam before embracing Ahmadiyyat. I am not going to write about the beauty of Ahmadiyyat and focus your attention on what the Holy Founder of the Movement has brought to this earth to revive Islam but on the contrary I shall enlighten you on certain aspects of the teachings which would be used as materialistic proof invariably documented and preserved in our religious books and doctrines. Communism is not a religion whereas Islam is a universal religion practised all over the world and is the fastest growing religion in the world. Islam has no parallel and it is held in high esteem. Islam is the only religion which presents its scripture, the Holy Quran, in its original form without any additions or alterations.

Let me throw some light on Communism. Communism is a social system and a modern political movement and ideology. A communist or communal social system is based on the ownership of property by the community and not by individuals, with the benefits of the system distributed in accordance with the common good. Communism as a political movement which received its impetus during World War I, when followers of modern Communist ideology seized power in Russia and attempted to build a World Communist Society. Some of the Communist Countries are U.S.S.R., Mongolia, China, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany. There are small pockets of Communist parties spread all over the world but do not have the political control of the country other than having their presence felt.

The Communist society is totalitarian, all spheres of life being under the jurisdiction of the Party and the State. As a result, what may be called the associational life of the Communist differ markedly from that found in countries where the jurisdiction of the State is limited by law and tradition.

The long range Communist policy on religion is based on Marxist

contention that, because religion is illusory, it must be eliminated from the beliefs of man. But, since most Russians were believers at the time of the Revolution, it was agreed that, although organized religion should be deprived of its power, those who wished to worship would be permitted to do so, but the younger generation would be educated in the spirit of atheism.

The Bolsheviks had no experience of any pure rational religions. They identified all religions with the most corrupt version of Christianity. When Karl Marx wrote the words *Religion is the Opium of the People* he was referring to the Christian religion. Christianity was further exposed by Ludwig Feurbach in his book *Essence of Christianity*. [1841] When the Russians were fed up with the ways of Christianity then the Bolsheviks adopted the principle that religion is a matter for the free choice of adults. It insisted that parents have no right to instil the principles of any religion into the heads of their children. Under this principle children are separated from their parents at an early age. They are brought up and educated under the supervision and control of the State. All reference to religion and religious doctrine is excluded from the prescribed curriculum. The result is that a child grows up completely in an environment indifferent to religion. By the time an individual becomes an adult and is ready to make personal decisions, he is almost hostile even to the idea of religion. This attitude reflects in a system which ensures that coming generations will be confirmed atheists. The Holy Quran has alluded to this Communist point of view as follows:

Among men there are some who dispute about Allah, without knowledge and follow every rebellious satan. Among men is he who disputes concerning Allah without knowledge and without guidance and without an illuminating Book. Turning his side disdainfully that he may lead men astray from the way of Allah. For him is disgrace in this world; and on the Day of Resurrection We shall make him taste the punishment of burning. (22:9, 10)

The Promised Messiah, on this subject said at a gathering on May, 15th 1908:

There is a Hadees which says that the acquisition of knowledge is a must for every male and female Muslim. Let me first talk of the male members; it is very dangerous that one should begin to acquire worldly knowledge before having acquainted himself with religious knowledge. If the small children start with the worldly education without first knowing anything about religion, they will be totally inclined towards the worldly affairs and it is quite possible that they

may turn away from religion altogether. They may not become Christians because Trinity, Atonement and the Divinity of a human being are not acceptable to any intelligent person; but, of course, they will become atheists. How dangerous it is. It is very essential that along with the current branches of knowledge, children must be taught religion as well and the philosophy of spiritual affairs should also be made part of their studies. The current system of education has not benefited the male members, how can it be of any good to the female section. I have myself established a school for girls, but what I feel in this respect is that it is of utmost importance that first the castle of religion must be fortified so that other (evil) influences may not disrupt life. I pray to God that He may guide everybody to the right path, taqwa and purity of the heart.

(Badr, May 24, 1908)

The basic lines of Soviet policy toward religion since 1917 have been consistent although the intensity of the phases through which it was to proceed has varied. Those phases, as planned, are four in number:—

1. The disestablishment of the Russian Orthodox Church, into which three fourths of the subjects of the Russian Empire had been born and in which they had been compelled by law to remain.
2. The nationalization of the property of all religious bodies, with the provision that, with governmental permission, local associations might be formed to operate churches, synagogues, or mosques (these continuing to be state property while operated by contributions of the parishioners).
3. The prohibition of organized religious instruction of the young.
4. The monopolization of the various means of education and indoctrination by the government and party, and their systematic use for the dissemination of atheism.

The spirit in which these policies have been executed has changed some what from time to time. From 1917 to about 1935 religion was barely tolerated. Most religious buildings were closed or put to whatever use the authorities might designate — anti-religious museums, granaries, or clubs. Priests and rabbis were arrested by the hundreds. Only a few religious edifices remained open, serving parishioners who were mostly middle aged or elderly women, while members of the clergy were dying and not being replaced. At the same time, a new generation was being educated in a non-religious or anti-religious atmosphere. The concept of

Sunday as a day of rest was abolished.

Communists being short-sighted and lacking high resolve, appoint different purposes for their lives and limit themselves to worldly goals and ambitions. But the purpose that God Almighty has appointed for man in the Holy Word is as follows:

I have created men and jinn so that they may know Me and worship Me. (51:57)

Thus the purpose of man's life is worship of God. His understanding and complete devotion to Him.

It is obvious that man is not in a position to appoint the purpose of his own life, for he does not come into the world of his own accord, nor will he depart therefrom of his own will. He is a creature and the One Who created him and invested him with better and higher faculties than those of all other animals, has also appointed a purpose of his life. Whether anyone comprehends it or not, the purpose of man's creation without a doubt is the worship and the understanding of God and complete devotion to Him.

At another place God Almighty has said in the Holy Quran:

The religion which provides true understanding of God and prescribes His true worship is Islam. (3:20)

Islam is inherent in man's nature and man has been created in accord with Islam. That is the everlasting faith. (30:30-31)

This means that God has desired that man should devote himself to His worship and obedience and love with all his faculties.

Ahmadiyyat teaches that one must learn to find God, whereas Communism teaches you to denounce God, the Creator:

Unto Him alone is the true prayer, as He has the power to do all things. Those on whom they call beside Him, do not respond to them at all. Their case is like that of one who stretches forth his hand towards water that it may reach his mouth but reaches it not. The prayers of those who are unaware of the True God are but a delusion. (13:15)

Turning back to the life of early Muslims in the Communist world, I must say that the Muslim countries were brought under the control of the Communist government. In order to destroy that national entity of the

people the Communists divided each Muslim country into small fragments. Thus the Muslim nation composed of people tied together with common language, race, religion, culture etc. were divided into smaller units and each unit was made a separate nation.

There is a large population of Muslims under Russian religious oppression. This mass consists of Muslims in Western Turkistan, Idil-Ural, Trans-Caucasia, Azerbaijan and Crimea. These countries adjoin one another. Besides, there are multitudes of Muslims in Siberia which was annexed to Russian Empire early in 1850. Some of the smaller countries had to suffer a lot under the Communist Regime. Some Muslims were given upto 24 hours only to pack up and leave for Siberia under armed supervision.

The Communist Regime, thus put an axe on the solidarity of Russian Muslim Nations. The Russian Muslims were divided and annihilated completely. The bold Muslims who resisted the Communist tactics were labelled as traitors and punished with execution or exile. Some devout Muslims, Muslim army officers, Muslim intelligentsia, who did not accept the Communist Regime wholeheartedly were killed. Their families were deported to Siberia. Some Muslims were deported from their homeland to Tundra regions under the control of the army. They were asked to work in mines. They died due to extreme cold weather and starvation. The Communist Regime thus disintegrated and annihilated the Muslim population in Russia. This was one successful Communist move to break the unity of Muslims.

Who has broken whose unity is something time has told. Nothing can work against the religion of Allah. In the new generation Ahmadiyyat has sprung up to revive Islam. Look at the prophecy of the Promised Messiah:

I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the Earth.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam pronounced:

Hear ye people and bear witness to it that God Almighty, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, has foretold me that He shall spread His own Ahmadiyya Movement in all parts of the world and make it triumphant over all religions by dint of reason and arguments. The days are approaching, rather they are at hand when Islam will be the only religion held in esteem by all. God shall bless this religion (Islam) and this Movement (Ahmadiyya) in an extraordinary manner. There shall be only one religion, Islam and one guide, the

Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). I was raised only to sow the seed for the revival of Islam and I have done it. Islam shall grow now and flourish and no one can check its growth.

(Tazkiratul Shahadatin, English p.65)

Regardless of what the political situation in Communist countries is today, Allah has chosen Islam for mankind:

Surely the true religion with Allah is Islam. (3:20)

And whosoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from Him. (3:86)

Mankind being one; all people are born inclined in nature (Fitrat) towards Islam, irrespective of country, race or creed:

God is One and humanity is one. This is Fitrat Allah or Dinul Fitrah – the religion which is rooted in the nature of man and to which he conforms and instinctively reacts. It is in this religion that a child is born with, but his environment, the ideas and beliefs of his parents and the training he receives from them subsequently make him a Jew, a Magian or a Christian. (Bukhari)

Whereas a Communist looks at this world as the only world, being material and an end in itself, a Muslim fervently prays:

And of them there are some who say Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and save us from the torment of fire. (Quran 2:202)

Muslims in the Communist world have always been under discontent. During the *Tsarist Regime* they were subjected to brutality under the *Cross*. Now during the Communist era the Muslim are continuously suffering under the *Hammer and Sickle*. The Muslims are now becoming a growing concern for the Soviet Union because the Soviet Muslims are concentrated in the USSR's strategic Southern border regions and are maintaining ties with Muslim people in the neighbouring countries.

Mr Gorbachev, the present Communist leader, gave a speech at Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. He called for a *firm and uncompromising, struggle against religious phenomena*. Then he said, *We must be strict above all with Communists and senior officials, particularly those who say they defend out of morality and ideals but in fact help promote backward views and themselves take part in religious ceremonies*. This was Mr Gorbachev's first pronouncement on Islam since he took office in 1985. Indeed, according

to Kremlin watchers, it is rare for a Soviet General Secretary to attack religion so directly. It has been noticed that Russia's struggle against religion has not been going well. Moreover, the fact that Mr Gorbachev chose Tashkent as the place to attack religion indicated that the Soviet leadership is specifically fearful about the currents of fundamentalist zealotry sweeping the Muslim world which might eventually infect the fast-growing nationalities of Soviet Central Asia. (Time Magazine, 12th January, 1987)

Islam is strong and growing in the Soviet Union. More and more Muslims are taking Friday off to go to mosques. They are taking the Holy month of Ramazan more seriously. However, those who are still followers of *old reactionary rituals* now try to make the practices more acceptable to the Soviets by dieting and five daily ritual prayers of prostration are termed calisthenics.

Ahmadiyyat teaches preaching. You ought to impart the teachings of your religion to others – Communism suppresses this right and you cannot communicate your beliefs openly to others. Anti-religious and Atheistic propaganda is encouraged and made lawful in the Soviet Union constitution. Religious propagational activity is hampered, hindered and made unlawful. Clause 6 of the Soviet Constitution states against all democratic rights of people.

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

Today Ahmadiyyat has re-kindled that torch of Islam and the light will shine in every corners of the Communist world.

In his Friday sermon on 21st November 1986, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV devoted a portion of his address explaining that the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are endowed with three distinctive features which make them better than other people. He elaborated on the first characteristic which makes Muslims better than others because they do not ask others to serve them but rather feel obliged to serve mankind at large irrespective of race, colour or creed.

The second distinctive feature is that Muslims always persuade others to do good and abstain from evil. By good and evil here simply mean the universally regarded good and evil characteristics of any nation, religion,

anywhere and in any part of the world. The third feature which makes Muslims better than others is their firm belief that Allah is One, Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. The third feature distinguishes them from people living in Russia where the concept of *no God* is in vogue these days. Thus Hazrat Khalifatul Massih IV pronounced that according to the Holy Quran the followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) are certainly the best people for they are raised for the good of mankind in as much as they seek pleasure in serving mankind, they ask others to do good and stay away from evil. Also, they believe in God.

Ahmadees, being the true followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam, have a challenge to meet in the criteria of being the best people raised for the good of mankind. They should be at the service of mankind, ask others to do good and abstain from evil, and also proclaim the Oneness of Allah throughout the world. It is, therefore, the genuine interest and concern of the Ahmadiyya Movement that people living in Russia should also come into the fold of one God.

The Ahmadiyya Movement is the torch bearer of Islam. It is a matter of time, God willing, the people of Soviet Union will accept Islam through the preaching activities of Ahmadiyya Movement. Long ago an Ahmadiyya missionary was sent to Russia but he was put in prison and ill-treated for a long time. He was kept in captivity for two years and two months then pushed across the border out of Russia. There has been secrecy surrounding the Russian Society, but recently Mr. Gorbachev has openly condemned the party mistakes of the past. It appears that he is determined to introduce key changes in the Soviet system. This is a very healthy sign.

There are certain prophecies that the people of the Soviet Union will be blessed with belief in One God through the missionary activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. The Promised Messiah prophesied that a day will come when the Czar of Russia would meet a tragic end. Subsequently he was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

Today the Communist world has seen dramatic changes. In the political scene every newspaper or television report cover the happenings in at least one Communist country. People power is crushing Communism. Democracy is what people are after and not to be ruled under the Communist Regime. Look at East Germany today. After forty years of Communist rule the country is in turmoil and the Berlin wall has come down. Another barrier for Ahmadiyyat has been crushed. Countries like Poland have seen a swing towards democracy. The political climate in

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PRESS REPORT

MULLAHS VERSUS TAHIR KHAN

(A case was instituted by the police against an Ahmadi Muslim of Nankana, Pakistan, Mr. Tahir Khan. The charges were brought by the mullahs. The case shows how innocent Ahmadis are being subjected to inhuman behaviour even in the courts of Pakistan. The story is told by Mr. Tahir Khan himself.)

In 1986, on the complaint of some mullahs, two cases were brought against me under section 298' c and 295' c at Nankana police station. Since then I have to go twice a month regularly to Sheikhpura to attend the court of the Assistant Commissioner.

In addition, another case was brought by the mullahs recently on the day of Eid-ul-Adha, which the police later changed to two separate cases, one under section 298' c, and another under section 506, Pakistan Penal Code. The details of the incident are as under:

On Eid day after Fajr Prayer I went to the Eidgah to make some arrangement for the Eid Congregational Prayer. After finishing my work, at about 6:30 a.m. I was going back to my house. I had to pass through the street in which the office of the Khatme Nabuwwat Organisation is situated. I saw one boy standing in the door of the office. As I drew nearer, the boy came in my way and said, *Why did you look at me in a funny way?* Then he started using filthy language against me. I ignored him and tried to pass by, but he grabbed me by my shirt and pulled it so that it was torn at places. Suddenly I saw 10 or 15 boys armed with clubs and sticks ready to pounce on me. Some were carrying bricks in their hands. I stood my ground. They came closer, but by the grace of God Almighty no one dared to attack me. In the meantime the boy who had stopped me in the first place, had gone back into the shop and brought an axe. With the back of the axe he hit me on my arm. By this time the neighbours had also gathered. Some of them intervened and asked me to go away quickly. With my arm black and blue I moved away with hurried steps until I reached home safely. The crowd shouted more abuses at me as I left.

Next day I went to Rabwah. While in Rabwah, I learnt that a case had been registered against me on the complaint of mullahs. The charges levied against me were:

(1) I recited Takbirat (Verses praising God Almighty) while passing

through the street.

(2) *I slapped a boy who reprimanded me saying that being a non-Muslim I should not recite those verses.*

The report also mentioned that Ahmadis create a law and order problem in the country, and they do this on instructions from their leaders in Rabwah.

When I appeared before the judge, my non-Ahmadi lawyer objected to the conduct of the police who had added an extra charge under section 506 to the original charge. The judge remarked: *You don't know these Qadianis. They are deliberately creating a law and order problem in the country.* Then he addressed me and said: *Why don't you stop all this? Why don't you stop hurting the feelings of Muslims?* I replied: *I have done nothing illegal.* The judge thundered: *You are a liar. You are a menace to the country.* I kept quiet. At this the lawyer representing the mullahs stepped forward and handed over a letter to the judge. *This is the letter which he wrote,* he said, pointing towards me and it states, *I will shoot all Muslims.* The judge looked at me again and said, *Eh! You said that you have done nothing. What is this?* I replied *I did not write this letter.*

The lawyer stepped forward once again and handed over another letter to the judge, which he claimed I had written to a mullah, Aslam Qureshi by name, threatening to kill him. I denied writing these letters. My lawyer told the judge that these are false allegations brought by the mischievous mullahs. It is the mullahs who were responsible for setting ablaze all Ahmadi houses in the village in April. At this stage, the President of the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat Organisation, addressed the judge and said that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community had written such and such things in his books, and he also made some false allegations against the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and asked *how can we tolerate all this? The Ahmadis should thank God that they are still alive.* The judge listened to this rubbish and then said to me, *Tell me, will you do this sort of thing again?* I replied *Sir I have done nothing. I have not hurt the feelings of anyone.* My lawyer interrupted and asked me to keep quiet. At this the President of the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat Organisation said, *This is all Mirza Tahir's fault. He is sitting in London, but sends regular instructions through cassettes to his followers.* The judge then remarked, *But you should not worry. Let the dogs bark.*

The judge then addressed my lawyer and said, *Look, I will accept his bail today.* Then he looked at me and said, *Listen carefully, I am releasing you on bail today, but if you do it again, I will send you behind bars for life.* Then he

summoned me towards him and when I stepped on the platform, he said, *Touch your ears (as if to beg pardon from him) and say loudly, I won't do it again.*

I burst with anger, *I haven't done anything wrong. The mullahs are liars..... My lawyer and some other well-wishers whispered to me, saying there is no harm in saying that I won't do it again.* I did say that. The Promised Messiah's quotation came to my mind,

Be utterly humble like a false person even if you are a truthful.

All the mullahs present in the court laughed with joy when they saw me in that position. My heart began to bleed afterwards. My conscience began to prick. I asked myself, *Which action have I promised not to do again? Why did I say that? Why did I falter at the test of my faith? Why? My eyes are still full of tears with remorse. O God, forgive me for my shortcomings. Indeed you are the Most Merciful!*

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countries like Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria is changing. What next? A victory for Islam. For too long Communism had its power base in the Eastern Block but that is going through a period of dramatic changes. Even strong men like Gorbachev have had a change of heart. This change is certainly a victory for Democracy and a victory for Islam which will see the spread of Ahmadiyyat more rapidly in all the Communist nations of the world.

REASON IN RELIGION

(Bashir Ahmad Rafiq)

The age in which we are living is also called the Age of reason. With the advancement in science and technology, we are to-day more and more convinced of the application of reason and logic in our dealings with life. Gone is the time when the masses could be compelled to accept a theory or dogma with blind faith. Mankind has laid great sacrifices for the achievement of this end.

One of the great results of this type of thinking is that people of the world are also judging the truth of various existing religions through the application of logic and reason. They do not and would not put their faith in anything which they are unable to understand. Only that religion would fairly be considered as the religion of the masses which could stand this challenge. Let us, therefore, judge two great faiths by this standard.

Christianity is considered to be the religion with the largest number of followers in the world. Its teachings certainly do not allow the use of reason in matters of the dogmas of faith. As far as the real Jesus is concerned, we definitely think that they were based on common sense and logic. Immediately after his disappearance from the scene, Paul changed the whole face of Christianity.

Paul was not a disciple of Jesus in the sense that he never met him during his life time. He was a Jew with a background of Roman education. He had a superiority over the other disciples of Jesus by being granted Roman citizenship. With such a back-ground, he naturally thought himself to be the most competent in understanding the Divine Call, although the true knowledge of God and the understanding of His message does not require a person of any worldly degrees or scholarships. God Himself teaches and educates those whom He wants to raise for the reformation of the world.

Peter, though an illiterate and a poor fisherman was, in the sight of God, far more educated and literate than any other of his contemporaries who had worldly degrees. He was taught and trained by the Master (Jesus) himself and therefore his integrity and scholarship was far more than Paul's. It was because of this understanding of the truth that he opposed Paul on many occasions. He opposed him on the question of the

preaching of the new faith to the Gentiles.

Paul, however, introduced such ideas into Christianity that proved fatal to the progress of the true religion of Jesus. Paul invented the theory of original sin. This theory has never been understood by any reasonable human being. Trinity was introduced, making again a stumbling block in the way of reason. The Resurrection and Ascension are other such irrational theories. Judged by any yard-stick, Christianity is based on mythology and superstition.

Trinity was considered to be the principal pillar of Christian teachings. The deniers of Trinity were branded as heretics and sinners. Many of them were excommunicated because they believed in the unity. But in this age of reason, a rational being, could not be satisfied with the ridiculous trio. *How could there be three Almightyies* is a question often asked by the people. There is no explanation to it, except that it was a mystery that was never understood by anyone, and yet we are bound to have faith in it. When the thinking Christians found no escape and could not explain the fundamentals of Trinity, they commenced denying it openly. The religious sect of Jehova's Witnesses belong to this class, they deny Trinity but believe in the duality of God. They bring the position of Jesus slightly down, but have the same ideas of original sin, worship of Jesus, etc.

The swing towards the Jehova's Witnesses from orthodox Christianity is not because they find an escape in it from the irrational dogmas of the orthodox Christians. But the question is, will the masses find satisfaction in the Jehova's Witnesses' interpretations – certainly not, because they will also find in it the same trend of blind faith with regards to other vital questions i.e. The Ressurrection, The Ascension, etc.

Thomas Paine was among the first of the thinkers who raised their voices doubting the credibility, absurdities and irrational teachings of Christianity. He was persecuted for his views; how truly he said:

In my publications on religious subjects, my endeavours have been directed to bringing man to a right use of reason God has given him; to impress upon him the great principles of divine morality; justice, mercy and a benevolent disposition to all men and to all creatures and to inspire in him a spirit of trust.

The result of Thomas Paine's thinking and reasoning of the question of God was in his own words:

I believe in one God, and no more and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

Every correct thinking person is bound to accept the unity of God and to reject the ridiculous dogmas of multiple divinity.

Now let us consider the case of Islam in this respect. The Holy Quran is the Muslim scripture. It contains a complete code of conduct for Muslims in it. The main characteristic of the Holy Quran is that it bases its arguments and claims on reason and logic. For every article of faith there is a reasonable explanation.

In the Holy Quran, Allah lays down the following principle for mankind to follow:

Thus does Allah make His commandments clear to you that you may understand. (2:243)

According to this verse all the commandments of Allah are clear to understand. There is no ambiguity or crookedness in them. They are based on reason and understanding. Apart from this there are many other verses where Allah has mentioned the application of reasoning in support of Islam and its teachings. Now let us examine only three of the main teachings of Islam, on this standard. The most pertinent question in all faiths is the conception of God. What is God and what relationship have we with Him? What are His powers? As mentioned earlier, Christianity gives a very ambiguous and ridiculous explanation of God that could never be understood by anyone in the world. Recent attempts to explain Christian teachings on God have deteriorated the position of Christianity.

This question of the Trinity was also discussed at length in the famous council of Nicea in 325 A.D. when by a majority vote, the idea of Trinity was adopted. It was never preached by Jesus or his disciples. Jesus was a pure unitarian Jew.

Islam is very clear on this subject. The Holy Quran supports its claims with strong arguments. It declares:

And your God is one God, there is no God but He, the Gracious and Merciful. (2:164)

The next verse after this furnishes proof of the existence of God:

Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alteration of night and day and in the ships which sail in the sea with that which profits men, and in the waters which Allah sends down from the sky and quickens therein the earth after its death and

scatters therein all kinds of beasts, and in the change of the winds, and the clouds pressed into service between heaven and the earth, are indeed signs for the people who understand. (2:165)

This verse supplies an argument in support of the existence of God referred to in the preceeding verse. A careful study of the universe definitely points to a Creator. Heaven and earth, night and day, the supply of provisions, rainfall with its power of quickening and devastating, the means of communications, the blowing of the winds, the sunshine, all point to one controlling agency, i.e; the God, the maker of heavens and earth. Once an illiterate Arab was asked by his scholarly friend the proof of the existence of God. The Arab said that whenever he sees on the sands in the desert some droppings of the camels he becomes certain that some camels have passed through there. If just by such droppings one could be sure of the existence of a camel why one should not be sure of the existence of God who has created all the worlds and all the objects in it. Thus the Holy Quran declares that there is a God who is One and then in the next verse furnishes the argument in its favour.

The next point is whether we could communicate with God. Does He hear us and could He answer our supplications?

On this question again Christianity does not offer any reasonable answer. The denial of revelation is very common among Christians. Christendom has failed for a long time to provide any example of persons with revelational experience. According to the Quran, however, God has spoken to men in all ages and still speaks to His chosen ones. In the present age we have the Promised Messiah, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement who declared that God spoke to him and revealed the future news to him.

God says in the Holy Quran:

And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: I am near.

I answer the prayers of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should harken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way. (2:187)

This verse furnishes the answer to the question: Does God communicate with us? The answer is in the affirmative. God is near. He not only hears our prayers but also answers them.

The Ahmadiyya Movement by the Grace of God, has produced thousands of people who declare and prove their claim that God speaks to

them and answer their prayers.

When the Christian crusader, Billy Graham toured Africa, our missionaries there threw out a challenge to him. It was suggested by our missionaries that if he could not take part in a debate on Trinity with the Muslims, he should come forward and choose 30 incurable patients from the hospitals, divide them among his group and the Muslims, then both the groups will with humility and sincerity pray for forty days for the recovery of the patients. If most of the patients of the Muslim group were cured, it would be a proof that the same was a religion from God. He never accepted this challenge, but continuously avoided the issue and the Ahmadiyya missionaries. The challenge still stands!

Thus every aspect of the conception of God is so clear according to Islam, that it could be understood by all. The same is the case with all other fundamental teachings of Islam. They are based on a philosophy to be understood by all human beings.

One point here needs clarification and that is the place of reason in religion. As mentioned previously, Islam encourages the use of reason in the understanding of the fundamental teachings. But it also makes it quite clear that reason alone could not be the sole judge of the establishment of the relationship with God. Mere reason could take us to a certain degree of understanding, but when it is coupled with the divine revelation, it brings certainty to our mind. Thus the straight path is the use of such reason which is also coupled with Divine light.

The following example will make this point clear. By mere reason we could only attain a stage where we could realise that there should be the Maker of the world, i.e; a God. But the revelation and the Divine light takes us a step forward by saying that there is a God. The difference of *should* and *is* is quite clear. We arrive at the truth by reasoning, but the certainty in faith is obtained only when reason is coupled with Divine light.

According to Islam, both are equally important; one is bound up with the other. Mere reasoning would lead us to agnosticism. It could not be a real guide to God or the Maker. But to be certain of the existence of God, we do need Divine revelation.

In the present age we have been blessed with the advent of the Promised Messiah – Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, who has proved to the world that God speaks and reveals Himself even today.

CONTACT WITH DEPARTED SOULS

(Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad)

The Holy Quran says concerning the origin of the soul:

Verily, We created man from an extract of clay; then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe depository (womb) then We fashioned the sperm into a clot; then We fashioned the clot into a shapeless lump; then We clothed the bones with flesh; and then We developed it into another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators. (23:13-15).

In these verses God has beautifully described both the process of the birth of the body and soul of man along with an exposition of the different stages. Firstly, the creation of man's body has been described stage by stage: from an extract of clay to a sperm, and then into a loose clot, and then into a compact lump, then into bones and then into a covering of flesh and skin and concluded with the creation of the soul from within this body as indicated in the original words ***خلقا آخر*** (a new birth) and then prefixing it with the words ****نشأناه**** (developed and elevated it), hinted thereby that it is actually the soul in man which distinguishes him from other animals and makes him stand apart from all other living species.

According to the teachings of Islam the soul is really a developed and elevated essence of the body, evolved from within after its perfection into a new and sublime creation. The view held by the Arya Samajists that the soul is a foreign element which enters the body from outside is totally wrong. Now, when according to the Islamic teachings it is apparent that the soul is really a developed part of the body, it becomes clear that its connexion with the body which is like a seed or father unto it, it cannot be severed completely, and remains essentially attached to the body in one way or another. This is why the Holy Prophet of Islam is reported to have said that after a man's death when the soul has departed, an invisible part of his body, perhaps similar to an atom or molecule, still remains. I am not a scientist but I am explaining in general terms. In this saying of the Holy Prophet that part has been referred to as i.e; the lowest part of the spinal column (Bukhari). It is on this account that it has been accepted that there is a connexion between the departed soul and the grave.

Many saints and righteous people have had the experience that when

they visited the tomb of a great saint and prayed there with fervent attention, then sometimes through spiritual visions they met with the soul of that entombed saint. It must be remembered that visions are totally different from dreams. Dreams are seen during sleep while visions are observed in a state of wakefulness when the material curtain is withdrawn before the observer's eyes and unseen things are revealed to him. These scenes are somewhat like a cinema film running before the physical eyes.

It is necessary for me to explain that according to Islamic terminology the grave does not always mean the commonly understood grave in the earth. It also means the place where the soul is kept from the time of death until the day of resurrection. God says in the Holy Quran:

Then in due course He causes him to die and assigns a grave to him.
(80:22).

It is evident that in this world every man is not assigned to an earthly grave. Millions are cremated while others drown and are even eaten by beasts. How, then, can it be said that God assigns a grave to every person who dies? Surely it can be taken only in the wider sense as explained in a tradition that the grave signifies a place where after death and before resurrection the soul of man is consigned.

It is, therefore, in this sense that the Holy Prophet of Islam has used the words punishment of the fire as distinct from punishment of the grave. Some ignorant and materialistic people take the meaning of the grave in the literal sense and make them more spacious so that the deceased may have ample space to sit up in the presence of two angels who will visit them in the grave. What is actually meant by the grave is the place where the souls of the deceased ones are temporarily kept after death to which the Holy Quran has applied the name * *قبر* ** meaning a place or depository for the intervening period between death and resurrection. Only as long as the souls remain in this place do they have a connexion in some way or another with this world. After that this connexion will terminate and the life after death will start in full measure.

Perhaps I am going too deep into subtle religious terms. The fact is, however, that these questions are so much bound together and their linking threads are so much interwoven that it is well-nigh impossible to separate or extricate one from the other.

I will now turn to the question as to whether it is possible for a living person to meet with a departed soul in this world. It is possible but not in

the manner that whenever and by whomsoever at any time a departed soul can be called upon and words exchanged. This view is contrary to the teachings of the Holy Quran which says:

And behind them (the deceased ones) is a barrier until the day when they shall be raised again. (23:10)

How then can one have contact with departed souls? The Holy Quran is not silent on this point. It says:

And they ask thee, O Prophet, concerning the soul. Say, the soul has been created by the command of my Lord; and of the knowledge thereof you have been given but a little. (17:86)

As I have said meeting with a departed soul is certainly possible but not that it can be called forth and conversed with instantly by anyone at any time. Between this world and the next there exists a barrier and meetings between the living and the dead are only possible by the command of God and not otherwise.

This history of the prophets and saints is replete with incidents showing how prayer and concentration they had, with God's leave, met certain departed souls. It is related in a tradition that Abdullah, a companion of the Holy Prophet, was killed in the battle of Uhud. On the basis of a vision the Holy Prophet said in a consoling manner to the son of Abdullah:

When your deceased father appeared before God Who was well pleased with his sacrifice. He asked him if he had any wish. He replied 'My Lord: Thy bounties are limitless. I only wish that I may be restored to life so that I may sacrifice it again in Thy cause.'

God replied that He would have fulfilled this wish but for the fact that He had decreed in the Holy Quran that those who die shall not return to the world. (Tirmizi and Ibn Majah)

It has been related that when the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) saw the corpses of the disbelievers on the battle field of Badr, he was shown their souls in a vision and said to them with great emotion:

We have seen the fulfilment of the promise of our Lord. Have you (disbelievers) also witnessed the fulfilment of the promise of your god?
(Bukhari Al Maghazi)

The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement has written in one of

his Arabic eulogies:

By God I have seen with mine own corporal eyes the sublime beauty and excellence of the Holy Prophet while sitting in my house. In my early youth I saw his blessed face. Again, while fully awake, I was honoured again with a meeting of the Holy Prophet.

(Aina Kamalat-e-Islam)

Again, he writes of his meeting with Jesus:

I have met the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him), many times in visions, and he had meals with me at the same table.

(Nurul Haq, part 1)

Experiences of this kind are found in abundance in the lives of saintly people both in the Islamic and pre-Islamic periods. Strictly speaking all such experiences are of a visionary nature in which, with the leave of God, people do meet with the souls of the dead. My own humble self has also experienced this matter.

One point remains to be settled. These days certain Western spiritualists claim that they recall and communicate with deceased souls. What truth lies in these claims? Since no such incident has happened before my eyes I am, therefore, unable to say anything with precise knowledge in this respect. I do know, however, that such experiences are not possible without the leave of God. Some scholars consider these incidents to be hallucinations or illusions which effect the seeing and hearing faculties of men. This is the view held by many people in Europe and America. At the most it might be conceded that these experiences are related to hypnotism or mesmerism which are arts well known and which have been practised since times immemorial. Some people mistakenly look upon them as **magic**. This art has **nothing to do with real spirituality**. Hypnotism is an art by means of which its experts, who may belong to any religion, can for a time mesmerise and influence the minds of others who are mainly people of weak mental condition. Those under its influence may sometimes observe unreal things or hear unreal voices as if they were real. Sometimes this hypnotic power influences more than one person or even a crowd. As I have already said this art has no relation with true spirituality. It is a power which can through proper practice be developed by a non-Muslim or even an atheist. Many times I have witnessed such performances. Sometimes even inanimate objects can be influenced through sufficient practice. A burning lamp, for instance can be dimmed or a voice can be produced from a wooden or steel table. Some people take advantage of this art in curing diseases and so on and so forth. It is so

well known that this art hardly calls for any evidence.

It would not be out of place to mention that there is a basic difference between the soul of a man and the soul of an animal. After death the soul of a man retains its capacity to live whereas the soul of an animal becomes extinct. This is why most scholars do not name an animal's soul as a soul but call it mere life. The word soul is used for a human soul only. The reason for this difference, as so often stated in the Holy Quran, is that man is created for a continuous or eternal life, a part of which he has to pass in this world and a much longer part in the Hereafter where he reaps the fruits or punishment of his deeds in this world. No such object is aimed at in the life of animals which have been created only for the benefit of man in this world and become extinct after death. It is for this reason that the Holy Quran says regarding man:

Surely We have created man in the best make then if he does evil deeds, We degrade him as the lowest of the low, save those who do good works; so for them is an unfailing reward. (95:5-7)

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by God to introduce anything new. According to Sikh scholars there were only two religions in the country in the days of Guru Nanak – namely Islam and Hinduism. There was no third religion worth the name. The *Sikhism* had not been born yet. Since Hinduism was strongly despised by Guru Nanak and he could not be without a religion too, ISLAM remains to be the only religion that he could have possibly followed.

And as has been discussed and established above, he indeed was a true Muslim. His own verdict on this issue is also recorded in Sikh literature which reads:

I thank God that I am a faithful (Muslim)

(Jewan cherter Guru Nanak Dev plate No. X)

BELIEF IN THE UNSEEN

(Saud Ahmad Khan)

Religion solves the riddle of everything being influx or the changing phenomena of nature. Man is a limited being and every material thing or product of matter is limited. So is the case of the universe in relation to man's limited understanding. Obviously there are many other parts of the universe which are invisible. The Ultimate Reality must be One, the unlimited power beyond man's perception. The flux condition of the universe, therefore, is the ever-changing manifestation of that unlimited Ultimate Reality, God, or any other name given to that Reality. That Omnipresent and Omniscient Exalted Being controlling the universe discloses the invisibility of His Being to man as He deems it fit and only to that extent which is apprehensible to man's limited senses.

Philosophy is right in pointing out the changing phenomena of nature but it remains quiet as to what is beyond matter since it is beyond the system of thinking of philosophers. Belief that God speaks according to philosophy is only speculation which cannot be proved. It is another philosophical fact of belief in the unseen. Religion comes to the rescue as proclaimed in the Holy Quran:

All that is on the earth will pass away, and there will abide for ever only the Person of thy Lord, Master of Glory and Honour.
(55:27-28)

Again the Holy Quran explains that the changes are due to continuous Divine manifestations:

Every day He reveals Himself in a different state. (55:30)

This is also for the better understanding of man as elsewhere stated in the Holy Quran:

Eyes cannot reach Him but He reaches the eyes. And He is the Incomprehensible, the All-Aware. (6:104)

Plato expounded the theory of ideas. It seemed to him that in addition to this world of senses there must also exist another world of things which could only be apprehended by mind. He regarded ideas as being real and objective. They are forms of which the objects are copies. He meant that belief in the unseen is due to an inborn urge of man to search for someone

not apprehended by his senses. Plato talks of ideas without telling about their controlling authority. On the other hand religion, especially Islam, speaks of the unseen Ultimate Reality, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

Everybody acts according to his own way, and your Lord knows who is best guided. (17:85).

Man, therefore, is not a copy of any external ideas. It is his aptitude which he is free to express which makes him superior to all other creatures. At the same time, however, it is up to him to judge whether or not he uses his volition according to the law of nature – the will of his Creator.

What Aristotle called metaphysical religion was called intuition by Plato and who, in trying to solve the riddle of the unseen Reality held previous incarnation as the source of intuition which Aristotle named metaphysics. However, acknowledgement of the unseen could not be denied by Aristotle either. Religion solves the riddle by inspiring man with belief in God Who being unlimited in His attributes could not be realised by limited physical faculties alone. Man can realise the Exalted Holy Being of the Ultimate Reality, Almighty God, by remembering Him and by pondering over His creation for the benefit of man on earth. God says in the Holy Quran:

In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth; and say, 'Our Lord, Thou hast not created this universe in vain. Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the fire. (3:191-192).

The way of co-relating the individual with universal understanding so that he acquires better enlightenment of the Ultimate Reality requires both physical submission and mental attention. Whoever, therefore, ponders over the creation of the universe would come to the conclusion that there should be a controlling power behind it. Sir James Jeant said:

The universe is a thought in the mind of a mathematical thinker. (Guide to Modern Thought by C.E.M. Joad).

He has created everything, and determined its proper measure. (25:3).

The ultimate Unseen Reality in Islam does not remain a hidden secret as viewed by Aristotle. Man sees it with his inward eyes and is compelled by his conscience to believe in it deep down in his heart. Even in worldly affairs man believes in a thousand and one things which are beyond his sense of perception. Much of human progress is indebted to his hopes which, unless they are realised, are but speculations in the unseen. Human relationships cannot remain sweet but for mutual trust which is just the same as faith in the unseen.

Modern thought began with Decartes based on doubt in the validity of sense perception. He does not differentiate between Plato's sense perception and Aristotle's mental conception since the human mind is also a part of the human physique. Senses are deceived by wrong perception. Sight, for example, is deceived by a mirage and hearing by head noises.

Man is in search of something. What is that something for which he is restlessly searching? Moreover man's doubting mind also signifies some hidden fear in him which keeps him ever conscious of the need of protection. All scriptures refer to this fear and have been reminding man of his responsibility to live a righteous life otherwise he would suffer the consequences. We are indebted to philosophy also because when man goes astray and neglects his responsibilities and obligations philosophers, at least, speak of right and wrong, good and evil, realities and unrealities of life not, however, pin pointing specifically what man has lost and needs to regain. It is religion which solves the riddle. In the Holy Quran Almighty God reveals the way for finding guidance:

When my servants ask thee about Me, say, I am here, I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me, so they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right path.

Generally mind is considered to have three states – opinion, belief and knowledge. Faith is out of the sphere of philosophy. A person is abnormal who believes something to be true when logically it has been demonstrated to be false. Islam does not consider opinion to be sufficient because it does not carry any proof. Belief is a higher stage. When we study our origin and source of sustenance we conclude that there must be a mathematical force in motion to operate the whole system. In the Holy Quran this stage of understanding is called *Ilmul Yaqin* just a conception. When we look further and see the complete coherence and co-relation in each and every object and those round about wherein each planet is revolving in a fixed orbit, then we reach a stage of wonder which is described as a challenge in the Holy Quran:

Who has created the seven heavens in harmony. No incongruity canst thou see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again. Seest thou any flaw? Aye, look again, and yet again, thy sight will only return to thee confused and fatigued, having seen no incongruity. (67:4-5).

It is as though we have witnessed a thing with our own eyes. In the Holy Quran the terminology used is *Ain-ul-Yaqin*. As already quoted Allah hears and answers the prayer of a supplicant. Man reaches yet a higher stage when he personally experiences God. The Holy Quran calls this stage *Haqqul Yaqin* or full realisation. Here belief in the unseen becomes a certainty and man enters a phase of his spiritual journey which has been figuratively narrated in the Holy Quran:

And remember when the Lord brought forth from Adam's children – out of their loins – and made them bear witness against their own selves saying, 'Am I not your Lord?' they said 'Yea, we do bear witness.' (7:173).

This is the state of an inner soul of a searching mind. As scientists are more practical than philosophers in their search they more easily submit to the truth confessing their shortcomings as in this respect Joseph Needham wrote:

The concept of revelation is removed from science The world as seen by science is not the world as it really is. (Sceptical Biologist, as quoted by Joad).

Where philosophy failed science took over and carried on the search. It also proved almost helpless in discovering Reality and seems to be turning to religion for guidance as clearly stated after having interviewed eminent scientists:

In the new universe, it appears our religious insight is granted as great validity as our scientific insight. Indeed, in the opinion of the greatest creator of them all (Einstein) our religious insight is the source and guide of our scientific insight (Interviews with Eminent Scientists, Observer, April 13, 1930).

Islam claims to be the religion of nature. As nature is from God so, in correspondence with nature, religion should also come from God Who says in the Holy Quran:

So set thy face to the service of religion with single minded devotion. And follow the nature made by Allah, the nature according to which

*He has fashioned mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah.
That is the right religion – but most men know not. (30:31).*

God reveals knowledge of Himself and guidance for mankind through His prophets who never express doubts as do the philosophers. The Prophets talk of knowledge through experience and invite others to have the experience of God for themselves. In the Holy Quran Allah, Almighty God, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to say:

*Say, 'This is my way; I call unto Allah standing on sure ground, I
and those who follow me.' (12:109).*

The call of the Holy Prophet of Islam is so meaningful and sure that no one can find an iota of doubt therein; rather so much certain assurance has been given that his followers joined him filled with sure knowledge of the truth of his message: The Holy Quran gives the glad tidings:

*Say, If you love Allah, follow me; then will Allah love you and forgive
you your sins. And Allah is Most forgiving and Merciful.
(3:32).*

Man's quest of knowledge is for the realisation of the Absolute Reality and to dispel any doubts that may linger in the human mind Allah established the institution of Prophethood. Scriptures confirm God's attributes of hearing and answering prayer which can be manifested in the form of supplication, restlessness or enthusiasm when in search for some truth of nature controlled by the Absolute Reality. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

*And Your Lord says, 'Pray unto Me; I will answer your prayer.'
(40:61).*

And again:

*Who answers the cry of the distressed person when he calls upon
Him. (27:63).*

God is Most Merciful:

My Mercy encompasses all things. (7:157).

The most compassionate love of Allah brings about the desired result of man's strivings. Man is punished or recompensed when he has the freedom of action. If he has no choice he would not be punished. We read in the Holy Quran:

The result of his striving will soon be known. (53:41)

Allah burdens not any soul against its capacity. It shall have the reward it earns; and the punishment it incurs. (2:287).

All doubtful questions are answered in religion. Islam does not impose blind faith. No doubt it does enjoin faith in the unseen but man is not left in doubt about it. Rather he is strengthened in his belief. Allah has promised in the Holy Quran:

As for those who strive to meet meet Us – We will, surely, guide them in Our ways. And, verily, Allah is with those who do good. (29:70).

What is the prescribed way? It has already been mentioned when God commanded the Holy Prophet of Islam:

Say, 'If you love Allah, follow me; then will Allah love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Most Forgiving and Merciful.' (3:32).

The Holy Quran tells us in what manner one is blessed with Divine love by following the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him):

O, thou soul at peace. Return to thy Lord, thou well pleased with Him, and He well pleased with thee, so enter thou among my chosen servants. (89:28–30).

Paradise is the abode of the soul in the hereafter for the righteous believers; and it is also mentioned in the Holy Quran that the servants of God will also enjoy a blissful life in this world:

And for him who fears to stand before his Lord there are two gardens. (55:47).

The Arabic word *Jannat* used in the above verse means gardens and paradise. True believers can enjoy a taste of paradise in this very world as again we read in the Holy Quran:

As for those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them reassuring them: 'Fear not, nor grieve; and rejoice in the glad tidings of the Garden which you were promised. We are your friends in this life and in the Hereafter. Therein you will have all that your souls will desire and therein you will have all that you ask for. An entertainment from the Most Forgiving, Merciful God. (41:31–33).

In looking for the truth of the Ultimate Reality Toynbee, instead of attending to any Divine call for the answer has suggested that leaders of

different religions should tolerate one another and wait for the answer of the problem. He said in his Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh:

The practical test of a religion, always and everywhere, is its success or failure in helping human souls to respond to the challenge of suffering and sin. In the chapter of the world's history on which we are entering, it looks as if the continuing progress of technology were going to make our suffering more acute than ever and our sins more devastating in their practical consequences. This is going to be the testing time, and if we are wise, we shall await its verdict.

If we do not feel that we can afford to wait for time to do its discriminating work, we are confessing the lack of faith in the truth and value of religion that happens to be ours. On the other hand, if we do have faith in it, we shall have no fear that it will fail to play its full part in helping human souls to enter communion with the presence behind the phenomena and to bring themselves into harmony with the Absolute Reality. The mission of higher religions are not competitive; they are complementary. We can believe in our own religion without having to feel that it is the sole repository of truth. We can love without having to feel that it is the sole means of salvation. (Toynbee, Historical Approach to Religion).

We must, of course, appreciate the late Prof. Toynbee's recognition for the need of understanding between different religions. But it does not solve the problem. Islam points to the Divine knowledge and guidance revealed by God through His prophets who were raised for the enlightenment of mankind.

SELF REFORM

The mightiest man is he who restrains his passions. The weaker man is he who loses heart in self reform.

All the occupations of a wise man are for his self reform, all his cares for the benefit of the next world and all his endeavours are for the good of the life to come.

(Hazrat Ali)

The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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

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

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