

THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS



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THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

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

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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

LIGHT OF THE AGE

Despite the variety of religions in the world today, the average person is unable to single out any one of them which is able to enable him to attain a realisation of the existence of God and a personal relationship with Him. If the world is to be saved from present-day materialism then a practical message must be presented to mankind. People have become distrustful of the efficacy of prayer and have begun to doubt whether there is even a God who exists and answers prayers.

The only sure sign of God's existence is His living Word which He reveals to man through divine revelation. Throughout all ages He has manifested Himself through the means of revelation not only to His Prophets and Messengers in abundance but also even to ordinary individuals. The belief is encouraged by almost all religions that God's attribute of converse is a thing of the past.

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam proclaims to the world the important truth that God holds communion with man by means of divine revelation and heavenly signs in the same way as He used to do in the past. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was a profuse recipient of divine revelation from God. He described this converse as being just the same as two people holding a conversation. As already mentioned this experience is not confined only to God's chosen Messengers but can be tasted also, though to a lesser extent, by ordinary individuals. The Ahmadiyya Movement realises the need to propagate worldwide this truth and this is exactly what it has been doing since its inception in 1889. Describing the necessity of his advent Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad declared:

I have been sent by God to remove the mist of doubt which exists in man's relationship with God, and to re-establish love and sincerity, and to lay the foundation of peace by revealing the truth, and thereby exterminate all religious antagonism. I shall reveal those divine truths which lie hidden from the eye of the world, and shall give an example of the purity of soul which lies suppressed under the darkness of sin. I am to explain, not merely by saying it, but from my own personal experience, the divine powers which manifest themselves in man by prayer or concentration of mind. Furthermore I am

to re-plant in the mind of my followers that bright and pure tree of the Unity of God, free from any polytheistic ideas, which is now dead. All this will take place, not by my efforts, but by the power of God Who is the Creator of the earth and the heavens.

(Lecture on Islam)

This is an inspiring message of hope. Amid the darkness of unbelief the light of God has illuminated the way of spiritual progress. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad through personal divine experiences demonstrated the truth and efficacy of Islam and showed to what heights of spiritual eminence man was capable of attaining. The Word of God was revealed to him which revived the souls of men. There are many members of the Ahmadiyya Movement whose faith has been strengthened by similar divine experiences though on a lesser scale. These experiences were not only enjoyed by contemporary companions of the Promised Messiah but also by devout followers right down to this day in all parts of the world. Describing the signs of the truth of a true and living religion the Promised Messiah said:

That religion alone is true which demonstrates that God hears and speaks in this age also. In a true religion God attests His existence through His speaking.

(Chashma Masihi)

Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam fulfils and demonstrates this great truth which is a powerful divine sign for all seekers after truth.

GARMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The garment of righteousness is a term of the Holy Quran. This points to the fact that spiritual beauty and spiritual adornment can only be achieved through righteousness. And righteousness means that a person should, to the best of his ability, discharge his responsibilities regarding his faculties and covenant of faith with God as a sacred trust. Also he should pay full regard to what he owes to his fellow human beings and to all that is created by God as a trust imposed by Him. He should tread the path of righteousness to the minutest detail according to the best of his ability.

(Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)

AHMADIYYA CENTENNIAL CONGRATULATIONS

(We produce some messages of congratulations from prominent personalities on the occasion of the Annual Conference of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association in August, 1989 at Islamabad, Tilford, U.K.)

Message from the Home Secretary of Great Britain

'I congratulate the Ahmadiyya Movement on reaching its Centenary Year and wish the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, United Kingdom, every success in the future.'

Douglas Hurd, Home Secretary

Message from the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain

'I should like to congratulate the International Ahmadiyya Muslim Association on its Centenary and to wish it well in the years ahead.'

*John Major, Foreign Secretary,
Her Majesty's Government*

Message from the Prime Minister of Canada

Mr. Sergio Marchi, who read out the message, said:

Your Holiness, distinguished guests, brothers and sisters,
For me and for my colleagues it is an honour and indeed a privilege to be members of the Canadian delegation, led by your Canadian leader, Naseem Mahdi, to join you and share with you these three very special days. It also gives me great pleasure to extend to His Holiness and to the Gathering greetings of our Prime Minister of Canada; and it reads as follows:

'It is with sincere pleasure that I extend to His Holiness and to the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam the good wishes of the Government of Canada on the occasion of the international gathering of the Ahmadiyya Movement which is to be held in London from August 11 to August 13, 1989. The Centennial of the founding of the Ahmadiyya

Movement is being celebrated this year throughout the world, and I am pleased that His Holiness has been able to visit the Ahmadiyya Community in Canada to share in their celebrations to date. I know the representatives of the Canadian Community will also be present at the international gathering which brings together members of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Community. I truly hope that the international gathering will be a successful and enjoyable celebration of the Ahmadiyya Movement's one hundreth year.'

*The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney,
Prime Minister of Canada*

Mr. Sergio Marchi continued:

It also gives me great pleasure to invite my two colleagues from Canada who will present to His Holiness our Canadian and very proud symbol, the Maple Leaf, in our national flag.

Mr. Tom Cox, Member of British Parliament

'Supreme Head, dear brothers and sisters, I bring to you the warm and lasting friendship of your many friends who are members of the British Parliament.

We are all proud as we witness the growing strength of your Movement throughout the world and of the great respect that is always shown to the Supreme Head. It shows to all of us wherever we live, whatever may be the religious beliefs we hold, the great love and the great affection in which he is held by people throughout the world, as indeed is the teaching of Islam.

For people like myself, as a Member of Parliament, we are aware that sadly there are your brothers and sisters in parts of the world who are persecuted, who do not have their freedom to follow their beliefs as you are able to follow them here. And I have to say that we do know and we are deeply concerned at the abuse that does exist in countries as to the lack of those rights being given to men and women, and we as members of the British Parliament now look, and must certainly now look to Pakistan to see that in that country where the Ahmadiyya Community has sadly suffered very deep persecution, we seek an immediate end to that kind of tyranny and the rights of all men and women who live in that country to be able not only to follow their religious beliefs but also for your Community to be able to have the freedom to publish and to read any of your many publications that they may wish to buy and read.

The view and message of British members of Parliament is: No country can call itself a democracy, no country can say we believe in freedom, if they oppress people who live in those countries. And, therefore, I assure you that your many friends in the British Parliament will always campaign with you, with the Supreme Head and your followers throughout the world for their basic right as human beings to follow their religious beliefs.

Can I say that we are aware that this has been a very, very difficult year for you? A book has been published that has caused the most enormous offence to people throughout the world.

But I say to all of you here, to all of you who live in the countries afar but have come to join this wonderful weekend here at Islamabad:

Never ever forget whatever may be said, however hurtful it may be, always remember what your great strengths are. Always remember the great teachings of Islam, the depth and wisdom of those teachings, because that, my dear friends, is the strength of your Movement, your Movement here, your Movement throughout the world. And no one, whatever they may say, whatever they may write, can ever lose that strength that you build on day by day.

Can I in closing say: It is always a great pleasure to come here to Islamabad, to be with you, to be with people I am privileged to call very great friends of mine, always a pleasure. But this year especially in your Centenary, it is both a pleasure and a great honour, and I thank you all for that privilege.'

Mr. Gary Waller, Member of British Parliament

'Supreme Head and my very good friends, it is a great pleasure for me to be here and share with you this great occasion, this great historic occasion of your Centenary Convention. Islam has much to teach the world, for in a society which emphasises self, Islam emphasises the group and the community. And three of the injunctions of Islam, of prayers, of fasting and Hajj, are directly related to community activity and participation. And because of this emphasis on the community the Muslim family is still cohesive and not broken down, and children are secure. So we have much to learn, I say again, from Islam.

In the modern era, Islam has been sadly misrepresented and misused, sometimes by outsiders and sometimes by leaders of Muslim States who

have misquoted and misapplied the Holy Quran in support of their rule. The writer Johnson Swift said: 'We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another. The background, I have to say, my friends, is a sombre one, because more people have been killed in war in this century than in wars in the rest of human history. And thus today, even more than in the past, the world needs Islam's confidence in the destiny of the human race as a corrective and stabilising force.'

We also need to remember the Islamic values of compassion and of kindness. Let us never forget that the Prophet, peace be upon him, built bridges for Islam and had good relations with other communities and peoples in countries such as Abyssinia and Egypt.

Supreme Leader, my friends, your Movement is in the forefront of building bridges, and sadly those who build bridges are often persecuted. But I say to you that one can destroy individuals, one can destroy people, but one can never destroy belief and faith. I, too, hope and I believe that your Movement will go from strength to strength.

I am very happy today to greet you and to wish you all well.'

Mr. Mittar, representative of the High Commissioner for India

'Friends, on the occasion of the Annual Gathering of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at I congratulate you on behalf of the Indian High Commissioner and hope that the work that the Ahmadiyya Jama't is doing may be successfully accomplished and their message may prosper in all the countries wherever they have gone to.

The relationship between India and Ahmadiyyat is so old that I need not dwell on it, as your President, Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan, has mentioned that Qadian, from where Ahmadiyyat started, is situated in the District of Gurdaspur, in India. I am proud to say that those people who are living in Qadian or any members of your Jama'at elsewhere in India are absolutely under no restriction and they have no difficulties.

We all live in India in a spirit of love and good neighbourliness. Another special thing about this Annual Gathering is this that one hundred years have been completed since the start of Ahmadiyyat, therefore, I offer you congratulations. I know that you are eagerly waiting to hear the Khalifatul Masih, and still there are many speakers sitting around who have to take their turn. You must be wishing that these speakers

would cut short their speeches so that you, who have come here in thousands from thousands of miles, may be able to listen to his address. I do not wish to take more of your time and once again I offer my congratulations to you.'

**Honourable Sam K. Njuba,
Minister for Constitutional Affairs, Uganda**

'Fellow people of God, I come from Uganda, as you have heard, and bring you greetings of the people of Uganda on your Centenary celebrations. I congratulate you whole heartedly and wish you many happy returns of the day.

May I take this occasion to thank your great leader for having extended an invitation to us through your Community leader in Uganda, having enabled us to travel as a delegation to this country and see your potential.

We are highly impressed and as a Christian, I think, humiliated that Muslims in Uganda are renowned for conflict and violations, but here we are with Muslims, far away from their homes in the United Kingdom, peacefully gathering and demonstrating patience, selflessness and self-control.

Once again, it is my hope that this spirit will continue. On my part, I will definitely convey to the people in Uganda your wishes. I am glad to thank you and the Community and your leader in particular for all that you have done for our country. A few years ago, last year I think, for the generosity you expressed to us when you made donations for relief in the form of blankets and when you promised to improve on the school that you run there and the hospital which has been established by your Community in Uganda. We thank you very much for all this and we hope that your generosity will continue to grow.

On the point that your great leader mentioned about persecution, I have one comment to make: people should learn that matters of politics should be kept away from matters of religion. We at home are a secular State, and that does not mean we have no beliefs, but we tolerate each other and work together irrespective of our various religions. We hope this will extend to your homeland one day.

Nevertheless, let me end by quoting from our Holy Book, the Bible — Matthew 5:11,12: Blessed are those who are persecuted for their beliefs

for their reward is in heaven.
God bless you.'

**Professor Dr. Moses B. Dumbuya,
Minister for Education, Cultural Affairs and Sports, Sierra Leone**

'Supreme Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Jama'at, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Honourable Ministers and Honourable Members of Parliament from different countries, distinguished delegates, please allow me to convey to you the highest commendations and fraternal congratulations and greetings from His Excellency, the President, Major-General Dr. Joseph Saedo Momoh, the government and the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone for this wonderful Movement which is today celebrating its hundredth anniversary.....

Your Holiness, we have a number of organisations in the country which are also concerned with the development of man. The Ahmadiyya Mission in Sierra Leone is playing a very significant role in our educational development. We have fourteen missions or Mission Houses in the country, 438 mosques, all run by this great Movement. There are two Arabic schools run by the Ahmadiyya Mission, one missionary training centre, 104 primary schools, 16 secondary schools, 169 communities, one newspaper 'The African Crescent', 12 Pakistani missionaries in the country under the umbrella of the Ahmadiyya Movement.....

Your Holiness, I have been requested by my people to inform you that as a country one of our greatest assets has been religious tolerance in West Africa. The people of Sierra Leone practise different religions, but we all consider ourselves as one people in Islam and in Allah. My government's commitment to the philosophy of constructive nationalism is based on merit, suitability and dedication. We believe that man must be given an opportunity to serve and worship wherever he is. And my country is doing very well in this regard. As my colleague will be talking to you – my colleague is a Christian, I am a Muslim, but we all went to the same school in Sierra Leone. This is a common principle that we look at the man and not what he believes in.

Your Holiness, my dear brothers, with these few words I once again convey to you highest commendation and congratulations and God-speed for this wonderful occasion. Thank you.'

**Professor Victor Mambu, Minister of Information and Broadcasting,
former Minister of Works and Labour, Sierra Leone**

'Your Holiness, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, fellow-participants. After that brilliant analysis by my colleague, Honourable Professor Dumbuya, there is not much I can say except to say that there is a common saying that where there is no vision, the people perish. But I can see from the analysis of Huzur himself yesterday, or day before yesterday, that there is a great future for the Ahmadiyya Movement in the international world. So you can see that with this great future there is no doubt that the Movement will move from strength to strength, and in the very near future you will go back to the true Islamabad. So, therefore, long live the Leader, Huzur, long live the Movement, long live the Community, Insha-Allah'.

Mr. Maurice Wilson, Maori tribe Elder, New Zealand

'Your Holiness, Huzur, the Supreme Leader of this congregation, Sir, first of all I would like your permission for me to speak in my language to show my respect for you as a holy leader.'

(Mr. Wilson then spoke in his native language and gave an English translation of what he had said as follows:) 'The last lament is for those loved ones whom we have lost, for those loved ones who have been killed under suppression, of things that have made you very sad. This is the lament that comes from the people of New Zealand, the Maori people, and is sung on occasions like this, and I really sing this to you because of the sadness that is in my heart.'

I stand here as a very humble person, the reason is because of His Holiness here. I first met His Holiness on his whirlwind visit to New Zealand. I didn't really know the magnitude of His Holiness until the time we met him at the National Airport and the welcome that we had for him. But the most important thing that stays in my memory and in my heart was the time that we spent with him at the White Hair Inn Lodge, the luncheon that was given in his honour and we were honoured to be asked to be with him on that afternoon. Now those things still live in the memories of my heart, the things that he had said, the things that he had done and the movement of the person within that building. The people who were with me at the airport, helping to welcome His Holiness, had also expressed their feelings of how it was when His Holiness arrived, that the feeling in them had changed. They didn't really know who they were welcoming,

the person they were welcoming, but as soon as he walked through the door, something happened. Something happened to all of us. Although there were only a few of us, everything was given from the heart. And we felt so much for His Holiness that everyone did everything that they could. But the important part of this welcome was the actions of His Holiness. Words weren't spoken, it was just the actions that he did. What he did was, he took a garland of flowers from around his neck and placed it around one of our small children. Now this one thing will never be forgotten by our people.

I come back now to our visit. I must really say this, the hospitality has just been something that can't be spoken about. The hospitality can only be spoken to me, to my people in our language, because the English language, I don't think, has enough words to explain the hospitality that has been given to us and shared with us during my wife's and my visit to England. So once again I would like to turn and thank His Holiness for the opportunity of being here with this congregation to celebrate with you the Centenary, and I can say this that I am very proud to be here, my children are going to be very proud, my grandchildren will be very proud because in years to come they will see this Centenary in history; they will know that one of their grandparents was here as a speaker.
Assalam-o-Alaikum.'

**Honourable Parsu Raman, Minister of Education, Arts and Culture,
Vice-Chairman of the ruling political party (M.S.M) in Mauritius,
Chairman of the Minorities National Commission for UNESCO**

Your Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Honourable Ministers, Honourable members of Parliament, Brothers and Sisters, Assalam-o-Alaikum! It is a great privilege for me to associate myself with you on this solemn occasion when you are celebrating the Centenary of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement. May I express to you, Your Holiness, my sincere thanks for the kind invitation extended to me. Your Holiness, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Nero Jagnath who has a lot of admiration for your commitment to the cause of peace and service to humanity, has asked me to convey to you and to all your members his personal greetings, the good wishes of the government and people of Mauritius on this great occasion. May I also convey my best wishes to the delegates of Mauritius who have travelled all the way to participate in this celebration.

I am especially happy to learn that the Mauritian branch, created in 1915, is the second Mission next to the London branch established outside the Indian sub-continent. The Ahmadiyya Movement which started in Qadian, India, in 1889, has now expanded in all parts of the world and the message of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has reached more than ten million adherents in some 120 countries. Today, the Ahmadiyya Movement is recognised as a worldwide progressive movement within the broad spectrum of Islam. The members of the Community render obedience to the laws of the State where they are domiciled, are peace-loving at heart and in action and have contributed tremendously to the betterment of mankind at large. The best homage one can pay to the Ahmadiyya Movement is to commend the choice of its motto *Love for all, hatred for none*.

This motto is a display of the true love you have for mankind transcending through all barriers set up on the basis of caste, creed, colour and race, because none can claim to love the artist without his work. Man being the masterpiece of God, how can anybody claim to love God without loving His creation. It has been rightly said, one who loves man, loves God, and one who loves God, loves His creation. This is your eternal message which would serve as a guiding principle for the whole of mankind. It is through this concept of love and through their spiritual commitment to the elevation of the soul that above the onesided material pursuits of life inspires the Ahmadis of Mauritius to integrate themselves in the multi-racial multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society of Mauritius.

Your Eminence, you recently graced Mauritius by your visit. To people outside Mauritius, at first sight the Mauritian landscape appears complex to the observer who may be baffled by so many different cultures, languages and religions, but a close experience of people and things will reveal deep dimensions of sharing and interaction. Thus from the minarets of our mosques, the belfries of our churches, the roofs of our pagodas and the mantra chanting of our Hindu priests the same message flows invariably. We may look different, but we are children of the same God.

In our world where we are daily witnessing conflicts and violence in countries either between people of the same religion or between people of different religions, the Mauritian experience is an outstanding example for the rest of the world.

The Secretary-General of O.A.U; following a recent visit to Mauritius, said, I quote, *Mauritius has won the Oscar of peaceful co-existence*. The peace and

harmony that characterises our daily life is a result of personal will and historical movement and under the inspired leadership of Sir Nero Jagnath, Prime Minister of Mauritius, we have been able to raise ourselves to a level of democracy that gives every individual his share of what he deserves. Equality in Mauritius is based on the belief that every religion has a truth to convey to its believers but the individual is above all a sacred gift of God. Thus the language, the art, form and the means of communication within a culture, the spiritual books and the thoughts and convictions that have been handed over to us by tradition, constitute the springboards of cultural actions. Each culture has an intensity of its own, an aura of its own, and it behoves us, as adherents to our several cultures to preserve them in our different ways.

It is true that God is One, but owing to the differences of geography and owing to the moral and spiritual endowments of different peoples of the world, diversity of cultures is a fact. But diversity should not bring about conflict. It should, on the contrary, provoke in us the desire to know more about the other. The cultural philosophy that guides us in Mauritius is the principle of unity in diversity, and we think of different communities as different colours in a rainbow. We proudly call ourselves the *Rainbow Nation*. The Ahmadiyya Community in Mauritius, I am proud to say, is one of the beautiful colours of the rainbow. It is one of the beautiful flowers which make the garden of Mauritius. Any unjust discrimination against one community affects not only that community but also the rest. That is why national unity must be preserved at all costs by giving to each religion the freedom to blossom on its own.

As government, we are not only concerned with economic growth, but also with the moral, spiritual, intellectual, in one word, cultural development of the Mauritian people. We are one of the rare countries in the world to give a religious subsidy to various faiths, including the Ahmadiyya Movement, established in Mauritius. On the occasion of the 20th Independence Day celebrations in March last year, we managed to assemble also heads of religion side by side on a common platform in prayer for the blessing of Mauritius. Our conviction is that no intellectual growth has meaning without spiritual elevation. No economic progress will last without the recognition that God is a Creator of happiness.

Your Holiness, in your address at the inaugural ceremony last Friday, you spoke abundantly of the sufferings of members of the Ahmadiyya Community. May I, therefore, assure you of our full support in your struggle against violation of human rights.

Your Holiness, Brothers and Sisters of Ahmadiyya Community, in your

moments of hardships may I in all humility refer you to the following verse from the Holy Quran: *The remembrance of God is a source of the consolation of the heart.*

I pray that Allah may always be with you. Now I close this brief speech; this humble person requests Huzur to accept from the government of Mauritius a small gift.'

**Honourable G. V. Kromah, Cabinet Minister, Liberia,
Director-General of National Broadcasting System,
former Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism**

Your Holiness, Assalam-o-Alaikum wa Rahmat-ullah-e wa Barakatohu. I have the distinct honour this time to extend to you personal greetings from Dr. Samuel Khanyon Doe, President of the Republic of Liberia, the Vice-President of the Second Republic of Liberia. President Doe has accepted the invitation which you extended to him to grace this occasion, and arrangements were being made for his visit. Regrettably, a few weeks before this Convention, national developments arose which made it impossible for him to come personally. He, therefore, asked me to come here along with my colleagues Mr. Wellington Toh and Mr. Erum Pee, to represent him personally as well as the government of the Republic of Liberia. He has, therefore, asked me to extend to you heartiest felicitations and through you to the Jama'at of the Ahmadiyya Movement worldwide his heartfelt admiration as you celebrate this centenary.

The delegation here today, a composition of Christians and a Muslim is a crystal reflection of the ideology of Liberia. For more than one hundred years, Liberia has existed with multiple religions, Christianity and Islam being the largest groups, and they have co-existed in peace and harmony. They have together developed the Liberian nation, and this is a cardinal point in the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia that there shall be no religious supremacy, all religions shall be equal. Therefore, there shall be no special preference given to any religion in Liberia over another religion, and religion shall not serve as the basis for promotion or consideration in government and other affairs. The composition, as indicated, of our delegation here today is an example of that.

In 1980, the great revolution occurred. It was a revolution not only to change the status quo of the government, but it was a revolution to re-enforce the equality of man, the ideology of equality and freedom, irrespective of religious beliefs. And these are the guidelines under which

the people of the Republic of Liberia are marching ahead today. The decision of President Samuel Khanyon Doe to send us here to represent him and the government, even though he is a Christian, indicates his respect for His Holiness and the Ahmadiyya Movement which is also a representation of the large Islamic community in Liberia. It is, therefore, a happy occasion that we have been placed in the position to observe your collective expression and commitment to your belief as Ahmadis.

We have been impressed, for the past several days I have been here, by the emotional display by you individually despite your sects; as comments and messages were poured out we observed that handkerchiefs are taken out of pockets. This to us is an indication that you are committed and you do have faith.

Your Holiness, finally allow me to indicate to you that President Dow believes in the supremacy of the Supreme Being. Religion is a matter of faith. It is not subject to debate. It could be explained for the purpose of those who may be interested, but it is not a subject of debate. It cannot be imposed, because faith is belief, because of the diversity of religions and as sources of Holy Scriptures one can have nothing else as a common denominator besides God. That is why the President of Liberia and the people of Liberia believe that religion is a matter of faith.

May I say here before I take my seat that the Ahmadiyya Mission in Liberia has been very active. They have been very law-abiding, they have been very productive. They have taken on a character of a partner-in-progress in Liberia, and this we believe is a true reflection of a true religious commitment. Once again permit me on behalf of my country and the President to extend to you felicitations on this occasion.

**Honourable Emanuel G. Tanoh, Minister for Chieftancy Affairs,
Acting Attorney, Acting Secretary of Justice, Ghana**

'Your Holiness, the Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Your Excellencies, Honourable Members of Parliament, distinguished guests, members of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Jama'at! In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful, I bring you greetings and congratulations from the government and the people of Ghana on the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of the foundation of your Movement and of the 24th Annual Convention of my dear Muslim Jama'at in the United Kingdom.

Your Holiness, a hundred years in the lifetime of any institution is by itself

no mean achievement. And in your case, to have survived under such harsh and difficult conditions and to have spread out to all the four corners of the earth – to at least 120 countries – embracing about ten million adherents is an achievement of the highest order. Not man alone but God also has done it. The survival and extension of your Movement under such unfavourable circumstances is eloquent testimony of the strength of the vision of your great Founder, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and of his immense capacity to inspire unflinching faith in his guidance. It is also a tribute to the higher qualities of leadership of his Successors.

We have heard with great pain and sorrow about what is being done to the members of your Movement, ironically in the very country where this great Movement was born and nurtured. We shall add our voice to all those who want these indignities and injustices to come to an end, and pray that one day those who are being oppressed may also enjoy the blessings of religious freedom which so many countries in the world now take for granted.

Your Holiness, distinguished guests, gentlemen, the fact that I am here today, taking part in these celebrations and the Annual Convention is a clear indication of the appreciation of the government and people of Ghana of all that the Ahmadiyya Movement has been doing in our country. It was established about 68 years ago. In our country though your Mission is not one of the biggest, it is certainly one of the most progressive with about 200 or more primary schools, five secondary schools, one training college and five hospitals to its credit. Our boys are also given scholarships to study in higher institutions in Pakistan, and lately your Mission has embarked on an impressive agricultural programme. But above all, your greatest contribution to our country has been the type of people your Mission has produced for us. These people are noted for their integrity, their humility, their high sense of dedication and their self-sacrificing spirit which, if I may add has been abundantly manifested in this Convention.

There are now many members of your Movement who are occupying very high positions in government, in the civil service, in educational institutions and also in various walks of life. And I must say that the head of your Mission, Amir Abdul Wahab Adam, is one of the most respected and esteemed people in our country.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Your Holiness and members of the Movement for the invitation to attend these wonderful and epoch-making celebrations. We shall always carry happy

memories of it. We are also grateful for the wonderful companionship we have shared with many people since we came and for the hospitality which has been accorded us. We shall never forget it and will always report these matters to our people when we get back home. We wish Your Holiness long life and the Movement, of which you are the Head, increasing prosperity and strength. We wish you peace and happiness for all those who are being oppressed. Assalam-o-Alaikum!

**Honourable Omar Ahmodu Jallow,
Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, The Gambia**

'Your Holiness, Supreme Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Movement, Huzur, Honourable Ministers, Parliamentarians, diplomats, distinguished invitees from the four corners of the world, committed and loyal followers of this great Movement! For me, I would like to say, Your Holiness, that for the last three days I am, of course, very emotionally charged and very sentimentally moved. Therefore, I will make my statement very short.

We have come to learn we have come to see and some of us have come to observe – it is a hundred years since this great Movement was formed. Hundred years in the life of a Movement or any religious organisation, I would say, is a very short time. For some religious organisations we are not able to achieve what this Movement has achieved in one hundred years, although some of those movements which are religious organisations have existed, some for over 1400 years, some for 1900 years, some for over 2000 years. I said so, Your Holiness, because the teachings of your Movement have reached the four corners of the world, not only in different languages, but with true different people, committed missionaries who are dedicated, committed and determined to pursue the teachings of the leader of this great Movement. For us in The Gambia, we have gained a lot and the Movement has intervened in many important areas of development. For me there are three parts in the development of man: the spiritual being, the mental being and the physical being.

The Ahmadiyya Movement in The Gambia has built schools to develop the mental being of the Gambians. They have built mosques, built libraries, distributed pamphlets and the translation of the Holy Quran in most of our dialects in The Gambia to build and develop the spiritual being. For the physical being they have built hospitals and clinics throughout the country to treat the sick, because when you are sick, you cannot perform, you cannot work, your intelligence is of no use to you,

and you cannot pray correctly. Therefore, the Movement has really stood up to build the man, the individual being so that he can follow God and follow the teachings of God and perform his prayers in The Gambia.

I have listened again with interest, I have listened with emotion on Friday when His Holiness gave an assessment of what is happening to his followers in their own land. I would like to say, this Movement no longer belongs to any land, it is a world Movement.

I am also very much consoled by religious history. Moses was banished from Egypt for forty years, Jesus Christ was not only banished by his people or rejected, he was killed by his people. The Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaihe wasallam*, was sent out of Mecca by his own people. Therefore, if we find our leader in London being treated badly by his own people, history is repeating itself.

The Gambian government and every Gambian condemns any act of injustice in the manner of infringing on the rights of not only the individual but also those of any community. Entrenched in our Constitution is the respect for the rights of people, the respect of humans and communities. That is why the O.A.U. has decided to establish the headquarters of the Human Rights Commission in Banjul, the capital of The Gambia. We believe in the freedom of the person, particularly when it comes to religion. He is free to believe in his religion, practise his religion how he thinks fit and how he wants to do it.

We stand solidly behind your Movement in pursuance of your right to perform your rites anywhere in the world on any ground the way you want to perform as members of the Ahmadiyya Movement and members of the Islamic faith.

It is ironical that Muslim leaders are talking with Jews, they are talking with Christians, they are talking with Buddhists – they are tolerating them, it is ironical, it is sad that within Islam one sect refuses to accept the other sects. To me that is very hypocritical. One thing I emphasise, with the indulgence of Your Holiness, is my impression since I came. I will not be doing justice if I leave without saying how I feel. The discipline among the people, the discipline among the members of the Movement is something that all countries should emulate, is something that all religions should emulate, is that all institutions should emulate. The elders, the women, particularly the youth, the leaders of tomorrow, have shown that high spirit of responsibility, dedication and commitment, so selflessly in the name of Allah, in the name of their Movement and in belief and respect of their leader. I thank you all and congratulate you on that.

Finally, the true reflection of any movement or religion is the true reflection of the leadership. With all the persecutions, with all the killings, with all the burning of your houses your leader believes in God and knows it is only through God that salvation will come, that peace will come. Therefore, he preaches tolerance, he preaches forgiveness, he preaches patience, this very foundation on which our noble and honourable Prophet Muhammad built the Islamic religion. Therefore, your Movement is in the right direction. You are going to be successful, you are going to win, you are representing the minds and spirits and intelligence of everybody in the world. I thank you very much once more.

Mr. Pierre Chartiers, Montreal

'Brothers and Sisters, assalam-o-alaikum. I have the ring (with the Arabic inscription *Is Allah not enough for His servant?* because it was presented to me by one of my Ahmadi refugees for whom I won the case in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and finally his wife and children arrived to meet him. He hadn't seen them for two or three years. She brought the ring for me, and it fits perfectly. This beard I am wearing is new. An Ahmadi client told me it was the French-cut or the Ahmadi-cut. There is a word I will not use in front of His Holiness that describes this beard. There is something missing, it is the signing of religion. I am not ready to sign, it, although this Centenary would have been a perfect timing, but I have too much love for Ahmadis, too much respect for you and too much respect for His Holiness to sign without being sure. Now I come from a Western world, I come from the province of Quebec which is the French part of Canada. It is quite liberal minded, and there are things that I have to think about before signing. But Insha-Allah when I sign, it will be for ever.

When we are out of Canada we speak with one voice, and you heard the honourable Member of Parliament, Mr. Sergio Marchi, who is from the Liberal Party, and his colleague, and you know that he read with a lot of emotion the message of our Prime Minister of Canada who is a Conservative. When we are out of Canada, we speak with one voice, and this is why, out of respect for them and for my country, I am wearing the Canadian flag, although usually I wear the Quebec flag.

May I take a few seconds to explain how I got acquainted with the Ahmadiyya Community. I am a lawyer, I am doing immigration cases, refugee cases since 1985, and one day in September 1986 I was going for *one of my cases* at the Immigration Centre and I saw a lady dressed in some kind of something – that is what I said at that time – and she had

three young children crying. I have no children of my own, and it upsets me, especially when I am going to do an immigration case. I have to keep calm. This lady was crying and I did not know why. So I went to see her. She was crying in her poor English, that some councillor or lawyer had dumped her because she did not have any money, and the immigration was forcing her to proceed without a lawyer, so I brought her to the immigration agent's room and I said I am the new lawyer, give me another date to prepare the case. So I was granted another date, and before I prepared the case with this lady, some Ahmadi leaders from Montreal, from the Jama'at, came to my office to prepare the case but certainly more for the reason to see who I was and if I deserved to deal with Ahmadi cases. I have been doing Ahmadi cases since September 1986, so I believe that I got the trust from the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Montreal, and I will continue doing so for many years.

Now, in 1947 after Partition, Ahmadi Muslims – because they are Muslims – walked to Pakistan. They left everything behind. Some were lucky enough to have carriages, but I know that many walked. I was told that, and Ahmadis speak the truth. In 1953, during the Punjab disturbances, Mullahs wanted your great spirit, Muhammad Zafrulla Khan to be kicked out of his post of Foreign Minister. They wanted Ahmadis to be declared non-Muslim. For reasons I don't know, you were not declared non-Muslims then, but Zafrulla Khan was kicked out, to become Justice and then Chief Justice of the International Court at The Hague and Chairman of the General Assembly of the United Nations. This is a great tribute to the Ahmadiyya Community. In 1974, after the Rabwah railway station incident, after the atrocities against Ahmadis, you were declared non-Muslims on the 7th of September, 1974, supposedly to calm the Muslims down. In 1984, on 26th April, you had Ordinance XX. Like Huzur said, you cannot offer peace to your neighbour (i.e. greet with 'assalam-o-alaikum'), if not, you will go to prison for three years. And I believe, in 1986 Parliament changed that. It is called blaspheming Muhammad which is a capital offence bringing capital punishment.

After that Shariat Bill (Islamic Law) was passed, not at the lower House, at the Senate, and Junejo, not passing it forthwith at the House level, was kicked out by Zia and on 15th June, 1988, Shariat Bill was passed by decree. And you know what *Shariat* means to Ahmadis. The Islamic law is supreme in Pakistan. Now we had this tremendous hope of the election coming and in Benazir Bhutto who had suffered exile as *Huzur* is suffering exile now. We were hoping in Canada that she would win the election, and she did. And you know what she declared in January of this year, that

the passing of the Constitution Amendment in 1974 making Ahmadis non-Muslim was one of her father's great achievements! Shame! And now we are opening a new chapter of persecution which *Huzur* talked about. We have the incidents of April, we have the incidents of July, we have the police and military patrolling Rabwah until the end of the year, we have the killings, we have the burning of houses. No sweets for the children, no new clothes. This is where we are now. Now, I am from Canada, I am not so humble. I have to learn that before becoming Ahmadi, but I am telling you there is not much we can do, not much that my colleagues can do either from Canada. We cannot help very much the Ahmadis that are in Pakistan. But we have met today with the representative of the High Commissioner and we will meet somebody else tomorrow at the High Commission and will try to find some way for the Ahmadis that are here and have been crying, taking their handkerchiefs out of their pockets. We will try to get you to Canada some way, and I can tell you only that I deal with cases in Montreal, Quebec. For those Ahmadis who will manage to reach the province of Quebec, I will deal with you with the best of my ability. And let me tell you that we have a new law since the 1st of January this year, and I have not lost any Ahmadi case since then, and the judges have to take into consideration the last decisions. So I believe that there is a good future for the generous Ahmadis with the generous people of Quebec and Canada. *Shukria, Khuda Hafiz.*

Mr. Jim Karygiannis, Member of the Canadian Parliament

'Your Holiness, distinguished Members of Parliament, Ministers, distinguished guests, people from all over the world. I noticed when I came to the compound two days ago flags from all over the world. I looked at my friend, Naseem Mahdi, and I said, you've got all the flags in the world. He said yes. I said, you have even got the Greek flag there. In Canada we are a multicultural nation. I think if the rest of the world looks at Canada, it might take some lessons.

I went to Canada in 1966, fleeing political oppression, political persecution. I was ten years old when one night my father yanked me out of my house and said *we are leaving*. I looked at him and asked *why? I did not understand*. He said *in due time you will understand*. What happened in Greece in the next seven years, is what your Community in Pakistan has been going through the last fifteen years. It was political oppression. In Pakistan you have religious oppression. So I have seen the Greek flag and I said to Naseem Mahdi, *are there any Greeks among the crowd?* He said *I am sure there must be*.

Your Holiness, you visited Canada, and we became, in my mind, a little better acquainted. You have a religious leader that you should be proud of. Not a lot of religious leaders are the calibre, the intelligence and honesty of this man, and I say that with humbleness because I was very much moved by meeting him and by talking to him.

You are celebrating your 100 years. Canada as a Dominion, as a nation, is a little older than that, roughly about 124 or 123 years. So we are growing. We have grown in pains as the previous speaker mentioned, and you have grown in pains. We know what it is like to grow. But in Canada the one thing that we have is the freedom to speak out, the freedom to believe in the God we want. You can find a Muslim living beside a Christian. You can find a Christian addressing a Muslim crowd. We are proud of it.

In September 1988 Canada became a member of the United Nations Security Council. This year Canada, along with other Commonwealth countries, along with the country of Britain, will be meeting in South East Asia. Why not take this opportunity – not only speaking on behalf of Canada, but I am also suggesting it to other members of the Commonwealth – why not take this opportunity, I repeat, reach out and let Pakistan know what it is doing. Human rights, freedom of speech, human rights throughout the world is not something we take for granted. We have seen many nations, Panama, South Africa, the government of Pakistan and other countries throughout the world abusing, killing people, kicking people—that has to stop. We cannot solve everything, but, however, if the government of Pakistan can be made to understand what it is doing is not desired through the rest of the world, if the government of Pakistan can be made to understand that it is time that it can live with its people in peace rather side by side, we have accomplished one small step toward humanity.

The work of the Ahmadis in Canada is a different story. They are moving fast, swiftly, and I tell you that I am proud to be here with them, I am proud to call them my friends.

In closing, I hope, Your Holiness, that you will visit us again in Canada. Although I have a very small apartment, it is always open to you. You know there is a saying from where I come from, Greece, it says, the only person that cannot fit into your house is the devil. And here we have friends and brothers and sisters. We have to live in peace with each other, we have to respect each other. And in closing I only want to say *Ahmadiyya Zindabad.*

Mr. Sergio Marchi, Member of Parliament, Canada

'Your Holiness, once again my distinguished colleagues and friends of the last three days, and I hope for many years to come, brothers in the tent and, through the great power of technology and video, to our sisters in the other tent. I am very, very, very humble to be standing before such an impressive international audience of Ahmadis. Your Holiness, when your very capable leader in Canada, Naseem Mahdi, who, as my colleague Jim Karygiannis said a few moments ago, will be a friend long after our political careers are over because we are not here simply as elected representatives, because what we talk and share transcends political boundaries and goes beyond for life and experience, when he called and on your behalf invited me to be a part of the Canadian delegation, one of my first thoughts was, why me, I have no special credentials, I have no special titles, but I accept this because I know it was offered in the humility and in the friendship that has come to characterise the Ahmadiyya Community in Canada and indeed throughout the world. My second thought was that it was very easy for me to say yes because I had looked forward to meeting His Holiness once again. When he came to Canada only a few months ago, one of his departing comments was, I hope to have the chance of having you in my temporary home in London. I had no thought that the re-visit would be so soon, and I suppose that our God had heard our conversation and had helped along the way. Let me tell you, as my colleagues have said so very, very well that we and myself have been particularly moved by the experience of these last three days. If I was to pick one moment of the past three days and call that one moment the highlight, I would pick with some regret, I suppose, because the theme and the feelings of the opening session when His Holiness read from letters that he had received from Ahmadiyya brothers and sisters in Pakistan. The words were simple, the words were true, and yet the words were so powerful and so forceful that one could not have helped but to be moved, if you were in proximity of this tent. They were forceful because they came from the heart, they came from the pen and they came from factual experience. And those words put on simple paper spoke more powerfully and with greater dignity than any speech that anyone of us can muster in Parliament, was more forceful than any parliamentary report that we can put together, was more forceful than any parliamentary task force can ever try to describe, because it came from people who were going through their tribulation.

It also reminded me of how troubled our world at times and in places actually is. In fact, every day we are surprised, we are repulsed, we are

offended when we read the headlines in our newspapers, watch the news on our television sets or hear the broadcast on radio of various acts of violence against our fellow-brethren. Sometimes you wonder why it is, you wonder how it can be that a fellow human being can take a match and light the castle of any family. Because we are bombarded by those messages sometimes, isn't it true that our world sometimes becomes indifferent to those headlines. Years ago, when there would be a murder on a street, we would talk about it for days. Now when we have death of hundreds and thousands, it becomes merely a statistic that we look at one page and then we turn to our sports pages to find out how our soccer team is doing. That has been reduced to a certain indifference, but I must tell you, Your Holiness, that the reaction of your Ahmadiyya Community is not one of indifference, is not one of simply passive response to what is happening in Pakistan.

For me this gathering in addition to praying and to offering your worship to your God, for me there are two messages that flow from this Conference in London, England, and the many conferences and celebrations that have marked your Centennial this year throughout the world. The first message goes to the Ahmadis in Pakistan, to the four-year old girl who wrote to His Holiness, to the young child who is denied education, to the men and women in the prisons who are being beaten, to the families who watch their houses being burnt, this is the message for them in solidarity to say we have not forgotten you, we admire you, we respect you, we give you courage, we give you strength, and may your struggles continue. So I say and we say collectively to the persons in the prison, to the persons watching the fire, to the persons being denied educational rights, you are not alone, your pain is shared. They know that, and when they receive that strength, I tell you that no armies, how powerful those armies may be, no armies would ever put out that flame that burns brightly because of your actions here and the actions of your people around the globe.

The second message is to the world. The second message is to the non-Ahmadiyya community of the world. That message is to suggest in a very positive way, please take note, please wake up to this misery, to this human suffering and offer your assistance. Therefore, through you, through my colleagues here and through my colleagues around the world, we have to recognise that the sufferings emanating in Pakistan are more than religious, they are indeed political. If the problems are political they require political solutions. There is a moral responsibility on those colleagues and Members of Parliament across the world to correct and right the wrong because if we don't do it in Pakistan and if we don't do it elsewhere where it is needed, then one day, God forbid, when it happens

to Canada, who will come and help us?

So, as my colleague has already mentioned, we need to have the strength of our convictions, of our political convictions, the way that you show the strength of your religious convictions, and we as a world, as an international community, particularly since Pakistan this year is looking for membership in the Commonwealth once again, we must say with one voice and that voice must be clear, and we should say:

Pakistan, if you call yourself a modern-day society, then free those liberties. Pakistan, if you call yourself a progressive society, let there be freedom of worship in your country.

Benazir Bhutto, if you are a forward-looking leader of the future, then accept the future and let those people believe in their God in their way and allow humanity to live.

No army could kill that flame, and I believe in the bottom of my heart that the leaders of Pakistan know that the people who are burning your homes and killing your children are being manipulated by the manipulators. They think they are doing it for their religious cause, but we must also address the source. I have a very strong belief that very, very soon, because of your support, because of your strength, that day of reckoning and the day of Judgement is indeed very close. While we have been tremendously moved by the organisation in Great Britain of the massive numbers of people who have been driving us, who have been cooking our bread, who have been volunteering through the night, the youngsters with the security badges, while the hospitality in Great Britain has been second to none, I look forward to joining the hundreds of people for one of our next celebrations in the heart of Pakistan together with the Ahmadiyya Community. Assalam-o-Alaikum.'

SECRET OF LASTING FRIENDSHIP

Two friends can continue their friendship only if at times each of them does what the other says and at times each of them agrees to what the other does. If one of them always insists on the other doing whatever he says, the friendship will not last long. This is the case with God and man. At times God listens to what man says and blesses him with His Grace and at other times man accepts patiently whatever God has destined for him.

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad – The Promised Messiah)

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

(We produce an extract from an inter-faith dialogue organised by Lyle Penner. Invited were representatives of four great faiths: Neil Rose, a Jewish family therapist associated with the University of Winnipeg's Interfaith Pastoral Institute; Imad Ijaz Qamar, president of the national Ahmadiyya Muslim Association and a Manitoba Agriculture economist; Keerchi Keerthipala, a Buddhist from Sri Lanka in the Engineering Department at the University of Manitoba; and Paul Patterson, Christian pastor/ teacher of Cornerstone Christian Fellowship. A friend of Keerchi, Sarath Aveysekera, from the University of Manitoba's Department of Finance, also a Buddhist, joined later in the discussion.)

Lyle: *How does your faith shape the way of your life as an individual?*

Neil: I perceive my connection to Judaism most strongly as a family or tribal connection. From my perspective the family of Jews exist for the purpose of faith. In other terms, it's ethnicity in the service of faith. One of the reasons that I am a family therapist is that I think the family is the ultimate reality of the individual, the ultimate reality of the world. And if we can somehow help create stronger, more harmonious families, then we really are on the way of rectifying the problems of the world. I think the Western world got detoured into the illusion of individualism, not that we are not individuals, but we now see the individual as central rather than environmental. Yet a large segment of the human environment is the family.

I see myself very much as a member of a covenanted community, needing to remain faithful to the spirit of the covenant, to some degree to a lifestyle of the covenant, and also to reach out beyond the community. The next kind of plateau in human consciousness that I see is the plateau where we see ourselves as part of a large global family or village, where every person can remain in an enlightened way connected to his/ her roots or tradition. As a Jew, the key is *to be commanded*. I am called upon by what people call God to remain faithful to the covenant and to move into the world. The ultimate sense of my spirituality is to be called upon.

The central prayer of Judaism is *Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God who always was*. Anybody can hear, but this is a question of listening. As a Jew, hearing and speaking are very important. I see Judaism as an aural, oral tradition. Aural with an 'a' meaning mouth, and oral with the ear. Print is a secondary process. Print serves as a reminder of that which is spoken.

Keerchi: Buddha never claimed to be other than human. He never claimed to be *God* or inspired by *God*. The enlightenment, or the realization of the ultimate truth, can only be attained through human intelligence and human effort. He showed the way to realize ultimate truth or *nirvana*, a key word which is difficult to translate. The Buddhist way of life leads a person to a more openminded, more objective, more rational way. The Buddha himself told his disciples not to take their views to heart. Taking views to heart sometimes leads to the extreme. He said that everything is interconnected and interdependent. By avoiding extremes, one can look at things objectively, Buddha advised. If something is a discomfort, see it as a discomfort. If it is a comfort, see it as a comfort. If it is good, take it. If it causes harm, leave it.

Buddha's advice was to see and experience for yourself. When you see something and realize it to please take it. Buddha declared, *The teaching that I teach cannot be taken directly. See the teaching with a critical mind*. With this kind of freedom, Buddha allowed freedom of thought..... This freedom of thought is essential because the ultimate realization – the detachment from *lukker* (the human condition) – the liberation from this *lukker* – is achieved by one's own effort, not as a reward from a creator or a god, or from that matter, from authority.

Of course, it is true this basic message also includes non-violence, compassion and understanding. For a Buddhist, there are two basic truths. One has to develop a day-to-day life that has compassion on the one hand, wisdom on the other. All these qualities can be developed in our mind. The understanding is the most important. To see for yourself with a critical mind.

Ijaz: Within the Islamic faith, I come from the Ahmadiyya school of thought. But, generally, the basic, fundamental concept in Islam is the unity or oneness of God. *Islam* is an Arabic word which means peace and submission. A person who follows Islam is a Muslim, *the one who submits to God*, Whose proper name in the Islamic faith is Allah. To call Islam a religion is not quite right. Islam is the Way to live. It has shaped my life since the day I was born and it will continue to until I die.

Islam is not a weekend religion. It's not a Saturday or a Sunday, and not even a Friday religion (Friday's a special day for Muslims), when one says one's prayers but they have no significance. No, Islam is the way you live. There are detailed instructions in the Qoran, the holy book of Islam, and the literal Word of God. The founder of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), has left a rich tradition, both oral and written. This is how I see Islam, the Way we live. This is what a Muslim is

supposed to be. To follow what God has told us in The Book. This governs every moment of our lives.

Paul: I, since, have changed my understanding of religion. I once was a very conservative Christian, but as the years passed I got to really study the Bible, not just Christian culture. I had to make a distinction between the cultural package that Christianity was in and the original cultural package Christianity came in. In seminary, I found that some of the words of Jesus were the words of the early Church. I learned how the Bible was constructed and how the history of our faith came to be. I found that the central message of the New Testament was not accepting Jesus-christ as your personal Saviour to be saved. I discovered that the center wasn't so much whether I accepted God but that God accepted me. I understood that acceptance through looking at the life and suffering of the One whom I chose to follow.

Lyle: *How does your faith contribute to the dialogue about what it means to be human in modern culture?*

Ijaz: In the Islamic tradition, there are two obligations. The one is toward your Creator, God. The other equally important center of obligation is toward human beings. God has created human beings. Thus, if you are serving human beings, you are serving God. For example looking after your neighbour is so important in (traditional) Islamic society that it is, in effect, commanded to give your neighbor inheritance from your property. It wasn't made a law but this was the spirit. The family concept is still very central to Islam; to treat your family, your wife, your children with respect is very significant. There are some basic fundamentals of Islam. The unity of God is the first as I mentioned. Traditionally, there has been a communal obligation to pay a tax to pay for the welfare of the community. Being neighbourly and friendly are fundamentals. Education and service to humanity are also basic concepts.

Keerchi: *Lukker* is a most difficult word to translate. It has been translated as unsatisfactory nature or imperfection. We are subject to death. After death, Buddha believes that you are born again, and the cycle begins again. Thus, it is important to eradicate the root causes which keep this existence going again and again, this unsatisfactory nature called *lukker*. (This is done through meditation, through seeing deeply into reality.) The mind in Buddhist principle is like any other organ like the eye, ear or mouth. Nothing is permanent. Everything is interdependent. Buddha advised his followers to see things beyond the labels. This freedom of thought is an essential quality.

Neil: Humanization is a process that takes a long time. Judaism emphasizes, for our purposes, four things. The first is called *hesed*, translated compassion, concern, and openness. Compassion is hard to describe. It is more the spirit of doing something. To pull someone's tooth out may be violent, but in the end it turns out to be an act of kindness. *Hased* happens between people. It is the oil or lubricant of human existence. On the societal level, there is *tsedeq* living. It is a sense of rightness and correctness, trying to correct equity and balance in the world. It is hard to make rules about this as well. What is equitable in one situation is not in another.

The third is *emunah* – sometimes translated as faith but really it means faithfulness – to other people and to God. It comes from the same root as amen. When we say *amen* it means that what we are essentially saying is reliable. The fourth aspect is a key word, *qodesh*, which means to make holy or to be holy. There is nothing in this world which cannot be made holy, which cannot be transformed. The struggle is to take what is not yet holy and make it holy. How this is done is another matter, but recognizing the holiness of people is very important.

Paul: People can get so caught up in how Jesus is God. The issue is that he is so closely unified with God – so obedient and conscious – that I want to follow that kind of humanization. The predominant way this reveals itself is through Jesus being the Cross-bearer – the One who accepts suffering and takes on the suffering of others. Although all traditions have a sense of cross-likeness in them, I think that in the Christian tradition it's uniquely central. The Cross is entered into as grace.

This means we don't have to succeed or be strong. We have to trust God. Living by grace means that there is nothing that we can do to get God to accept us anyway. God is already a foundation point of reality that accepts us. And by relying on that acceptance, I can enter into reality. I can take on suffering, I can take joy and integrate them both into myself.

I need this because I don't generally accept death very easily, yet it is the one thing that I must embrace by the time I get out of here! And I don't mean this place, I mean my life.

Lyle: So what do we think of each others' perspectives?

Neil: I find myself in a very paradoxical position. In our historical pilgrimage, we have never been a world power like Christianity or Islam, or, in a sense, like Buddhism and Hinduism. We always have lived in a

context of larger civilizations. So, much of what I understand about Judaism today probably has a Christian flavour, and probably a secular flavour as well. Yet the faith that I have the most difficulty with is Christianity! I can understand Islam. In many ways, Islam is a powerful religion. There's something powerful about Islamic prayer. I can understand Buddhism. Buddhism speaks about the existential realities of life. My problem is with you (Paul). On a very human level, I see that Christians believe that Jesus is a model for life, yet I see a man, according to the official versions, who didn't live with a woman, or fathered children, and spoke about the end of the world. So what did he know about the world, or suffering, or the pain of children? How can we take such a life, a life that looked forward to the end of time, and lived in anticipation of the end of time, as a model for us today?

I understand the Jesus of history, or at least I hypothesize about him, but the Jesus of faith I don't understand. I don't see how anybody could follow such a person because such a person isn't a person if he has neither the problems of family, of society, nor of time. I like Jesus in the Gospels when he curses the fig tree because sometimes I do too. I have great empathy for *Father, why have you forsaken me?* I like the Jesus who says, *Those without sin, cast the first stone.* What I like is what I'm calling *tsedeq*. The feeding of the multitude is what I call *hesed*. He was obviously a very powerful man. I can even understand that he thought he was the Messiah because the Messianic complex is one of the professional hazards of the preacher. But I can't understand the Christ of faith because he is not a model for me.

Paul: There is not a complete disjuncture between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. If I went the route of believing in the Christ of faith but not the Jesus of history I would have great difficulty because I would be talking more from a Buddhist point of view. Christ, then, would predominantly be an idea. The Christ of faith is rooted in the one you find in the Gospels. Is the difficulty the abnormality of the life of Jesus?

Ijaz: This is where Islam comes in. It bridges the gap. According to Islam, Jesus Christ was a prophet of God. And in the Jewish tradition there is a concept of Messiah, and before he comes Elijah has to come. Jesus' answer was that John the Baptist was Elijah. That's how he proved himself. The second coming of Elijah doesn't literally mean a second physical appearance.

To carry the same story in the Islamic tradition, there was to appear a Messiah in the Islamic dispensation of God. Muslims and Jews are still waiting for the Messiah. Some would say literally that Jesus Christ is the Messiah who has to come back. The founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement,

a hundred years ago, claimed that God told him that he is that Messiah. His claim is that he came in the power and spirit of Jesus Christ. He came back metaphorically. The Islamic message, then, is the culmination of the Jewish message and the Christian tradition. It's an evolutionary process, and in Islam it reached its culmination.

Sarath: Maybe. 99% of Buddhists live a normal day-to-day life. But what we're talking about is practised at a high level by very few people. We come to the highest level of mind through meditation. I don't regularly meditate. A lot of us don't understand that state. We won't get there until we make the effort to achieve that state of mind.

Ijaz: In order to get satisfaction out of life, you should be conscious of it. Suppose you are not conscious. Has anybody been reborn?

Keerchi: The Buddhist point of view is that every moment we die and are reborn.

Paul: Are we talking about the same thing? It seems that you're talking about the structure of human existence and the continuation of life, whereas we, in the more prophetic traditions, are talking about something else.

Ijaz: Religion, to me, is the way you establish your relationship with God. There is the Jewish way, the Christian way, the Islamic way, and up to five minutes ago, I thought Buddhism was another way to God! But I'm hearing you say that there is no concept of God in Buddhism.

Paul: There is familiarity in what Buddhism is saying. I would see Christ as moving in the path of Buddhahood. This is the difference between what Neil was talking about. I see Christ moving towards detachment from human existence, and I see this very positively, and more in line with the Buddhist perspective in a sense. Maybe we have something in common. Christ follows a similar way, except that Jesus did have a concept of a personal God and a relationship with Him. I don't know how to put that together.

Sarath: Buddha, though, 2500 years ago, came to a state of mind that he could look into his past – even hundreds and hundreds of years. he developed a mental state in which he could see that he had gone through successive lives. This is detachment.

Paul: Jesus was in a sense detached from his family.

Sarath: In that sense you can make an argument that Jesus was on his

way. But to be like Buddha cannot be done in one generation. It's a very long process.

Paul: Christians would go crazy to think that Christ was in another life!

Ijaz: About the Cross. In Islam, there simply is no concept of vicarious death or atonement. This is diametrically opposed to the Christian view that Christ *died for our sins*. In Islam, everyone bears one's own cross. Salvation is to recognize God in total submission. Muhammad (peace be on him) is very important but he isn't the person we worship. He only gives some guidelines as Jesus and Moses gave guidelines. The Quran contains all the teachings of life one can imagine.

Paul: How does one live a life of surrender?

Ijaz: Only through your faith and positive action. There is no Cross.

Paul: What if you mess up? What if you don't cut it?

Ijaz: I could ask you the same thing. There is accountability. If you break the law, you are punished according to the severity of the action.

Paul: Aren't we fairly severely in trouble? I don't live up to all my teachings. I'm not going to kid myself for a minute.

Ijaz: Don't you preach what I preach?

Paul: I don't preach that. There is no possibility for me to live exactly like Jesus. The focal point of belief is love, devotion, imitation, following the path. Action is a part of that but not so central. What do you do with people who can't live up to the law?

Ijaz: They are punished. But eventually, everybody will obey and everybody will be in spiritual bliss.

80 YEARS AGO

MARY'S PARENTAGE

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

One wonders at the blindness of those who say that according to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Mary, mother of Jesus, was the sister of Moses, the Law-giver. Any one who reads the Holy Quran will see that it recognises the long distance of time which separates Jesus from Moses, yet it is asserted that the Holy Prophet regarded Jesus as the nephew of Moses. Nothing can be more absurd! This error, it is said, probably arose out of a Jewish legend that *the angel of death had no power over Mary, Moses' sister, that she died with the kiss of the Lord, and that no insect or worm could touch her person*. This story, it is assumed, led the Holy Prophet to think that Mary, mother of Jesus, was the same Mary over whom the angel of death had no power and that she lived down to the Christian era to become the mother of Jesus. The absurdity of this explanation is too gross to need any comment.

The Christians assume that the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not know even this that more than one person could bear the same name and that when he heard that Jesus' mother was Mary, which was the name of Moses' sister too, he did not know how to solve this problem except by supposing that Moses' sister, Mary, must have survived to the Christian era. But what did he think of Mary the Copt, who was sent to him by Muckoukas, the Christian king of Egypt? Did he think her also to be Moses' sister, that had survived to his own time?

Really, the ignorance which they impute to the Holy Prophet reverts to their own selves. The verses on the basis of which it is asserted that according to the Holy Prophet, Mary, mother of Jesus, was Moses' sister are the following. In Surah Mariam we are told that after the birth of the Holy Child, the people came to her and said, *O Sister of Aaron, thy father was not a bad man, neither was thy mother a wicked woman*. Elsewhere she is spoken of as Mary, daughter of Imran. These verses have led the Christian critics to conclude that the Holy Prophet regarded Mary as the sister of Moses, brother of Aaron. So great is the prejudice of the Christian critics against Islam that while attacking the Holy Quran, they become forgetful even of their own scriptures. If the expressions *daughter of Imran* and *sister of Aaron* are open to objection, there are similar expressions in the Gospels which must also be held as objectionable. In Matt. I, 20 we read: *Behold the*

angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph son of David, In chapter IX, 27 of the same Gospel, we have: *And as Jesus passed from thence, there followed him two blind men crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, O son of David.* Again *And all the multitudes were amazed and said: Is not this the 'Son of David?'* (Matt. XII, 23). Many more expressions of this type might be quoted but the foregoing three will suffice. Now what would the Christians think of the man who, on the score of these expressions, should accuse the Gospel writers of making grossly inaccurate statements by representing David as the father of Joseph and Jesus and representing the latter two as brothers, being the sons of one and the same father? The Christian would certainly call such a man a fool. The multitudes called Jesus son of David because it was a custom among the people to call a man after the name of a distinguished ancestor. For the same reason Mary was called sister of Aaron and daughter of Imran, and if it is foolish to object to the term, *son of David*, when used with reference to Jesus and Joseph, it is equally foolish to object to the expressions *daughter of Imran* and *sister of Aaron*, when used with regard to Mary. If the people addressed Mary as the sister of Aaron, they only followed their national custom and it is as foolish to say that the Holy Quran confounds Mary, mother of Jesus, with Mary, sister of Moses, as to say that the Gospels represent Joseph husband of Mary and Jesus son of Mary, as brothers, both being spoken of as the sons of David, king of the Jews. Though almost all Christian critics have blindly objected to the use of these terms with regard to Mary, the natural and true explanation given above has suggested itself to some of the Christian writers. Rodwell says in a foot-note on page 113, *If Aaron the brother of Moses be meant, Mary may be called his sister, either because she was of the Levitical race, or by way of comparison.*

Besides, the Christians would have had some right to object to the terms *daughter of Imran* and *sister of Aaron* used with regard to Mary, if they had known who the parents of Mary were. They themselves are in absolute darkness as to the parentage of Mary, but when the Holy Quran speaks of her as *daughter of Imran*, they take an exception to it, as if they knew who her father was. Being themselves ignorant of the name of Mary's father, they had no right to object to the Quranic expressions, even if they were taken too literally, unless they showed that among the Jews there was only one Imran (Heb. Amram) and only one Aaron and they were the father and the brother of Moses, the law-giver, respectively. When they cannot show this, when, as a matter of fact, both these names were common among the Jews, and when they themselves are ignorant of Mary's parentage, is it not foolish for them to object to the use of these expressions, even if the expressions be interpreted in the way in which

they interpret them? To quote once more from the Gospels, in Matthew I,16 we read *And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.* From this quotation it appears that Mary, mother of Jesus, was the wife of Joseph and that Joseph was the son of Jacob. Should we then conclude that this verse represents Mary, mother of Jesus, as the wife of that Joseph that was cast into a well and sold as a slave in Egypt, and should we say that this conclusion is strengthened by the fact that Joseph, husband of Mary, is spoken of as the son of Jacob? If it is foolish to draw such a conclusion from the verse quoted above, it is equally foolish to say that wherever the names Aaron and Imran (Amram) occur as the names of a son and a father, they must be taken as referring to the Aaron and the Amram who were respectively the brother and the father of Moses. In the verse quoted above the names Joseph and Jacob are mentioned as the names of a son and a father, but they do not refer to the Joseph and the Jacob that were great-grandson and grandson of Abraham respectively. Thus the objection of the Christian critics must be rejected as foolish even if we interpret the words of the Holy Quran in the way in which the Christian critics interpret them. That the Christians are ignorant of the parentage of Mary, mother of Jesus, is apparent from the following quotation from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.XV, page 590:

Of her (Mary's) parentage nothing is recorded in any extant historical document of the first century, for the geneology in Luke III, (of I,27) is manifestly that of Joseph.

The readers have seen the absurdity of the Christian objection which has been just discussed and it is a pity that almost all Christian writers (and among them are such eminent men as professor Noldeke) who have dealt with the subject, have fallen into this deplorable error. From this the reader may judge the worth of their other objections against Islam. They may be otherwise eminent critics, but they behave like children when they deal with Islam. Disappointing as the conduct of these critics of Islam is, we believe that among those who now judge Islam and its Holy Founder (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) by the portraits drawn by ignorant Christians, there will be many that will welcome the truth when they learn it.

WHY I BELIEVE IN GOD

(S. M. Shahab Ahmad)

The simplest answer to this question is that I believe in God because there is a God. Unfortunately, people have remained divided on this issue for a long time. One group believes in God and the other denies His existence.

An objection raised against the existence of God by the atheists is that we cannot see God as we see other objects around us. The simplest answer to this question is that our eyes see material objects and God is not a material being.

Human beings have been provided with five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste; and to acquire knowledge of objects around us we have to use all the five senses. We use our eyes to perceive shapes and colours, to differentiate voices we use our ears, and to taste food we use our tongue etc. That is to say we have to use the appropriate sense organs.

It is a fact that each sense organ has a limit and works within a range. The eyes cannot see microscopic objects or the whole of very large objects. Also, the eyes can see violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red colours and their mixtures, but not ultra violet and infra red rays, which are parts of the spectrum. Similarly, human ears listen to sound waves between the frequencies: 20 to 20,000 cycles per second; but not beyond or below this range. Nevertheless it is a scientific fact that sound waves less than 20 cycles per second and more than 20,000 cycles per second do exist. Can any rational man deny the existence of microscopic objects, ultra violet and infra red rays, or sound waves having frequencies less than 20 cycles per second and more than 20,000 cycles per second if he cannot see or hear them? Definitely not.

In addition, we know so many things around us by inference and do not depend upon any sense organ e.g; love, anger etc. We see a mother cuddling her child, an angry person in action, but not love and anger as such. We infer about them.

The Holy Quran has answered most beautifully the question: *Why is God not visible to the eyes, or why cannot He be perceived by any of the sense organs?* in the following verse:

We are closer to him than his jugular vein (50:17)

Has any one seen his jugular vein? Based upon this verse of the Holy Quran, the Soofis say that God is not visible to man because He is nearer to him than the nearest object and farther from him than the farthest object. (No one can see an object too close to him or too far away from him).

To find God through the crude sense organs is a vain attempt. Says the Holy Quran:

*Eyes cannot reach Him, but He manifests Himself before the eyes.
He is the imperceptible, the All-Aware. (6:104)*

The Holy Quran repeatedly claims that God alone is the Creator of the universe. In answer, the atheists say that if God has created the universe, then who has created God? This objection is based upon a wrong generalization, which can be answered in the following ways: All scientific principles and rules have a limit and cannot be applied in every situation. For example, if one pours liquids in vessels of different shapes, it takes the shape of the vessel. Therefore, it is inferred that liquids change their shape according to the shape of the containers or vessels. But this rule is not applicable to solids. A solid object retains its own shape regardless of the shape of the containers. Both liquids and solids are material objects, but there are two different sets of rules for each of them. A rule applicable to liquids is not valid in the case of solids and the vice versa. When such is the case within the material bodies, then how can we generalize a rule based upon material facts to God, Who is not a material being?

The point to be realized is that the universe has been created and what is created needs a Creator. But One Who is the Creator and Eternal does not need another Creator.

Therefore the claim of the Holy Quran truly confirms:

All types of perfect praise belong to Allah alone, the Creator, the Sustainer and Lord of the worlds (1:2)

Again the Holy Quran says:

Say, He is Allah, the One! Allah, the Independant and Besought of all. (112:2-3)

All things and beings depend upon God and He is Independent and Besought of all. All have need of Him and He has need of none. He needed the help of no being or material to create the universe.

That every thing other than God is dependent is not a hollow claim. The

following examples support it. Animals, including man, need food, water, air, heat, light etc. for their survival. Plants depend upon water, air, heat, light etc. The earth is dependent upon the sun, the moon and a number of stars, which provide heat, light etc. to the earth. The sun, in order to maintain its volume, needs gases which it takes from other stars. In fact, nothing in the universe is complete in itself. not even the smallest atom. Nothing is self-subsisting; every thing depends on some other thing for its existence. God alone is such a Being Who depends on no being or thing. In short, every thing in this world or in other worlds needs a Creator and Sustainer, and He is God.

LAW OF WITNESS

A great proof in support of the existence of God is the law of witness. In material dealings and judgments, we proceed on positive statements. The judge records statements from those who were witnesses to the incident, not from those who were not. An example will clarify this. Suppose a number of persons are sitting in a house and one of their friends passes by the house. Some persons sitting in the house see him and some do not. Suppose after a while the question arises: *Has their friend passed by the house?* The statement of those who have seen him passing will be accepted, not the statement of those who did not see him. There may have been a number of reasons for not seeing him.

Similar is the case of seeing God. One group says that he has seen God, the other group says he has not. One statement is positive, the other negative. And according to the law of witness, acceptable even to the atheists, the first statement is acceptable and valid, not the second.

The atheists or those who do not believe in God cannot say that there is no God. The utmost they can say is that they have not seen God, and this is not a valid statement.

Further, while recording statements by witnesses their character is given due importance. The judge wants complete satisfaction about the character of the witnesses whose statements he records. He does not record statements of persons of doubtful character. This law also goes in favour of those who say that they have seen God.

If we look into the history of the Holy Prophets (peace be on them) then it is very clear that their pious characters were acceptable to those around them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) before he was called to the ministry was given the titles of *trustworthy* and *truthful* by his fellow citizens.

Then during his ministry and in the tooth of opposition, the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) challenges his opponents:

I have indeed lived among you a whole life time before this. Will you not then understand? (10:17)

Silence was the only answer of the opponents.

The verse embodies an infalliable criterion to test the truth of a claimant to Prophethood. If the life of a prophet before he lays claims to Prophethood presents an extraordinarily high standard of truthfulness and integrity and between that period and his claim to Prophethood there is no interval during which it might be supposed that he has fallen from that high standard of moral excellence, then his claim to Prophethood must be accepted as that of a highly moral and truthful man. Naturally, a person confirmed in a certain course of conduct through habit or temperament takes a long time to develop in himself a major change for either good or evil. How then could the Prophet of Islam suddenly turn into an impostor when all his lifetime prior to his claim to Prophethood had been singularly upright?

Another example in this connection is that of the Prophet Salih (peace be on him). Says the Holy Quran:

They said, O' Salih, thou wast among us one in whom we placed our hopes. (11:63)

This verse clearly indicates the high hopes the people of Sahih expected from him. And it was possible only when they were impressed by his character.

In this age, even the bitter opponents of the Promised Messiah (peace on him) could not point out any spot in his character.

Then how come that a group of pious persons can make a false statement that there is a God. On the contrary, unlike the Prophets (peace be on them), there is no record about good character and high morale of the leaders of atheism. Thus the law of witness goes in favour of the Prophets, who say that they have seen God.

KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE:

What is said above leads to a simple rule of logic i.e; 'If one does not know about some thing, it does not mean that the thing does not exist'. Follow this, the atheists or the non-believers cannot say that there is no God. The utmost they can say is that they do not know God. They were

unsuccessful candidates, whereas the Prophets, who saw God, were the successful ones. In every branch of learning the statement of the successful candidate is accepted, not of the unsuccessful one. An example from a very important field of science will illustrate the principle.

About a century ago, the great Russian scientist Dmitri Mendeleev (1834-1907) presented the Periodic Table before the scientists. In that Table he placed a number of elements known at that time at their proper places and mentioned their properties. In addition, he placed in the Table a number of elements unknown at that time at their hypothetical places and mentioned their properties. Scientists started their research to discover those unknown elements. The majority of them failed. However, a few of them discovered those elements one by one. Do the scientists, and even the non-scientists give any importance to the researches of the scientists who could not find the unknown elements? Definitely not. Recognition is given to the researches of the successful candidates only.

Similar is the case of the Holy Prophets (peace be on them) and the atheists. The Prophets were successful candidates. Therefore, their finding that there is a God is acceptable. Whereas the atheists were non-successful. Therefore their statement is not acceptable.

As a matter of fact, the development of human knowledge depends upon the transfer of learning. One scholar discovers a fact. Others base their research upon it and proceed further. Had it not been so, human knowledge could never develop. It is a weakness of the animals that they do not benefit by transfer of knowledge. But human beings do which is their strength. Then why not accept the statement, based upon success, that there is a God.

DOMINANCE OF THE BELIEVERS OVER THE NON-BELIEVERS

The Holy Quran says:

Every people has had its guide. (13:8)

There is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent. (35:25)

We did raise among every people a Messenger. (16:37)

Allah has decreed: Most surely, it is I Who will prevail, I and My Messengers. (58:22)

What fact do these verses point to? They point to the fact that although there have been believers and non-believers the former have always

outnumbered the latter. It is admitted even by the atheists. E Spenser, who in a way is supposed to be the founder of atheism, admits that a belief very popular among the masses cannot be false. This is also a fact that many atheists at the time of their death turn doubtful about their faith. But this is not true with the believers.

PERFECT ORDER IN THE UNIVERSE

I will not repeat that the universe needs a Creator, but the perfection in the universe is pointed to. Says the Holy Quran:

Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom and He has the power to do all that He wills, Who has created death and life that He might try you which of you is best in conduct. He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving, Who has created the seven heavens in order. Thou canst not discover a flaw in the creation of the Gracious One. Then look again: Seest thou any disparity? Look again, and yet again, thy sight will return to thee frustrated and fatigued. (67:25)

No one has been able to point out any disparity in God's creation. On the other hand, scientists have admitted the testimony of the Holy Quran. To quote Flint:

Wonderful indeed is God's creation. The solar system of which our earth is but a small member is vast, varied and orderly and yet this system is but one of hundreds of millions of systems, some of which are incalculably larger than it, yet the countless millions of suns and stars are so arranged and distributed in relation to one another as to produce everywhere harmony and beauty. The order that covers and pervades the universe is obvious to the ordinary naked eye, and is spread far beyond the range of disciplined vision, assisted by all the instruments and appliances which science and art have been able to invent.

That is to say the high order of the universe points to a Supreme Designer.

MORAL PROOF

Moral qualities of man point to God. Man by nature is good and is inclined towards it. He repents if he deviates from this natural path. The Holy Quran points to this fact in the following verses:

Nay, I swear by the self-accusing soul that the Day of Judgement is a certainty (75:3)

That is to say, I call to witness the self that reproves itself for every vice

and intemperance.

Again:

And by the soul and its perfection. And He revealed to it the ways of evil and the ways of righteousness. (91:8-9)

A.G.Bilmore, a Christian philosopher, has taken the good nature of man as a proof of the existence of God. He says that we are attracted towards beauty and good things, but we do not know who has implanted this desire in our hearts. Therefore, it has to be admitted that some other being has implanted such desires.

Before I conclude my lecture, I would like to answer the question: *Why some people could find God and others could not?* The answer is that those who could find God adopted the right means, and others did not. This in itself is a lengthy topic, therefore, I will give the simplest answer. Any person who sincerely tries to find God should call Him, to be manifested, and He will. The Prophets and other pious persons (May Allah be pleased with them) did it, whereas the other group did not. As a matter of fact, God for His discovery does not depend upon human efforts. He reveals Himself to His servants. The Holy Quran says:

Eyes cannot reach Him, but He manifests Himself before the eyes. He is the imperceptible, the All-Aware. (6:104)

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

HOLY PROPHET ON MODESTY

Modesty is part and parcel of faith.

Meekness and modesty are two branches of Iman (faith); and vain talking and embellishing are two branches of hypocrisy.

True modesty is the source of all virtues.

Modesty and chastity are parts of the Faith.

SRI KRISHNA – PROPHET OF GOD

(Muhammad Umar, Madras)

Almighty God has given the following basic teaching in the Holy Quran:

*And there is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent.
(35:25)*

And there is a guide for every people. (13:8)

In the light of this teaching, it is our belief that Sri Krishan Maharaj, who is regarded as an Avatar (Messiah) by millions of people, was indeed a true Messenger of God.

The Holy Quran has also said:

And We did send Messengers before thee, of them are some whom We have mentioned to thee, and of them there are some whom We have not mentioned to thee. (40:79)

The following comment has been made on the verse quoted above, in the Commentary Al-Tanzil, Vol2, page 65:

Hazrat Ali (Allah be pleased with him) reports that certainly Almighty God had also raised a prophet whose colour was black and this prophet is one of those not mentioned in the Holy Quran.

The same comment is also made in the Commentary Kashaf written by Allama Zamkhasari.

We Ahmadis, believe in Hazrat Krishanji Maharaj (peace be on him) because our lord and master the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said:

In India there was a prophet who was of black colour whose name was Kahina (Kanhayya i.e; Sri Krishna)

In the presence of such a clear statement of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), we are compelled to believe that this Avatar who appeared in India, is a true Prophet and Messenger of God. Therefore when we mention his name we should say *peace be on him*.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, (peace be on him)

who was the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, has stated:

Raja Krishna, as it has been revealed to me, was certainly such a perfect man that his parallel is not to be found among the Rishis and Avatars of the Hindus. He was the Avatar, or the true Prophet, of his time on whom the Holy Ghost had descended. He was made triumphant and glorious by God. He cleansed Arya Varta (India) from evils. He was really a Prophet of his age. Many things which he taught were corrupted afterwards. He was replete with the love of God. He was a friend of virtue and an enemy of vice.

(Lecture delivered at Sialkot in 1904).

Also in his book, *Tohfa-e-Qaisariyya*, Hazrat Ahmad, peace be on him, has discussed the point that all the spiritual leaders who ever lived on this earth, who were accepted as true prophets by millions of men, who won the respect of a large portion of the human race and who were held in esteem for a long period of time, were indeed true prophets of God. If they had not been sent by God, they would not have found such an acceptance. An impostor fails in his enterprise and is destroyed.

After the declaration by the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, many Muslim leaders and divines began to acknowledge that Sri Krishna (peace be on him) was a Divine Messenger of his time. Thus Hazrat Khwaja Hasan Nizami says in his book *Krishan Biti*:

Of all the Avatars and Reformers that appeared in India, Sri Krishna distinguished himself by his various noble qualities. (page 39)

Similarly, Syed Akhtar Mohani, writes in one of his articles:

In my opinion, he (Sri Krishna) was a chosen Avatar. He was sent by God for the guidance of the world. It is incumbent on everyone to respect and honour him.

I revere Hazrat Sri Krishna (peace be on him) also because the Holy Quran has given us the following guidance:

And We did raise among every people a Messenger preaching: Worship Allah and shun the Evil One. (16:37)

He sends down the angels with revelation by His command on whomsoever of His servants He pleases, saying: Warn people that there is no God but I, so take Me alone for your Protector. (16:3)

I have studied the Bhagvad Gita (Hindu scripture). I have found that

there is clear teaching of the Oneness of God in it. For example, Sri Krishna says:

Oh Arjun! Put yourself in the beam of the same One God; as a result of this you will get permanent peace and tranquility.

The Holy Quran has given the same teaching. It says:

And thou, O soul at peace! Return to thy Lord well pleased with Him and He well pleased with thee. So enter thou among My chosen servants, And enter thou My Garden. (89:28-31)

There is a famous Mantar (verse) of the Hindus which states:

Brahma was also a master, Vishnu was also a master. But in the real sense the master who is worthy of worship is our guide Bram Brahma Parameshwar. Therefore I bow down my head before this one and only one God.

What an excellent teaching the Hindu religion is placing before us!

In an other place it is stated:

He Who has many attributes, Who runs the entire world, Who has the Power over the whole world and nourishes all — such a God do I worship.

Islam also teaches the same thing. Sri Krishna Maharaj has enumerated the same attributes of Almighty God which are mentioned in the Holy Quran; He says:

He is the aim of man's life. He is the Nourisher. He is the Master. He is the Witness. He is the place of refuge and rescue. He is the real friend. He is the First and the Last. He is the treasure. He is the Living and He sustains all. (Bhagvad Gita 9:18)

Compare this with the excellent attributes of God mentioned in the Holy Quran:

And that to thy Lord do all things ultimately go. (53:43)

The Nourisher of all the worlds. (1:2)

To whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is Witness over all things. (85:10)

There is no refuge from Allah save unto Himself. (9:118)

Allah is the Friend of those who believe. (2:258)

He is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden; and He knows all things full well. (57:4)

And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth. (63:8)

Allah – there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. (2:256)

In short, Sri Krishna (peace be on him) has narrated the same attributes of Almighty God which are mentioned in the Holy Quran.

It follows from these facts that our acceptance of Sri Krishna (peace be on him) as a Prophet of God and our love for him, is completely in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Quran.

I would like to answer a question which many people have asked me. These days, the history of Sri Krishna (peace be on him) is being shown on the television network of India. In this programme, a view is also shown of some naked ladies taking a bath in a pool of water. Near the pool on a tree, Sri Krishna is seated holding the dresses of the ladies. Seeing them he plays the flute in his hand. The women keep on asking him for their dresses. It has been asked whether such a conduct is worthy of a prophet of God when even an ordinary person is ashamed to behave in this way. This objection is based on a misunderstanding. Actually this describes a situation in pictorial language. Even the Hindus who do not understand the philosophy behind it evade this issue. Here the women represent worldly people, because it is said that the seeker of worldly things is akin to a woman. The picture therefore signifies that the people at the time of Sri Krishna (peace be on him) hankered after the material world and were spiritually naked, i.e; devoid of Godliness and righteousness. The Holy Quran has described righteousness as a garment:

but the garment of righteousness – that is the best. (7:27)

Hazrat Sri Krishna (peace be on him) came to give his people the garment of righteousness. The picture does not imply that Hazrat Sri Krishna snatched away the dresses of the women and had climbed up the tree. It only signifies that he came to clothe the spiritually naked people of his age with the garment of righteousness.

The tree symbolizes *Kalima Tayyiba*, i.e; good word. The Holy Quran says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَرَّغَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا
ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

*Dost thou not see how Allah sets forth the similitude of a good word?
It is like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches reach
into heaven. (14:25)*

The tree also signifies spiritual system. Thus Hazrat Sri Krishna (peace be on him) was the founder of the spiritual system established by God Almighty in his time.

The flute also has a deep meaning. It signifies the word of God which affects the heart and brain. It gives the same sound which the flute player desires and does not give any sound independently. In this manner, Almighty God Himself declares about the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him):

*Nor does he speak out of his own desire. It is nothing but pure
révelation that has been revealed by God. (53:4,5)*

In short, all Prophets and Messengers are like the flutes of God. Hazrat Maulana Rumi says:

*God's Avatars (or Messengers) are the flutes of God into which God
Alimghty puts His voice so that people may go to Him after hearing
the voice.*

I would now like to draw attention towards a prophecy of Hazrat Sri Krishna which we hear every week on the Indian television in the Mahabharat Programme:

*Whenever there is decay of Dharma (i.e. religion) and there is
exaltation of Adharma (i.e. irreligion) then for the protection of the
poor and the good and for the destruction of the evil doer, I shall
appear from age to age.*

At the present time everyone is expecting that a reformer would appear according to the prophecy. This is a time of darkest vice when a reformer is greatly needed. Reviewing the present state of affairs, the renowned philosopher and the former President of India, Dr. Radhakrishnan had said:

*Today that time has come when we are producing the means of
destroying the culture of the world which we have established
through the efforts of the centuries. Today the blood of man has
become very cheap and the danger of violence has increased. If we*

have lost our confidence in the culture and the values of human life and we have forgotten God, then a prophet should appear to make us aware that these values should be restored. If we fail to heed the voice of God, then we would have the way for our collective destruction. (Pratap Jalandhar dated 27 October 1961).

In the same way, the magazine Milap in its issue of Janam Astami states:

Oh! the flute player! We will keep entreating to you: Come! Come! Please hurry up and come! Now what has remained in India! The entire army of modern kauravas has appeared with all its might: fraudulent methods, bribes, sins of smuggling and ill-gotten wealth, the evil of prostitution; the deception of false smiles and crocodile tears, pickpocketing, gambling, drunkenness, etc. Armed with the weapons of all these evils and tortures, O Sudharsan! the kauravas are ravaging us and striking us, leaving us weeping and crying for help. They are making us tremble and shudder. What! Does this look nice to you? O God, don't you have mercy for us. Do come soon, O Merciful! (The Daily Milap dated 7 September 1966).

Almighty God did listen to such painful and timely cries and according to His promise He sent His Messenger as the Second Advent of Sri Krishna in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India (peace be on him). He announced:

*I am the heavenly water which came at its appointed time,
I am the light of God which brought forth the day.*

Hence I appeal to my Hindu brethren that just as we, the members of the Ahmadiyya Community, believe in the first advent of Sri Krishna as a prophet of God and use the epithet *peace be on him*; in the same way, they should study thoughtfully the teachings of the Divine Reformer who has come in this age in fulfilment of the prophecy of Sri Krishna (*peace be on him*) and accept the truth. In this way they would become believers of both the Krishnas, namely, the first Sri Krishna and the second Krishna who has appeared in our time. May God enable all to do so, Ameen.

What is Islam?

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

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

This is Islam which is wrongly called Muhammadanism.

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

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

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

The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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

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

During more than eighty-eight years the message of Islam has been conveyed through this magazine to millions of readers and many fortunate persons have recognized the truth of Islam and accepted it through its study.

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

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

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

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

