بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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Publisher:
Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah

Distribution:
Muhammad Hanif

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ISSN No: 0034-6721

Editorial

January 2002 marks the first centenary of the *Review of Religions*. This English magazine was started by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) of Qadian, India (1835-1908). Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as), who claimed under divine guidance that he was the Promised Messiah(as) and World Reformer awaited by all revealed religions of the world.

The twentieth century commenced with a proposal for the establishment of the *Review of Religions*. Right from the very beginning, the Promised Messiah(as) had a deep interest in the propagation of Islam in Western countries. It is related that once a follower brought glad tidings of his victory in a debate and the Promised Messiah(as) stated, 'I thought that you have brought the news that Europe has become Muslim'. He had already been a recipient of prophecies predicting that his writings would be published in large quantities in Europe. He was informed that impressed by such writings, hundreds of thousands of Englishmen would embrace Islam even though at that time only a few advertisements and some books had been translated into the English language and had found their way into Europe and America. Nevertheless, this was a significant project. Ever since the commencement of his claim to be the Promised Messiah(as), he had desired that an English language magazine should be launched to spread the voice of Islam in the West in which translations of articles he had penned in support of Islam should be published.

After consulting some of his volunteers conversant with the English language, on 15 January 1901, the Promised Messiah(as) announced the establishment of an English magazine under the joint editorship of Maulawi Muhammad Ali sahib MA and Khawaja Kamaluddin sahib, BA, Pleader Peshawar. To set this magazine on a sound footing, the community's members met on 31 March 1901 and 1 April 1901 in Masjid Aqsa and Masjid

Mubarak, Qadian, India. It was mutually agreed that a permanent board called 'Anjuman Isha'at Islam' be established for the English magazine and the translation of the books of the Promised Messiah(as). The Promised Messiah(as) himself was the Chairman and the remaining board was made up of the following:

President
Hadhrat Maulawi Nuruddin sahib

Vice President
Maulawi Abdul Karim Sialkoti sahib

Secretary
Mr Khawaja Kamaluddin

Assistant Secretary
Maulawi Muhammad Ali sahib

Financial Secretary
Mr Sheikh Rahmatullah Malik of Bombay House

Accountant
Mr Mian Tajdin Lahori

The board of directors chose the *Review of Religions* as the name of the English magazine and selected Lahore as its head office. A committee was formed to draft the constitution. The Anjuman also decided on 24 November 1901 that if three hundred subscribers were obtained, an Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions* would also be launched.

These then are the details of the humble beginning of this longest running Muslim monthly magazine in the English language. It was the first publication body established under the supervision of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. When the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya was established in early 1906, this vehicle along with other departments was absorbed in the new entity.

Both English and Urdu editions of the *Review of Religions* proposed by the Promised Messiah(as) commenced in January 1902. Whereas the English edition continued to be published for some time from Lahore, the first edition of the Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions* was published from the Faiz A'am Lahore Press and after that began to be published from Mr Shaikh Yaqoob Ali's Anwaar Ahmadiyya Press of Qadian.

We will dwell on the impact of the *Review of Religions* on its readers and their favourable comments in some future edition.

Coming back to today, as readers would have no doubt observed we have introduced a few changes. Firstly, the size has shrunk to the commercial standard A5. We prefer the traditional A4 but soem readers requested a handy size. The cover has a more comprehensive coverage of the contents amid a splash of colour. As for the contents themselves, we had certain outstanding commitments and promised scheduling but past this stage it is our intention to go back to basics and revive the prime objective of this magazine. We also intend to do our utmost to produce 12 editions each year so that no subscriber feelss short-changed.

Finally, I wish to thank my predecessor, Mr Rafiq Ahmed Hayat, who earlier last year took over the additional responsibilities of the national president of the entire community in the United Kingdom. His contribution to the *Review of Religions* in building up an excellent team of editors and in both the cover and the contents of short and varied articles has left an unforgettable mark.

I step into his shoes conscious that I carry a heavy responsibility to propel this magazine into the new centenary. I can but request the prayers of the readers that God Almighty enables me to contribute a little to the purpose for which this magazine was established a century ago.

We wish a very happy New Year to all our readers.

Mansoor Ahmed Shah

Notes & Comments

RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

by Salim A. Malik - UK

In this modern world, people are discovering the richness of other faiths and religious traditions without abandoning their own faith. Many Christians and people of other faiths learn meditation from Buddhists. Jews feel no qualms about reading the modernist theologians like Paul Tillich and Christians readily read Jewish philosophers. But one religion seems to have been excluded from the circle of goodwill for the last one thousand years. The Western world has created a false image of Islam which has no relationship with reality. The intensity and continuity of this distortion is such that it shows no signs of abating even in this liberal and tolerant climate of today's world. The West conveniently ignores the fact that Islam had for centuries a better record of tolerance than Christianity or Judaism. The Holy Qur'an, fourteen hundred years ago, gave women the rights that European women did not receive until the 19th century. But some of the extremist clerics of Islam today have also made their contribution in perpetuating this vision of extremism and intolerance. These Don Quixotes have had their tilt at their perceived windmills for long enough to distort the truth and, in so doing, they changed the Holy Word into Holy War. It says in the Holy Qur'an,

> *They pervert the words from their proper places and have forgotten a good part of that which they were exhorted.*
> (Ch.5:v.14)

The zealots and fanatics have, consciously, placed mankind at large at the mercy of those groups who had no general concern for life other than their own. They are only few and in minority, and, in no way

represent the true Muslim majority. As Edmund Burke wrote: '*Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importune clink, while thousands of great cattle repos-ing beneath the shake of an oak chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field.'*

This phenomenon of fanaticism and extremism is relatively new in Islam. It is not the religion but the purveyors of religion who have traditionally brought religions in disrepute. If we read the dismal history of religious hatred, we see that voices of reason have traditionally been drowned by the ignorant prejudice. Torrents of blood have been shed in the name of every religion, deity, ideology, faith, order and political system. It is sufficient to compel one to form a conclusion that mankind will distort and pervert any and every concept to justify and sanction premeditated violence

The Jewish religion is deeply rooted in the wrath of God, in Judgment and punishment – according to a 'partly negotiated' but exclusive and judicial contract. The Christian religion brought a less exacting but attainable image of the Almighty, caring tenderly for all people. The teachings were, at once, more humane and amenable to human nature. Christianity, in fact, expanded Judaism into a doctrine acceptable to vast numbers of people but incapable of practicable application.

One of the greatest flowerings of human achievement, both in sciences, literature, poetry and even human hygiene, came with the spread of Islam and the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Beginning as a powerful monotheistic faith in Arabia, Islam soon extended westward through Africa to Gibraltar and Spain and eastward as far as Indonesia. It formed a loosely formed community held by religious order under a highly cultivated, magnanimous and tolerant semi-theocratic rule. It suited all nations and all faiths that lived under this benevolent system. Islam is a remarkably simple religion to follow. The

Holy Qur'an gives the definition of the believer as:

> *Who believe in the unseen and observe prayer and spend out of what we have provided for them: who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and that which was revealed before you and they have firm faith in the Hereafter. It is they who follow the guidance from their Lord and it is they who shall prosper.*
> (Chapter 2: verses 4-6)

The Holy Qur'an explains further:

> *This Messenger of Ours believes in that which has been revealed to him from his Lord and so do the believers; all of them believe in Allah and His angels and in His Books and in His Messengers, saying, 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers', and they say, 'We have heard and we are obedient. Our Lord! We implore thy forgiveness and to thee is our return.*
> (Ch.2: v.286)

The Holy Qur'an also declared:

> *There should be no compulsion in religion.*
> (Ch.2:v.257)

The unique feature of Islam is that a Muslim has to believe in all the Messengers of the past be they from Judaic dispensation or from outside the Abrahamic traditions. Islam also, firmly, repudiates any intolerance of other faiths. That is why throughout Islamic history, Islamic judges have gone out of their way to protect the rights of the people of other religions and Muslim scholars have insisted on the sacred right to freedom of expression and faith as strenuously as any Western liberal.

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi(as) of this age declared more than hundred years ago, in his book *A Message of Peace*:

> *'Irrespective of whether we are Hindus or Muslim, and though we have many differences, we believe in God who has created this world and all that is contained in it. We also claim*

commonality as human beings and we live in one country as neighbours. It is our duty that we should become friends with a clear conscience and honest intentions. We should sympathise with each other on all matters temporal or religious. My Friends! That faith is no faith that does not teach sympathy for mankind. A human being is not human unless he displays some element of sympathy. Our God has made no distinction in any nation. Whatever faculties were given to the ancient nations have been given to the Arabian, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, European and American nations. The earth serves as a common ground for all and the sun, the moon and the stars perform common service for all mankind. These Divine Manifestation teach us that we should, also treat each other equally, with amity and with tolerance. Narrow-mindedness or hard-heartedness have no place in human relations.'

The revival of Islam started with the advent of the Promised Messiah(as) and the Mahdi and his Ahmadiyya Community is engaged in the renewal and reform of Islam based on the true Qur'anic teachings. In the space of a century, the Movement has grown in 179 countries claiming 200 million followers. The impetus they have given to Islam and momentum is unstoppable. One question remains. Are the Western democracies liberal enough to accept the true teachings of Islam and free themselves from the prejudice of the past?

Salim A. Malik

Natural Selection and Survival of the Fittest

This is an extract taken from the book* Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth, *written by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad.

Answering the question as to who has been responsible, throughout the ages, for taking important decisions, which had to be taken at every step of evolutionary advancement, the Qur'an pronounces the following:

تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرُ * اِلَّذِيْ
خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيٰوةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيْزُ الْغَفُوْرُ * الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرٰى فِيْ
خَلْقِ الرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْ تَفٰوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرٰى مِنْ فُطُوْرٍ *
ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ اِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَّهُوَ حَسِيْرٌ *

Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom, and He has power over all things;
It is He *Who has created death and life that He might try you – which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving,*
The Same *Who has created seven heavens in stages.(No) incongruity can you see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again: Do you see any flaw?*
Aye, look again, and yet again, your sight will only return to you tired and fatigued.[1]
(Ch.67:vs2-5)

In the absence of God, life could not have travelled on a purpose-built path following a single direction throughout. At every step there was a wide aimless expanse of possibilities stretched before it, riddled with difficulties through which it had to carve its path. There were countless options which could potentially have changed the course and direction of evolution at every such critical moment in time. The question arises as to why life pursued a definite evolutionary course in a single direction as though none else was available.

The only explanation offered by scientists relates to the role of natural selection. Though they fully recognize the dimension and the gravity of the problem, they would have us believe that at every crucial point of decision making it was natural selection which took the decision, always making the right choices out of a countless number of available options.

Ever since Darwin coined the phrase 'Natural Selection', it has served as a magic wand for scientists who probe into the mysteries of nature. In relation to events which appear to present evidence of the role of a wilful Conscious Creator as the choice maker, they seek protection behind the mist of this vague term which is mostly incorrectly understood. Every step forward in the path of evolution is inadvertently attributed by them to innumerable chances having created a host of options for natural selection to choose from. But this choice, on the part of natural selection, they agree, is not conscious. When different characters and species struggle for survival in a competitive situation, it is quite natural for some to survive at the cost of others if they happen to possess greater potential for survival.

Here we may also mention another hackneyed phrase of Darwinian terminology 'The Survival of the Fittest' which is so extensively used by the naturalists. This phrase is coined on the presumption that natural selection, however blind it may be, would always go for the right choice and only the fittest would survive in a competitive world. Whatever is inferior in the struggle for existence is doomed to become extinct. Darwin's principle is perhaps misinterpreted to a degree that the very principle becomes questionable. We have irrefutable evidence spread all over the globe that even the most inferior character bearing species and the most ill-equipped animals at the lowest rung of evolution are still found to have survived. The

extinction of some, as against the others, only takes place when the contest for survival is extremely severe and mutually confrontational. Then too, it does not invariably lead to the survival of the fittest in its absolute sense. Survival of the fittest in its absolute sense, though possible, is yet unlikely to occur in the case of every struggle for existence. The fittest at such outcomes would only be the fittest in relation to that particular challenge. The unfortunate who may not survive these moments of trials may otherwise possess many more highly advanced qualities of life which may adjudge them to be the fittest in some other contexts.

Let us elaborate this further by visualizing the scenario of a grave famine resulting from a rare spell of drought covering an entire continent. Such a famine, if it persists for too long, is likely to bring to extinction a large number of species. The issue of extinction or survival would hang on the respective compatibility of the species in the given situation.

In a famine as severe as the one we are visualizing, almost all shrubs, bushes, trees and grasses with short roots, would be completely annihilated. The obvious reason for this is that the water level sinks lower and lower as the famine strikes deeper and deeper, until with the total dryness of the upper soil, the shorter roots are completely annihilated. The obvious reason for this is that the water level sinks lower as the famine strikes deeper and deeper, until with the total dryness of the upper soil, the shorter roots are completely dehydrated. But this may not be the fate of some trees with very long, deeply entrenched roots. Such roots are known to have reached astounding depths during long-lasting spells of severe droughts. There are many caves in mountains that have been explored by archaeologists which bear witness to this fact. Some roots of trees which stood right on the top of a mountain appear to have chased the water as it sank to amazingly low depths. Similarly, despite periodic long spells of droughts in deserts, the secret of the survival of an oasis lies in this ability of the roots of some trees to chase water.

In the scenario under study, one can reasonably expect all the short root shrubbery, bushes, trees and grasses etc., to have been completely wiped out, whereas some tall trees with tapering, long embedded roots could withstand even worse droughts.

Let us now visualize what would happen to life in general upon such a continent during this period of extreme trial. Most of the grazing animals with shorter legs and necks would most certainly be starved or dehydrated to death. So also the carnivores among the animals would not survive much

longer after their food supply had dwindled out of existence.

Maybe the only survivors would be those who could survive on very little water such as worms, scorpions, and millipedes and those animals which take their daily need of water by feeding on them with relish. Among them, meerkats are known to possess exceptional qualities to survive in such hostile environments. Some sorts of rodents could perhaps also share a fighting chance to crawl across an overly extended drought.

Among tall vertebrates however, there is one likely candidate who could have an outside chance to survive. For giraffes with exceptionally long necks and tall forequarters, it is not impossible to reach the green foliage on the tops of tall deep-rooted trees while all other species of grazing animals would be starving to death all around them.

There are also other factors which have to be the focus of attention. There are animals which can run for long distances in search of whatever water holes remain available, and there are slow moving animals as well at evident disadvantage. There are others better equipped with the sense of detecting water at long distances, and there are those who must find water right under their noses.

We have also to include in the picture the role of the beasts of the jungle who must thrive on the flesh of grazing animals, and follow them wherever they go. They too, in turn however, need water for their survival. It is painful to visualize at what tragic moment the curtain of this bizarre drama will fall at last. They must depart this stage fatigued and starved one after the other. Maybe the only spectators left behind will be some giraffes, some vermin, some meerkats, in the vast empty amphitheatre of this continent where this ghastly drama is playing its last act. Maybe the only applause that will be heard would be the tiny clapping of the meerkats, or the neighing of the giraffes – if they have any neighing strength left in them – applauding their own survival!

Is this the survival of the fittest? Is this what the scientists clamour about? Is this what they mean by natural selection at work? Do the qualities of the giraffes and the meerkats, not to mention those of a few species of vermin which survived, really represent the ultimate evolutionary preferences?

In a billion years, hundreds of such alternating waves of drastic fluctuations in the climate can be realistically estimated. There would have been times

when life was threatened with excessive cold or with excessive heat. There would have been times when life was threatened with excessive drought or excessive rains; there would also have been many scores of diseases attendant upon all such climatic changes. Whatever may have survived during the periods of these varying trials would not always be the giraffes and the meerkats, or the vermin for that matter.

In every changed context, the principle of the survival of the fittest would favour the survival of different contestants. Every calamity would have its own preferences. Looking at the issue of survival in relation to varying threats and challenges to life as it hazards its journey through a billion years of evolution, it is hard to visualize any survival at all. Little chance, if any, can be envisaged for the survival of all the forms of life, because different crises will have their own favourite targets which most often will not be the same. The poison for one category of life would be the meat for another. So the law of random selection would choose at random and continue to reject all that crosses its path.

We hope that by now the reader will have fully comprehended the nature and dimension of the problems involved in the operation of the survival of the fittest and natural selection. It should be remembered here that the term 'Natural Selection' is not being comprehensively examined in all its areas of application. We have only specifically taken up one of its many aspects to suit this context.

In Darwin's theory of biological evolution, as observed in comparatively more advanced species of life, the role of natural selection can be more easily discerned. But there also, it is found to be inadequate in accepting the right values and discarding the wrong ones.

Again, it should be emphasized here that the phenomenon of natural selection under changing environments does not possess any instrument of effecting internal cellular changes to suit the external requirements. The chromosomes and the character bearing genes lie far beyond the reach of chaotic external changes. The natural laws which govern them are insulated from the whims of cold and heat, or dryness and humidity. They are two absolutely unrelated phenomena.

Natural selection becomes operative only after a host of variants are created through progressive or random genetic changes. In the competitive world of the variants, thus created by 'chance', only those are able to survive which

are proved fittest in relation to the given challenges. With a change in the nature and character of challenges, the definition of preferred characters would also change. Hence, this misconception that natural selection would always favour the best characters in all varying situations should be dispelled once and for all. Occasionally it may do so, but most often it does not. The term is largely relative and rarely definitive regarding its choices. The competition for survival can be between members of the same species, or between different species. It is only the chance outcome of a given situation which decides the quality of the surviving factors. Blind struggle for existence cannot always aim at the right qualities. Whatever emerges, bad or good, must be accepted as the fittest. A particular species could be adjudged as champion with regards to its potential for survival in a specific situation. The species that becomes extinct could have possessed more advanced qualities and characters in other regards.

Consider for example the case of a solitary gorilla left stranded in a hostile arctic environment. In comparison to it, the polar bear and foxes stand far greater chances of survival in the same habitat. In that particular case the gorilla, despite its comparative evolutionary advancement, would be condemned to extinction by the instrument of natural selection as a worthless thing in comparison to the polar bear and the arctic fox. Replace the gorilla with a human in the same hypothetical situation, the condemnation of him to death by the principle of survival of the fittest will be speedier than in the case of the gorilla. Hence it is wrong to believe that natural selection goes for quality as such. In the barest terms, natural selection can at best be described as 'might is right'; even when might is vicious, distorted, oppressive and merciless, might will always emerge victorious in the sight of natural selection.

If we undertake the work of tracing the history of evolution in relation to all the various forms of life and try to determine how the principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest actually work, it would exhaust voluminous books running into hundreds of thousands of pages or more. It would take many generations of future scientists to pursue this task.

However, we must draw the attention of the reader to the fact that if one visualizes all the possible options at work, progressive selection would become impossible. At every such occasion where this discrimination is needed, it may take millions of chances to collude for the selection of a single superior character. The converse should also be seriously considered.

For haphazard mutations to jump in any direction, is not controversial, but for them to always jump in the right direction, to advance the cause of evolution towards a definite goal, is next to impossible. Hence, in a game of chance, as indeed it is a game of chance is highly implausible for it to always take the stride in the right direction as needed by the dictates of evolutionary requirements at that point in time. It is unfortunate however, that most scientists shut their eyes to the inevitability of the Hand of a Conscious Wise Selector Who will always take the right decisions at the right moment and will not leave them to the throw of a dice.

How can it be possible for evolution to continuously march forward in the direction of man while at each moment the possibilities of its taking the wrong steps backwards are overwhelmingly larger? The only possible solution to this otherwise insoluble dilemma would be to follow the backward escape route envisaged by a boy during a rainy day. Once, it is said, a boy reached his school very late. When severely reprimanded by his teacher, he offered the excuse that the road to school was so muddy and slippery that as he took one step forward in the direction of the school, he slipped back two steps.

'How on earth did you reach the school at all?' shouted the angry teacher.

'Excuse me, sir,' was the apologetic reply of the boy, 'It struck me rather late, that I should start walking in the direction of my house instead of that of the school. The moment I did it, I began to slide backwards towards the school at an even faster speed than I ordinarily maintain. And here I am sir, hitting the back of my head against the school wall, such was my haste to reach here, backwards all the way.'

The dilemma that life faces, if left entirely to the mercy of chance, is far more exasperating than the case of that boy. At each step forward, evolution driven by chance should have slipped a hundred thousand steps backwards. But for life with no prefixed direction, as some naturalists believe, the concept of a step forward simply does not arise. Forward in which direction and to what end, are the questions which can never be answered in relation to chance being its creator. Every step it took could be in any direction. Hence even turning the journey of life backwards could not resolve the problem. Man not being the ultimate goal of evolution, life would lose its bearing in the wilderness of chaos, squandering each quality it had gained, by chance, to the stormy aimless winds of annihilation.

Whatever the mutative changes might have gained, they may lose by other leaps in wrong directions. Let us apply the same logic to the creation of eyes

and examine how blind mutative changes could have succeeded in manufacturing even a most rudimentary eye which could see and transmit what it saw to the brain behind. It is far more likely for mutation, or gradual cellular development, to disorganize what it has created itself, than for it to organize the surrounding confusion with the passage of time. The haphazard mutative changes created only by chance could actually play havoc with the orderly shape and design of life. It could change, for instance, the positioning of the eye, the nose, the ear, the mouth, the tongue and their sensory buds. Maybe in a few subsequent generations some species could have eyes shifted to the back of their heads instead, or upon their stomachs, or one each under their armpits! Who can stay or discipline the hand of chance? Again, it is not unlikely that the ears could begin to see, the nose could talk and the tongue could hear, ankles could grow with buds of taste and smell! Different animals, at least some of them, should have exhibited such freaks of nature without a purpose to serve. But wherever in nature we find a shifting of the ear or the eye from their normally expected position, it is always done purposefully, being of advantage to the animal concerned rather than of disadvantage. But these are exceptions. The rule that governs millions of species dictates a universal design. When we observe chance at work it behaves differently; babies are born with congenital disorders, alas never to their advantage. Who knows? A game of chance is a game of chance.

The task of examining the evolutionary processes which led to the making of an eye require a thorough, indepth study. Also, the evolution of all animal organs, which make complex, yet perfect little worlds of their own need to be examined in depth.

It is intended, therefore, to add a separate chapter on the creative processes which resulted in the creation of complete organic units, eyes being central to the discussion.

Unfortunately, the physical features of species as they evolve have been far more emphasized by naturalists than their sensory organs. However, mere physical changes in a certain direction are of no significance compared to the advancement of awareness and consciousness in the grand scheme of the evolutionary spiral. What is life after all, if it is not awareness, as against the absolute unawareness of death?

The most dramatic miracle does not take place on the plane of mere cellular changes and complexities of molecules at the level of proteins. The miracle of the origin of life lies in the sudden dawn of consciousness upon the horizon

of the dead universe that preceded it. Ever since that happened it continues to grow from weakness to strength, from a lone beginning to diversity. The meaning of evolution can in no way be understood by confining oneself to the Darwinian principle of haphazard physical changes being selected and grouped together by the hand of natural selection. It can only be comprehended by gaining a better understanding of the five senses which ultimately evolved after the hazardous journey of life during its last billion years.

Man can look down from his vantage point at whatever lies behind him and below him. Only then will he realize the meaning of life and the meaning of evolution – bit by bit, nanometre by nanometre; the senses once born climbed through the spiralling path of endless evolution. The purpose and philosophy of evolution is doubtlessly the creation and promotion of the five senses. The creation of five senses, each of which in itself is a masterpiece of creative wonders, stands witness to a well-executed design at the grandest scale, where harmony rules supreme. No wonder then, that the Holy Qur'an repeatedly sums up the outcome of evolution in just three simple terms: the creation and perfection of the faculty of hearing, seeing and understanding.

وَاللّٰهُ اَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ شَيْئًا ۙ وَّجَعَلَ
لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ ۙ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ

And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you ears and eyes and hearts, that you might be grateful.[2]
(Ch.16: v.79)

To return to the main subject of discussion, let us emphasize once again that mutative changes could go far more often wrong than right, leaving little room, if any, for natural selection to choose from, for the betterment of life. But this is not all we observe in the grand panorama of evolution at play on the stage of life.

To pursue the point further, let us focus our gaze here upon the arctic habitat. The naturalist's understanding of physical evolution can specifically be put to test there with the characteristic study of polar bears and arctic foxes. Polar bears differ in shape from brown and black bears. Their hindquarters are set higher than their forequarters so that they can run faster in pursuit of prey,

while their elongated necks give them a more streamlined shape for swimming. Other bears can also swim, but polar bears can swim comparatively much faster and cover much longer distances, a competence direly needed for their survival in the arctic environment.

Polar bears can weigh as much as 800 kilograms and measure 3.0 metres. Their size is both a protection against the cold and a necessary factor in their ability to hunt and kill. Incidentally, the cubs born to a mother bear are amazingly small, they weigh a mere 500 grams, just a fraction of the weight of a human baby. Their black skin is covered with thick white fur, thus nature provides them with a perfect camouflage throughout the year. Their coats take a yellowish tinge only briefly in summer, matching perfectly with the melting ice. The polar bear's dense fur and an exceptionally thick layer of fat under its skin protect it against the freezing temperatures of the habitat.[3] The fat is particularly important when the bear is swimming, because the fur cannot retain the insulating air trapped in it. When dry, the white fur reflects the heat it receives from the sun's rays back to the body. The hairs are hollow, so that ultraviolet rays from the sun can pass through them and be absorbed by the black skin beneath.

Another striking feature of the polar bear is the relatively large size of its paws. They are very wide and armed with sharp claws for tearing its prey and for gripping the ice. The soles of its feet are covered with the same thick, creamy white fur as covers its body providing them a better grip on icy surfaces and much needed insulation.

Amazingly, polar bears can run as fast on ice as the fastest dog on firm ground. During the exceptionally long spells of night in the polar winter, it is almost impossible for the polar bear to perceive and reach the open water pools where seals are found. Thanks to its extra sharp faculty of smell, darkness offers no hindrance, so it can smell seals, meat or carrion even from as far as 20 kilometres, according to naturalists. In sharpness, its eyesight matches its sense of smell, which is keener than that of most other bears. During daylight they can locate seals from a considerably long distance. Having spotted the seal, the patience with which they stalk them is amazing, they creep upon them with bodies flattened to the ice, forefeet doubled under them and only the hind feet providing propulsion. They possess the artifice for contriving excellent camouflage. Sometimes they push a small heap of ice in front of them to camouflage their dark muzzles, or cover their noses with their white paws to avoid detection.

Much of a polar bear's time is spent in water. It possesses some unique features to correspond to this situation. The usage of limbs in water is reversed in comparison to the bear's behaviour when it stalks seals on pack ice. Instead of hind legs, which are now used as rudders, it uses only its forequarters for propulsion. In addition to their exceptionally large size, the front paws have the added advantage of being partially webbed. Another exceptional feature which makes the polar bear perfectly adapted to the polar habitat, is its ability to swim under water with eyes fully open and nostrils closed[3]. Although some scientists try to explain away these unique features of the polar bear by simply referring them to be a product of evolution, there are other naturalists however who remind them that it would take millions of years of evolution to create the specific features that separate polar bears from the bear family in general.

In adaptability to the polar climate, the arctic fox does not lag far behind the polar bear. In winter it grows a dense white fur to keep it warm and to provide it with camouflage. Little of its body heat is lost through its small, furry and rounded ears, so different from the ears of the foxes found elsewhere. Again in comparison to other foxes, the arctic fox has a short muzzle and legs, which also help it to conserve heat. Like the polar bear, the arctic fox also has thick fur under the soles of its paws, which provides it with excellent insulation against extreme cold. Surprisingly, the only other fox which shares the fur under the sole with the arctic fox is the desert fox. Obviously, there it needs this fur for insulation against heat. White arctic foxes are hard to see in the snow, their white fur could become a disadvantage in other habitats. For instance, in islands and in the coasts of the Arctic Ocean where there is less snow, they need a camouflage of a different colour. A bluish-grey colour seems to be ideally suited and it is exactly that which their coats turn into.[4]

This leads us back to the all-important question of the role of natural selection in the origin of species. If it took some millions of years for the polar bear to be equipped with such exceptional features, as are essential for its survival in the arctic climate, the same time-scale would show no partiality to the fox either. The question arises as to how many thousands of generations of bears and foxes must have perished in vain before they could have evolved the changes in their anatomy, vitally essential for their survival.

Again, if they had survived as they must have survived for millions of years, even without the advantage of these exceptional features which make them perfectly adapted to the arctic climate, where was the need for any adaptation at all? Why all the fuss about genetic changes and chance

mutations colluding for that long to provide the opportunity for natural selection to approve of a choice which, in fact, was imposed upon it.

Moreover, if ordinary bears and foxes as found elsewhere in the world were to be dumped into the arctic region today, while polar bears and artic foxes are removed from the arena, the question would arise as to whether they would have any chance of survival in that hostile climate, continuously, generation after generation, without becoming extinct. If they could do so with a fair guarantee for the survival of the species, the evolutionary exercise of the polar bears would be rendered superfluous and the characteristic changes brought about in features could no longer be considered as necessary.

Now we look at the same scenario from a slightly different angle. It is impossible for the extremely inhospitable environment, such as obtains in the arctic region, to work causatively for bringing about appropriate changes to the biochemistry of cells. Yet, without such profound changes in the character bearing genes, no gradual or mutative changes can be visualized. White fur upon black skin, taller hindquarters and shorter forequarters, tiny rounded ears, an exceptionally sharp sense of smell and vision, thick fur under the soles of their paws, change of coats in accordance with environmental dictates and layer upon layer of fat under the skin, cannot be made to order by the climatic conditions prevailing in the arctic habitat of the polar bears and foxes. Chance must continue to play its role separately and blindly in the cellular chemistry to add variety to characters and to bring about spontaneous changes in animal features, haphazardly in every direction.

Natural selection must wait for these painstakingly slow changes to provide a large variety of options for it to choose from. For instance, if random changes in the cellular chemistry can suddenly alter the colour of hair from black to white, with a thick layer of white fur added on top of that, why cannot they change the colour of the hair from black to blue or red or crimson or violet or green or deep yellow or saffron for that matter? How did cellular chemistry know that what was needed in the arctic climate was only white? Yet it failed to learn that the skin underneath the white fur would remain black. Why did the same cellular changes leave the skin alone and think only of changing the colour of the fur – a novel idea indeed to grow white fur on black skin! Hence, each of the specific features mentioned in relation to polar bears and foxes would evidently require a host of other options to have been created by chance.

According to the Darwinian theory of the origin of species, one should expect a wide variety of polar bears and foxes with a host of different features, to

have been created by chance before natural selection could come into play. The fossil record of the arctic region should testify to the earlier chance creation of red bears, blue bears, saffron bears and pink bears. But evolution, in relation to its effect on polar bears, seems to be colour-blind, capable only of recognizing black or white. Moreover, the bears should also come in all shapes and sizes. There should be tiny polar bears, giant polar bears, heavyweights, middle weights, lightweights, flyweights, bantamweights and featherweights etc. Some should be born with taller forequarters and shorter hindquarters, some with dim vision and diminished sense of smell. Why should the creative factors, whatever they were, provide only single options in the polar habitat and let natural selection sit idly by? There was nothing for it to choose from.

Some polar bears should again, have been accidentally born with a sense of utter distaste for the flesh of seals, and abhor it to the degree that they would rather die of starvation than to venture upon a mouthful of it. The very sight of it should have made them vomit and retch miserably for hours. It should be of no surprise if some among them were shabby swimmers and tardy runners. If so, the Darwinian naturalist would have some right to make us believe that it was only random creation which took care of the evolutionary processes in that specific region. Subsequently however, the inevitable law of the survival of the fittest and natural selection must have wiped out the unwanted and incompatible specimens of polar bears. All that was left to survive was the polar bear in its present form.

But where did those polar bears, whom survival of the fittest had condemned to extinction, disappear? We are not talking of a tropical environment. What we are talking about is the extremely cold habitat of the arctic. In a climate such as this, some of the corpses of different polar bears which became extinct must have been perfectly preserved as fossil records. One should remember that some animals which existed hundreds of thousands of years ago have been found buried in the arctic deep freeze, so completely unchanged that their flesh was edible, as if they had been buried yesterday; such is the case of a mammoth elephant discovered in Siberia not so long ago.

The same random cellular changes resulting in the creation of a host of variants among animal species should also be found operative in non-polar climates and habitats. At least some of their fossil records should have been found in the archives of nature.

Let us travel now from the arctic to the non-arctic regions of the world. By

comparison to the massive polar bears, the study of a tiny spider presents a fascinating contrast.

Spiders are found virtually everywhere except in the arctic climate. In tropical forests, however, they abound and flourish like nowhere else. Rain forests are not their only habitat. Their ability to survive extreme climates is amazing. They survive on mountain tops as well as in deep canyons and caves. There are at least thirty thousand known species of spiders, but some estimate the number to be twice as much[5]. All spiders are not weavers of webs. About half of them weave webs and the other half, despite the fact that they also produce silky threads, hunt their prey by directly attacking it and leaping upon it with amazing speed and precision. The cobweb weavers invariably go for insects alone, while other spiders can attack and kill comparatively much bigger animals.

Incidentally, in the last century, one naturalist estimated that the number of insects devoured by spiders was more than the total weight of the human population[5]. Returning to the main discussion, we should like to remind the reader that the greater the difference between the lifestyle of different species, the more challenging it becomes for the evolutionist to trace back the evolutionary history of each species. What natural factors guided their steps and how, over millions of years? Each of them seems to have accidentally reached the stage in which they are found today.

For the interest of the reader, we just quote a few examples of how vastly spiders vary from species to species. There are wolf spiders, which hunt with the ferocity of a wolf and there are huntsman spiders which move at amazingly fast speeds and there are bird-eating spiders, also known as tarantulas. They are exceptionally large in size by comparison to other spiders. Even small vertebrates appear diminutive by their side. Under extreme provocation they will not hesitate to attack humans. Their staple food consists of small roosting birds, reptiles,amphibians, beetles, moths, grasshoppers and also when needs be, they devour other spiders.

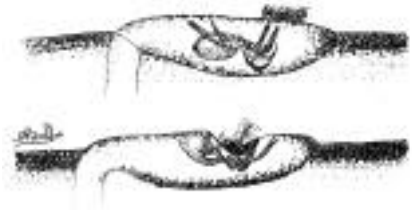
Again there are ant-eating spiders which are mere dwarfs as compared to the tarantulas. They are no bigger than the size of the ordinary ants they hunt. The Creator has provided them with such perfect camouflage as the ants never suspect the presence of these deadly aliens among them. They look like ants, they act like ants, they move like ants and the adage ‘when in Rome do as the Romans do’, applies to them most befittingly. Only, they do not think like ants. How could this amazing camouflage evolve by a mere collusion of

blind chances and how long did it take for aimless mutative changes to perfect this wonder? These are some questions for the evolutionist to answer.

Of course one would also expect some explanation as to how natural selection might have worked in relation to the ant-hunters. How many millions of generations of imperfect hunters must have been created and wiped out before the most perfect hunter was finally evolved by the aimless meanderings of the so-called evolutionary factors!

Another mysterious species of spiders is known as Atypus. Ever since they were discovered by W.E. Leach in 1816, they have continued to arouse widespread interest amongst zoologists. Long before sealed room mysteries were invented by detective story writers, Nature had created a living model of the sealed room mystery by designing and perfecting a female species known as 'the trapdoor spider'. Naturalists had long been puzzled as to how she could keep herself alive closeted in a long silk tube sealed at both ends. It took F. Enoch to finally provide the solution to this baffling problem during his work between 1885 to 1892. The silken tube in which Atypus locks herself is usually eight to nine inches in length. Of this all but two to three inches pass steeply down into the ground while the remaining portion juts out of the ground like an inflated finger of a glove. In the middle, the tube is more spacious to provide the spider room to turn and manoeuvre. The mastermind of blind evolution takes care that during the winter, when the spiders hibernate, the aerial portion is collapsed.

At other times they are easily mistaken for roots protruding from soil. The silk is intermixed with earth or sand grains by the spiders to make it appear inconspicuous. The way in which an insect is seized can be watched by tickling the tube with a grass stem. Suddenly two shining curved fangs are violently protruded through the web and it can be seen from their position that the spider strikes in a shark-like manner with its lower side uppermost. If a buzzing fly is held against the tube the fangs pierce its body and hold it like fish hooks. After a certain amount of tugging and jerking a slit appears in the tube wall through which the insect is pulled in. Before retiring to the inner chamber with the prey to enjoy the fruit of her labour, the spider returns to the upper portion of the tube to repair and reseal it.[6]



The trapdoor spider waiting in its tube, about to seize its prey.

How the Darwinian principle of 'Survival of the Fittest', aided only by mutative changes, could conceive, design and execute the creative plan of trapdoor spiders, is a mystery which perhaps only the elite among the naturalists can understand to their satisfaction.

Finally, we conclude this discussion by taking up the case of weaver spiders which make up almost half of all the spider species. So tiny, so fragile, so delicately built, they all possess the same surprising faculty and know-how to build intricate contraptions for catching flying insects. It is an intriguing case study because as we move from one type of weavers to another, the whole complexion of their style, strategy and weaving skills change dramatically. Let us visualize how blind chance might have endowed the spider to turn his salivary glands into a highly efficient mill for spinning yarn.

Of course it could not have happened overnight by an explosion of mutative changes. If we reconstruct the entire process bit by bit and stage by stage, then perhaps we can visualize to some degree what aimless evolution could have done for the spider.

Perhaps the story began with the salivary glands of the spider suddenly becoming over-sensitized due to some accidental factors. Then, maybe during the next one or two million years, an interplay of a host of chances taught its saliva to harden into strands the moment it was ejected into the air. But these fine fragile looking threads were simultaneously bestowed with a tensile strength greater than that of steel for the same body weight.

These exasperatingly long unmanageable threads must have scattered all over the place, entwining the spider's legs, entrapping it itself as a sitting duck for its predators. How long this might have gone on perhaps the evolutionists could visualize better. But as a layman's guess, we suggest that after a million or two years, a mentally more advanced spider was basking in the sun, lamenting its sorry state. At that rare moment rushed to its aid at last, a configuration of mutative changes which endowed its tiny spot of a brain with the skill to turn its disadvantage to advantage. In that flash of a moment, a new era began in the lifestyle of spiders which has no parallel in the entire animal kingdom.

It set itself immediately to the task of learning the art of weaving cobwebs as snares. How long it might have taken it to bring this exercise to a successful conclusion is indeed hard to visualize. In keeping with the pace of evolution it should not be surprising if it took the spider another couple of million years to perfect this art.

The most intricate and fascinating patterns of different types of webs that the spider weaves are not only wonderful to look at but are also precision-made to serve a set purpose. They never obstruct the movement of the spider's feet which dances along, light-footed, like the most skilful ballet dancer, and puts to shame the proudest of tightrope walkers. Never taking a false step, never faltering, never needing a balancing rod, never hesitating in a state of indecision as to how and where it should fix the next string as it proceeds to complete the task of constructing its meticulously designed cobweb to the finish. Thus the story of a spider learning to manufacture yam and weave it into such perfect traps comes to a happy ending. Even the most vicious of wasps which prey upon it would think twice before venturing to attack it as it sits safely entrenched in its spidery castle.

So far so good, but suddenly a disturbing thought passes one's mind as to what, after all, was the purpose of this exercise. Why was blind evolution driven towards this goal without a conscious pre-design and without a purpose? The only purpose one can think of is to provide the spider with the much needed food which was so essential for its survival.

The poor spider was only bestowed by nature with some twisted shabby looking legs. Before its skill to weave cobweb snares was perfected, it must have continued to survive on some food, generation after generation, for millions of years. Flies may be stupid, but they are not stupid enough to head straight for the spider's mouth without a cobweb to trap them. Yet, with or without this fly-meal, the spiders continued to survive over a long period of their existence. Where was the need for the entire exercise of spinning a yam and weaving a web and all the evolutionary requirements concomitant upon them?

It is indeed difficult for the uninitiated to visualize the challenges of a tremendously long period of transition from one manner to another. How many generations of spiders must have aimlessly perished during these challenges one wonders!

When we suggested earlier that perhaps the spider was suddenly taught the art of weaving a web for procuring food, by a configuration of mutative changes, we only did it to highlight the absurdity of this idea. Mutative changes do not occur simultaneously in perfectly organized purpose-built packages. It would require hundreds of thousands of chances to manipulate a meaningful sequence of mutative changes to be encoded in the character bearing genes of life, to bring about such dramatic changes as these in the lifestyle of any animal species.

The case of the delicate carnivorous aqueous plants is no less wondrous by any means. The simplest of these is complex enough to defy human attempts to demonstrate how a procession of blind chances in the right order could, over millions of years, create such perfect trapping machines. We begin by presenting the case of the marsh pitcher which, according to experts, belongs to the simplest category of carnivorous plants. It comprises leaves about a foot in length, which are bonded together at the seam to make a funnel. Each of these funnels is visible in its entire length as it protrudes above the water surface. The funnel tops are hooded by conspicuous reddish rims which, are generously studded with nectar producing glands. Abundant rains in the tropical regions where they grow, keep the funnels filled with water, yet they neither burst nor topple down under their weight. This is made possible in two ways:

(a) The leaves are bonded all the way, but for an inch or two at the top. They are left unjoined, leaving enough opening for the extra water to be drained out.

(b) A ring of small holes is provided at the right place just below the upper margin so that the right level of water is always maintained.

Insects are attracted by the colour as well as the sweet scent of the nectar exuding from the glands. As they hop around in search of more nectar, they slip down the funnel which is cropped with downward pointing slippery hairs which do not permit them to climb back up again. Down they go until they reach the lowest part of the funnel which has no hairs. In that enclosed pit they finally die and disintegrate enriching the water with proteins, salts etc. This food is assimilated by the plant for its survival. How many sightless attempts by nature must have been frustrated before it could finally perfect this well-coordinated trapping machine, is hard to estimate.

Now we present another example of how nature has turned the tables against the animal kingdom in favour of the vegetative life. The trumpet pitchers are provided with such waxy scales on the surface of their traps as would stick to the exploring animals' feet and loosen their hold.

Having lost their balance, down they tumble into the water-filled pit. The vibration thus caused stimulates the digestive glands of the funnel which immediately begin to exude a strong digestive juice. By this the fallen midgets can be completely dissolved in a few hours time, while flies may last for a day or two. It is not merely these insects which are devoured by these carnivorous

plants. The 'rajah' among the trumpets can even dissolve and devour scorpions and mice.

The case of the Venus's fly-trap is even more complicated as it is electrically operated. The mystery of how this electric current is produced, and what governs the operation of this mechanism, has so far baffled all attempts by scientists.

We can only invite the attention of Darwinian evolutionists to these amazing contrivances and most humbly require that they should explain how they must have evolved. How many generations of unsuccessful attempts must have perished before the final successful experiments by evolution to create a carnivorous plant with all its necessary trapping gadgets and digestive enzymes? Until ordinary green plants were finally transformed into formidable hunting machines they simply could not have started this completely different phase of their lives. The difference between the two is immeasurable. To have started supplementing their diet with animal enzymes and proteins was impossible until this transformation was completed. How many millions of years were required for this through an ordinary course of evolution governed by the Darwinian principle of natural selection is inconceivable.

It simply could not have happened, because no naturalist can even suggest a bit by bit transformation of ordinary green plants into carnivorous plants

The transformation has to be completed before they could start functioning.

We have yet to come across an attempt by naturalists to trace the evolutionary course of carnivorous plants bit by bit, organ by organ, back to their origin. Even the smallest insect eating plants pose extremely big problems when we examine them in depth and bring to the focus of our attention the intricacies of their coherent organic identity. Each part has to be purpose-built and specifically designed into a composite organic entity.

Last but not least, there was no impelling reason why they should have suddenly abandoned the most profitable lifestyle of their ancestors, who were well taken care of by photosynthesis, providing them with a glorious start in their struggle for existence. The Darwinian principle 'Survival of the Fittest' could not have played any role in their so-called evolution, adjudging them to be the fittest to survive. If it were so the entire dry land and all watery habitats should have become their prime territory. Evidently they were just made fit to survive without any history of evolution preceding that fitness.

Moreover, though it is understandable according to the evolutionary principles for any plant or animal to shift from a hostile environment to a hospitable one, the converse is never heard of. But, if the naturalists are to be taken seriously, their story runs counter to this phenomenon in the case of the Sundew and Venus's fly-trap.

Imagine a Sundew plant growing luxuriously by the side of a stagnant puddle, staring with abhorrence at what it observed in its middle. No plant could survive there because of most hostile environments. If the Sundew had an invisible brain while watching that puddle, with eyes that did not visibly exist, it should have been horrified at what it observed and leapt away from it were it not firmly rooted in the soil. But the naturalists have a completely different vision of what happened. According to them, it is the same Sundew – naturally and healthily growing by the side of that puddle – which got transformed into a fly-trap which we find flourishing undeterred in that hostile surrounding. It is inconceivable for it to survive there without having previously evolved to meet the new challenges. This could only happen if all the necessary changes had been brought about while it was still on dry land. Without having completed its transformation outside that environment, it could not have survived there for a single moment.

This is the dilemma which the scientists confront and must explain in sensible and logical terms. Two vital points need to be registered here.

1) The Sundew, which scientists believe to be the forefather of Venus's fly-trap is in itself an enigma. It has no traceable history of having evolved from ordinary green foliage

2) Venus's fly-trap must have evolved to its final minutest detail on dry soil outside the puddle without any evolutionary compulsion.

We rest our case here and expect the naturalists to take over from this point. Their explanation is most eagerly sought for.

We have specially highlighted the case of the Venus's fly-trap because it possesses a highly sophisticated, intricately designed and electrically operated mechanism which even advanced scientists fail to understand. As has been described above, in its finished form Venus's fly-trap is completely different from the anatomical composition of its so-called ancestors. Hence, it should be possible for the naturalists to try to fill this vast gap by suggesting a countless number of small evolutionary steps, which could appropriately fill

this immense blank. In the absence of this material, it is impossible to conceive natural selection to work on something which does not exist. To further highlight the absurdity of the naturalists' contention, they seem to believe in the birth of a child to a non-existent mother. Is this the picture of evolution which the survival of the fittest presents? What survival, what fitness? Where is the competition? If scientists have any professional ethics which they ordinarily do, let them apply their ethics to the case of all carnivorous plants which were already fully equipped with their hunting gears before entering the realm of natural selection! If this is 'Natural Selection', then what else is the mockery of common sense, one wonders!

The Case of Mosquitoes

Consider now for instance, the case of a mosquito. There is so much in it to be explained logically and convincingly, that it would require generations of scientists to unfold each mystery attendant upon the exquisite and precise mechanism of all its organs and their constituents. Such a study would remain inexhaustive, because as they reach one level of understanding there would appear yet another level waiting for them to unravel its mysteries.

No wonder therefore, that the Holy Qur'an singles out this small miracle of God's creation to make people see the greatness of His creative wonders. Even in the modelling of a mosquito, which the humans look down upon as a small insignificant thing, there is nothing for the Creator to be ashamed of. Let us build this theme further and share with the reader the intricacies of this flying machine, which may put to shame even the best achievements of the most advanced masters of technology.

Let us begin with the Qur'anic account of a mosquito which is so different from that of all other animals. It is the only animal which is mentioned with an emphatic denial that its creation could present any cause for embarrassment to its Creator. Thus declares the Qur'an:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِۦٓ أَنْ يَّضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوْضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا

Allah does not feel shy (or embarrassed) at mentioning the example of

a mosquito because of what is carried above it ...[7]
(Ch.2: v.27)

Here the word *fauq* literally means 'above' (see Al-Munjad and Al-Mufradat Lil-Raghib). Yet other translators have not employed its literal meaning. The evident reason why they did not do so is because they had no knowledge that mosquitoes do carry things above them.

The following are some of the questions which stir the reader's mind. At least the author has always been intrigued by the implied message of this verse.

The very first question which stirs the mind is why should God deny any cause to be ashamed of for creating mosquitoes. Nowhere else in the Qur'an is such a denial made in relation to any other creation; everywhere it is mentioned with pride. Is the exceptional treatment of the mosquito's creation, as found in this verse, indicative of the fact that the Qur'an draws the attention of the reader to the apparent worthlessness of the mosquito? The denial of an element of shame or embarrassment related to the creation of a worthless thing is in fact a denial of worthlessness itself. The denial invites the attention of man to reconsider his attitude towards mosquitoes. It indicates the following implied statements:

(a) the mosquitoes are not worthless and insignificant as commonly understood, and

(b) they play an important role which is not as yet fully understood and needs to be further investigated.

When investigated, it is admitted, the role of the mosquito will emerge to be extremely harmful and horrendous. Yet despite this admission, the element of shame related to this harmful creation is emphatically denied. It is denied because to perform this negative role mosquitoes had to be built precisely to be able to fulfil this purpose. Secondly the mosquito's function, though negative in character, must have played a vital role in the scheme of creation. As such the inevitability of the mosquito's creation and the perfection with which it is accomplished has to be understood as a mark of pride rather than a mark of shame for its Creator. The inference we have drawn can only be proved right if mosquitoes display some exceptional constructional beauty which is even more wonderful than that found in the creation of other forms of life. And again, the role of mosquitoes in the general scheme of life and its evolution has to be that of a blessing in disguise – a discovery yet to be made

by scientists. Presently, we can only suggest that mosquitoes may have played a vital role in developing and perfecting our immune system – a role which it still continues to play.

The possibility of all the above-mentioned implications of this verse to be simultaneously correct led the author to an in-depth study of mosquitoes, their anatomy and the role they perform in the animal kingdom - a task which is far more complex and difficult than it had appeared in the beginning. Most of the available literature on mosquitoes fails to explain the evolution of its organs - an omission which has especially attracted the author's attention. In many other cases, the results of their excellent study are available which describe the evolution of animal parts with minute attention. We have relied heavily on this material in the following discourse which testifies to the truth of the Qur'anic claim that mosquitoes are no ordinary things. Further research into the evolutionary aspect of the mosquito's creation has already been taken up by a competent team of Ahmadi scholars from America and Canada. This, however, is a time-consuming process and as the publication of this book cannot wait till then, we have decided to finish this work with the help of whatever material is available.

The apparently insignificant minute mosquito is perhaps the most important insect in relation to man and other forms of life. Mosquitoes are thought to have originated in the Cretaceous period (65-140 millions years ago)[8], when most of the modern taxonomic group of insects co-evolved with the origin of flowering plants. It is also speculated that mosquitoes may have originated in the Jurassic period (136-190 million years ago)**[8]**. As mammals were not created till then they must have sucked blood from reptiles, amphibians, primitive forms of mammals, or even perhaps from dinosaurs. This urge for blood, as conceived by the naturalist to have occurred during such a remote period of their creation raises many questions. Why had they developed this urge at all, when even without it they had survived for a very long period merely on vegetable produce? There were no flowering plants in that period so they may have fed mainly on honeydew.**[9]**

Mosquitoes are small two-winged insects belonging to the family Culicidae of the order of Diptera (two-winged flies). They essentially differ from all other flies by a long proboscis projecting from the head and some other features which are unique to them – like the presence of scales on the wing veins, a fringe of scales along the posterior margin of wings, and a characteristic venation whereby the second, the fourth, and the fifth longitudinal veins are branched.

Like other Diptera they undergo a complete metamorphosis during their reproduction, but many features of their metamorphosis are strikingly different from other flies. An active larva hatches from a passive egg bearing no resemblance to its parents, fully adapted to living and feeding in water.

It is amazing how all the highly competent authorities on mosquitoes, though thoroughly proficient in the knowledge of their anatomy and morphological cycles, do not present any sensible, logically acceptable scenario of natural selection playing any part in the design and manufacture of this tiny wonder of creation.

To modify a non blood-sucking mosquito into a blood-sucking one requires such changes as would take an interminably long period of time if left to chance. For them to develop patiently, bit by bit, each part developing separately yet simultaneously, in perfect coordination with each other, is an amazing proposition, particularly when one considers that this bit by bit organic development could serve no purpose in the life of a mosquito until it had culminated into its final completely organized and fully developed form. Take for instance the need of the mosquito to find and locate blood. When scientists study this small requirement they discover a complex support system to justify its existence.

The anatomical, sensory and physiological changes needed in a mosquito just for the act of finding a suitable host on which it will feed are tremendous. The mosquito faces the routine task of finding a suitable protein source amidst all the extraneous stimuli with which the environment bombards it. Scientists say the strategy that they have evolved is to:

> '...respond to visual cues, heat, and emanations such as carbon dioxide, lactic acid, and volatile fatty acids that are typical of those organisms that contain blood.' **10**

A further difficulty faced by the mosquito is the fact that chemical odour emanations are dispersed through air currents. Thus the mosquito must navigate an indirect route to the host. As the mosquito comes closer to the host, heat is used by it to home in on the host. During this chain of events in the mosquito's behaviour, a stimulus-response mechanism has to be perfected within it. The mosquito is not consciously seeking a host, but rather responding to stimuli for which it has been pre-programmed. Further complicating the issue is the fact that most mosquitoes are species-specific in their host seeking behaviour. For example, a certain species of mosquito may

respond only to the stimuli of a cow and yet not respond to those of a human.

Scientists speculate this behaviour evolved in the Mesozoic era (over sixty-five millions years ago) with

> '...the establishment of regular terrestrial dwellings (nests) by reptiles, birds, and mammals..'[11]

It is suggested by some scientists that the emergence of parental care in birds, mammals and dinosaurs further promoted associations with mosquitoes by providing them well protected and secure habitats. They felt at an advantage in and around nests where the young of the birds were kept. The same applied to the dens of the beasts of the jungle and the habitats of the dinosaurs where they reared their young. This, they suggest, presented opportunities for the mosquitoes to suck the blood of the animals whenever they liked, undisturbed. An amazing suggestion indeed if they mean that this caused the development of the bloodsucking proboscis among female mosquitoes. It can only be taken seriously if it implies that female mosquitoes had already turned into blood-sucking machines before they began to seek easy targets. Either way this conjecture does not serve to provide any methodology which may have been responsible for the evolution of blood-sucking female mosquitoes. It has been observed that if a human host moves within five seconds of the female mosquito landing on it she will fly off. Considering the complex chain of instinctive behaviour involved just in the act of locating a host, the chances of an accidental switch to blood feeding seem highly remote.

A female blood-sucking mosquito did not require only some complementary changes in its system for finding blood on a host. It also required suitable instruments for piercing skin and locating vessels, and a transport system for the blood to be carried to its storage reservoir which had to be a sac different from the one to which plant nectars are carried – a staple source of nourishment for all mosquitoes, even for the blood-sucking females who need blood only during specific periods.

As mentioned before, the scientific literature on the issue of mosquito evolution is largely silent. Scientists discussing the origin of various insects, point out that

> '...some of the better known groups are highly evolved - parasitic forms such as the Culicidae [mosquitoes] - whose evolutionary origins are obscure.'[12]

The cause of this obscurity, they say, is the insufficient fossil record, but that is no justification. They could and should have followed Darwin who studied the living finches of the Galapagos islands and not their fossil record in developing his theory of evolution. Likewise, it should have been possible to analyze the process of mosquito evolution even in the absence of a complete, detailed fossil history. The characteristics of modem mosquitoes as compared to other insects, or of the female mosquito in comparison to the male of the same species, can be studied to determine what steps in evolution must have occurred for the mosquito to have assumed its present form.

Before analyzing the unique characteristics of the mosquito let us very briefly examine the probable scenario for mosquito evolution presently put forth by scientists. They suggest that the mosquito progenitors prior to their feeding on vertebrate blood must have fed on soft-bodied insects. Later on, at some point in their evolutionary history, the adults switched to feeding on vertebrate blood[13]. According to this view, the progenitors' mouthparts had already developed similarities to the finally evolved form of mosquito mouthparts. However, it is known that at the larval stage (analogous to the caterpillar stage of a butterfly's life cycle) these insects do not have dependence or association with vertebrate hosts that would have facilitated an evolution toward a blood requirement. Additionally, if dinosaurs were indeed among the very first mosquito hosts, a serendipitous switch from feeding on soft-bodied insects to a feeding behaviour that involved penetration of dinosaur skin would seem all the more improbable. Scientists themselves admit that this process of evolution would have required 'adaptations leading to a radical switch'[14] from feeding on insects to feeding on blood. The explanation presented by them in support of this theory, is a mere conjecture that these progenitors accidentally started feeding on hosts that frequented their damp, recessed habitats. As will be demonstrated below, the process of blood-sucking requires multiple specializations within the mosquito. In light of all of these interdependent adaptations, it is difficult to conceive of an 'accidental' switch in the feeding behaviour of mosquitoes.

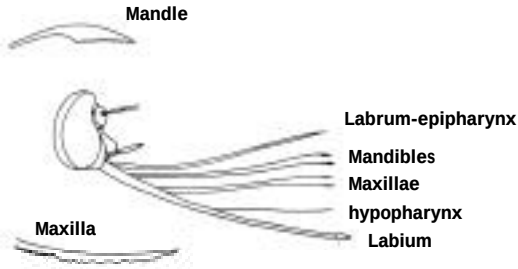
It should be remembered that three major aspects of the female mosquito had to be adapted to the specialized task of feeding on vertebrate blood. Feeding on blood requires adaptations of anatomy and form,

> '...such as a development of mouthparts able to penetrate skin; physiological adaptations, such as the proteolytic enzymes for blood digestion; and behavioural adaptations, such as the abilities to find objects that have blood and distinguish them from those that do not.'[15]

All this requires immense scientific knowledge and technical know-how.

The blood-sucking ability of a female mosquito, apart from its inbred system of locating the host and homing in on it, requires a host of other highly specialized precision instruments such as the proboscis. In itself the proboscis of a female mosquito is far more wonderful than the seven wonders of the world. It is a masterpiece of an artifact. The entire digestive system of a mosquito in fact, is to be keenly studied to realize that it is no product of the blind forces that model and shape the evolution of life. Returning to the proboscis, even a cursory examination of its construction should be sufficient to dispel the notion that it could have been constructed by natural selection, working patiently at it for over a million or so years. In adult females a proboscis, which is the apparatus for piercing and sucking blood, consists of six elongated parts enclosed in a flexible sheath.

The six include mandibles for cutting through the host's skin. They are blade-like tips which are enclosed within the proboscis and are protruded to its tip only when the mosquito requires a blood meal. Only then are they protruded through the outer tube to make a sharp surgical incision.



The mouthparts of a female mosquito

Then there is the labrum-epipharynx which during the act of biting, becomes a complete tube called the food canal through which blood is drawn. Whenever the mosquito bites, its saliva is transferred to the wound through the hypopharynx. There is also a pump to suck and transport the blood into a sort of stomach and to channel the plant nectars separately to the gut.

Expert naturalists maintain that by the selective action of the Cardia, a thickened portion at the anterior end of the mid-gut, blood is admitted directly into the mid-gut. The remaining food such as vegetative juices are led into the diverticula and held there for a while.

The unique salivary glands embedded in the proboscis present a wonder not to be witnessed elsewhere in the entire animal kingdom. But for these glands the entire bloodsucking exercise of a mosquito would have come to naught. In the saliva produced by them is a rare chemical of anticoagulant qualities. Typically, when a blood vessel is ruptured, platelets in the blood rush within a few seconds to start the process of clotting to close the leak. In order to make possible the process of feeding on blood, the female mosquito has within its saliva an enzyme known as apyrase. Apyrase is rare in animal tissues, but the mosquito salivary glands are rich in this enzyme. This chemical counteracts the fast acting chemical response in blood that leads to platelet coagulation.

Even more amazing is the fact that the digestive system of the mosquito and its blood stream is completely protected from this singularly dangerous enzyme. It is utilized exactly where it is needed – just at the point of incision.

Yet it is present in the saliva which is extensively used by a mosquito when it dissolves dried-up plant juice or nectar to render it suckable. It is said that almost a continuous stream of saliva flows from the mouth of a mosquito to facilitate this task, yet apyrase in the saliva is not utilized at all because there is no blood in the juices. All this unutilized apyrase is digested by the mosquito without doing any harm to its own blood circulation. Anyone can see from this that it is not just a game of chance creation on which natural selection is dependent, it is a case of wilful design. The entire negative role that the mosquito plays in the animal kingdom depends just on this factor. If the spitting of saliva containing apyrase into the host bloodstream was not made intuitively essential for female mosquitoes, the immense negative role of spreading disease worldwide among a variety of animals could not be made possible. The entire anatomy of the mosquito seems purpose-built to achieve that objective.

Of the five hundred or so viruses so far known to scientists, almost half that number are found in mosquitoes and about one hundred of them are responsible for spreading disease among humans alone. Some mosquitoes are host-specific for other animal species, yet they too carry viruses which may cause diseases which can also be shared by humans. There are some viruses for instance, which transfer from monkeys to man or vice versa by mosquitoes which feed on both. Mosquitoes may not necessarily be carriers of only one virus, they can carry many simultaneously. Again, they can be strong active vectors in one area while in other areas they may remain idle.

Among the major mosquito-conducted diseases which may be universal or regional, malaria leads them all. Then there are other widely known diseases like filariasis, yellow fever, dengue and encephalitis. The damage done to humans alone, over and above the vast damage caused to other animals, is horrendous. Malaria does not always kill directly but prepares the soil for so many dangerous diseases by disturbing the physiological economy of malarial patients.

The largest killer in the world, malaria is not always identified for the deaths it causes. Many malarial deaths are either not registered at all in Third World countries or not identified as malarial deaths. Many malarial patients die of diseases which result from malarial effects like tuberculosis and pneumonia commonly prevalent in malarial districts. Likewise there are many other diseases which actually relate to malaria because it damages the vital organs of the host resulting in a number of different diseases.

Two species of filariasis are widely transmitted by mosquitoes. Prolonged infection by them may cause elephantiasis both among humans and domestic animals.

Yellow fever, another mosquito transmitted disease, comprises both urban and jungle forms of yellow fever. The latter is transferable from animals to humans or humans to animals by the mosquito vector. The horrors which yellow fever has spelled in human history are but common knowledge. West Africa was called the white man's grave, solely for the presence of yellow fever there.

The colossal worldwide damage done by mosquitoes is not limited to the immense loss of human or animal life alone. The adverse influence of mosquitoes on human economy varies widely from a great loss of working hours in offices, factories or fields to a depression in prices of lands because of their nearness to mosquito habitats. Limitations are also imposed on residential areas in many ways. The history of World War II proves that many important battles were lost or won or the progress of war was seriously hampered because of this tiny, apparently insignificant, animal.

Returning to the subject of natural selection having played any role in this grand, yet bizarre scheme of things, we beg the naturalists to readjust their position regarding the factors which evolved and modelled life. It could be an eye-opener for them to concentrate on just one enzyme called apyrase. What mechanism or creative potential of natural selection could manage to produce

'NOW WE KNOW BETTER WHY THE PREVIOUS GENERATION OF SCHOLARS FAILED TO GRASP ITS EVIDENT MEANING. THEY HAD NO IDEA THAT MOSQUITOES DO CARRY VIRUSES INVISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE. WHY GOD IS NOT EMBARRASSED OF CREATING A DISEASE CARRIER OF SUCH HIGH MAGNITUDE IS BECAUSE IT WAS INTENDED AND PURPOSEFULLY DONE TO CREATE BALANCES IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF LIFE. .....WE ALSO PROPOSE THAT MOSQUITOES MUST HAVE PLAYED A MOST VITAL ROLE IN PROMOTING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM IN LIFE. ONE EXAMPLE OF THIS FUNCTION WE ALREADY KNOW RELATES TO SICKLE-CELL ANAEMIA..'

this enzyme in the saliva of only female mosquitoes to the exclusion of the males? Again, they are respectfully requested to quote one good reason why and how natural selection could compel female mosquitoes to add a blood meal to their customary vegetable diet. Why, again, is it only the female mosquitoes which feed on the blood of hosts while both male and female feed on nectar and other plant sugars as a common source of their survival? Is it not because the female mosquito requires the protein found in the blood of its hosts only in order to synthesize yolk and develop its eggs – a task certainly not needed by the male mosquito? How could natural selection teach only the female members of the species that protein is good for their reproductive organs so they must evolve a most complex system of blood-sucking? Why did the mosquitoes survive long before this female urge to seek more readily available protein from blood? How long did it take the female to bring about all the essential fundamental changes in its anatomy and synthesize the wonder drug apyrase to transfer to a new mode of survival without which it had already survived for hundreds of thousands of years?

The only sensible answer to this question is that it was purposefully designed and could not accidentally be created by natural selection. Evidently, the negative yet essential role which the mosquitoes were designed to play in the scheme of life must have necessitated the mosquito's propensity towards animal blood. The blood-sucking capability of female mosquitoes remarkably illustrates design in the process of evolution.

Evolutionists consider natural selection to somehow invariably take the right decisions and preserve only that which is good for life. Is the mosquito – the greatest threat to life – really the choice and product of natural selection?

According to the Qur'an, on the other hand, the threat to life created through the mosquito was intended and planned to serve a wide purpose.

The masterly perfection and exquisite implementation of this design has already been discussed above. Now we should like to point out that the Qur'anic verse on this subject is itself a miracle of literary excellence. Of particular note is the expression and *what is carried above it* (Ch.v.227). It can be translated to indicate the creation of similar living things beyond mosquitoes, but the evident literal meaning of *Fauq* which has eluded translators in the past, is: *and what it – the mosquito – carries*. When the Qur'an speaks of the Earth and all that it bears, it uses the same word *Fauq Wa Mafauq-alArd* means whatever is upon the earth.

Now when one re-translates the verse in question literally, it will read as follows: 'God does not feel shy of quoting the example of a mosquito and whatever is on it or whatever it carries.'

Now we know better why the previous generation of scholars failed to grasp its evident meaning. They had no idea that mosquitoes do carry viruses invisible to the naked eye. Why God is not embarrassed of creating a disease carrier of such high magnitude is because it was intended and purposefully done to create balances in the grand scheme of life. Also it may be so because the very construction of this fantastic flying machine is in itself a grand tribute to its Creator. We also propose that mosquitoes must have played a most vital role in promoting the immune system in life. One example of this function we already know relates to sickle-cell anaemia, which largely prevails among the Gambians. The presence of this anaemia creates resistance against even the most deadly forms of malaria. It is not at all unlikely therefore, that apart from some as yet unknown purposes which mosquito related diseases serve in the scheme of life, they may also have served the purpose of promoting and evolving the immune system. That may or may not be so, but the general declaration of the Qur'an is undeniable that the factors which lead to life and those which lead to death are both integral to the plan of creation.

Another rather strange fact which has to be noted is that mosquitoes carry hundreds of disease sources without ever being inflicted by them. No naturalist can ever recall a mosquito trembling with pre-malarial chills. Nor can he ever locate a mosquito suffering itself from any disease which it carries for others, within its own system, and not upon its feet or wings. The microscopic elephantiasis' causing worms that it carries have never stricken its own proboscis, enlarging it to the size of a baby elephant's trunk.

So much scientific knowledge goes into the making of the mosquito and such complex technology is required, that even today man cannot manufacture the mere proboscis of a mosquito. The mosquito can buzz the challenge into the ears of the most sophisticated and adroit modern genetic engineer to come and get him if he may and make him if he can. But, alas, all the mosquitoes in the world cannot bite an atheist enough to stir him out of his atheistic slumber! Let them fly away singing their mosquito songs! The deaf will never hear, the blind shall not see!

To recapitulate we again emphasize the characters and features of all animal species which present a systematic unfolding of precisely encoded messages in their cellular genetic symbols. The proteins of the cellular content are the guardian angels of their destiny. The character bearing strands, which make the DNA, RNA, somatic and reproductive cells of all living organisms, are totally independent of the outer environments and their influences upon them. The mindless environment has no mechanism to dictate terms to the genetic custodians of life, and the genetic custodians of life could not have designed themselves nor could they have set the precise sequence of amino acids within them which, if disturbed at any of their links and positioning, would rob the fundamental bricks of life of all their purpose and creative potential. That is why many a scientist has calculated that chance could certainly not have moulded them into shape even if it had worked upon them for trillions of years. Yet they are created somehow, having a world of their own, completely independent of climatic and environmental influences.

If God is removed from this intricate scheme of things, another creator must be found to replace Him. Let alone the mysteries of the inanimate universe, the living wonders which occupy the planet Earth will cry out for the Hand which shaped them and filled their existence with fathomless intricacies. Rule God out and their cries will forever remain unheard and unanswered. Man can only be sure of one thing: that Life did not create itself, and Death did not create Life. Natural selection is neither conscious nor alive. It is no more than a dead phenomenon like gravity. It can pull a rock deep into a ravine without ever realizing whether it fell upon a deer or a porcupine.

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Assessment of Belief – Part II

Presented below is a translation of the address delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, on 31 August 1901 on the occasion of a visit to Qadian by the Municipal Commissioner of Wazirabad, Janab Babu Ghulam Mustafa Sahib. For the purpose of translation, the original Urdu script of this address has been taken from *Malfoozat*, Vol. 4 pp.7-12.

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

In 1891, he claimed, on the basis of Divine revelation, that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been foretold by the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) and by the scriptures of other faiths.

His claim constitutes the basis of the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

[Translator's note: All references to the verses of the Holy Qur'an are given in Arabic as they occur in the text. The English translation, presented in Italics is taken from the translation of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib(ra).Where the Promised Messiah(as) has himself stated a certain interpretation of the Arabic verse, this is incorporated in the main body of the text].

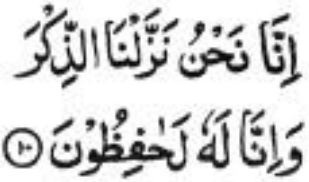
Translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad

There are some people who argue that there is no need for safeguarding [religion]. Such people commit a grave error. Is it not the duty or the wish of a person who creates a garden or erects a building that he should do all he can to protect that which he has created against the hand of destruction. There are erected walls and fences around gardens to safeguard them and in order to protect buildings against such risks as fire, ever new materials are manufactured and safety measures are taken

against dangers from electricity by using wire and such like. Such actions manifest the inherent element of protection that is naturally found in human beings. Is it not then legitimate for God that He should protect and safeguard His religion? Without doubt He protects and safeguards His religion and has done so at the time of every trial and tribulation. Now, at this time, when there is a great need for the [protection of His religion] God has appointed me for this purpose. The matter of safeguarding would have been in doubt or it would have been possible to reject it if the situation and the needs of the time were not, in fact, supporting [the argument that Islam is at this time in great need of protection]. Many hundreds of thousands of books have been written against Islam and there is no account of the number of leaflets and pamphlets that are issued daily, weekly and monthly by the Christian priests. Should all the abuses that have been hurled by Christian converts of this country against the most innocent of beings, the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa) and against his pure and virtuous wives were to be collated together, they would fill many floors. Were they to be put side by side, they would spread out into many miles. The writings of such people as Safdar Ali and Shaiq are not hidden from any one. The extreme offensiveness of the writings of Imad-ud-din, for example, is such that its dangerous nature is acknowledged even by some fair minded Christians themselves. Hence a newspaper named '*Shams-ul-Akhbar'* that used to be printed from Lukhnow, published an opinion that if in India there were to be another uprising, it would be due to writings like these. Such is the state of Islam — and there are still people who ask what harm has been done to Islam [and hence what need is there for its protection]? Such talk may be indulged in by those who either have no relationship or feeling for Islam or those who have been brought up in the darkness of their enclosures and thus have no knowledge of the outside world. Should there be such people then we take no notice of them but those who have a light in their hearts, those who have a love for Islam and who relate to this religion and are aware of the condition of the times, such

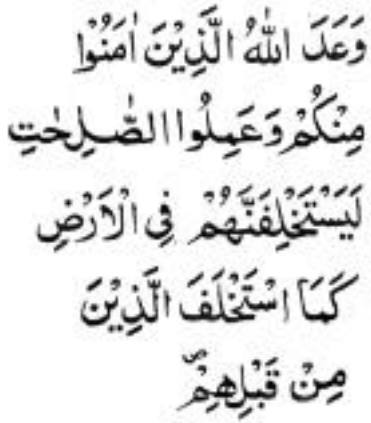
people have to acknowledge that this has to be the time for the advent of a truly great Reformer.

In short, at the present time there is much evidence bearing witness in support of my Commission [as the Promised Messiah]. There is, first, the internal evidence [of the state of the Muslims]. Secondly, there are the external factors [namely, attacks on Islam from outside]. Thirdly, the tradition [*Hadith*] of the Holy Prophet(sa) regarding the appointment of a Reformer at the head of every century. Fourthly, the promise that has been vouchsafed by God in the Qur'anic verse [as follows]:



Verily, We Ourself have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian.
(Ch.15:v.10)

I, now, present a fifth and a very powerful evidence bearing witness [in support of my claim] and that is the promise given in the Holy Qur'an, in the chapter entitled Al-Noor [chapter number 24]. The promise given here is of *Istikhlaf*, that is, the promise of the Caliphate or a system of Successors [after the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa)]. In this chapter God Almighty makes the following promise:



Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them;
(Ch.24:v.56)

In this verse, the Successors who would follow [the Holy Prophet] would be like the previous successors [who followed after the Prophet Moses(as)]. Similarly, in the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet(sa) has been likened unto

Prophet Moses(as), as stated in the verse [following]:

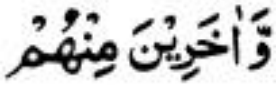
Verily, We have sent to you a Messenger, who is a witness over you, even as We sent a Messenger to Pharaoh.
(Ch.73: v.16)

Moreover, the Holy Prophet(sa) is also said to be like Prophet Moses(as) in the prophecy stated in the Bible, in the Book of Deuteronomy, [cf. Deutr. 18:15]. The resemblance and similarity between the Mosaic and the Muhammadiyya lines is total and complete and this is evident from the use of the word '*kama*' [meaning like or 'same as'] in the verses [quoted above] from Chapters 24 and 73 respectively]. The line of Mosaic Caliphs or successors ended with Jesus(as) who appeared in the fourteenth century after Moses(as). According to the similarity between the two lines, at least this much would be expected that during the fourteenth century [after the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa)] there should appear a Messiah of at least the same calibre and strength of the earlier Messiah, having a mission similar to that of Jesus. The nature of this similarity is so powerful that even if God the Almighty had not provided any further evidence, it would have been expected that in the fourteenth century someone should appear in the *Ummah* of the Holy Prophet(sa) who would be like unto the previous Messiah otherwise there could, God forbid, be perceived to be some fault or weakness in the line of the Holy Prophet(sa) given such a resemblance. However, God the Almighty has not only verified this resemblance and has supported it, He has also proven that the one who resembles Moses was in fact much better than the Prophet Moses(as) – he was, in fact, the best among all the Prophets.

Jesus(as) the Messiah did not bring any Divine Law of his own but came to fulfil the Torah. Similarly, the Messiah of the Muhammadiyya line has not

brought any new Divine Law of his own but has come to re-establish the rule of the Holy Qur'an and has been appointed for its fulfilment - the fulfilment that is known as spreading wide the moral teaching and Guidance [of the Holy Qur'an as vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet(sa)].

Regarding the fulfilment of the work of spreading the word of Guidance, it should be remembered that the Holy Prophet(sa) was endowed by God with the blessing and grace that was complete [in terms of his attaining nearness to God]. He was also endowed with a religion that reached its ultimate point of completion. These matters have two aspects: One is that of the fulfilment of Guidance and the other is one of fulfilment of the spread of Guidance. The completion of Guidance [received by the Holy Prophet(sa) from God] took place in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet(sa), through his own holy person. However, the final and complete fulfilment of the work of the spread of his Guidance was to take place in his 'second advent' and this is so because the chapter of the Holy Qur'an entitled *Al Jumma'a* [Chapter number 24] points to the preparation of another people through the teaching and blessings of the Holy Prophet(sa).



..from among ohers from them (Ch.62:V.4)

From this it is evident that there is intended another manifestation of the Holy Prophet(sa) which is in the form of a symbolic manifestation [that is, appearance of another person in the spiritual image of the Holy Prophet(sa)] and such a manifestation is now taking place. Hence, this is the time for the complete fulfilment of the task of spreading the Guidance and its teachings and this is the reason why all the means of publication and publicising are being developed. There is a widespread availability of printing presses and daily there come to be developed new systems such as the postal system and post offices, electricity, railways, ships and the establishment of newspapers – all these matters have made the world like one town [making the task of spreading the word of God so much easier]. Such progress is

in reality the success of the Holy Prophet(sa) because through them his complete guidance is attaining the fulfilment of the second aspect that is the spread of his teaching and guidance.

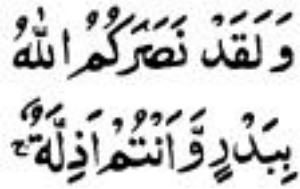
This task of fulfilment of spreading the teaching and guidance is like the task of the previous Messiah who stated that he had come to fulfil the Torah, and I say that one of my tasks is also to complete the work of the spread of the teaching of guidance [of the Holy Qur'an]. Hence, there is this resemblance also with Jesus(as). Furthermore, the tribulations that were faced by the people at the time of Jesus(as) are also to be found at the present time. Internally, the condition of the Jews at the time of Jesus(as) had worsened greatly and history bears witness to this fact that they had abandoned adherence to the Commandments of the Torah and instead gave greater importance to Talmud and other traditions. The condition of the Muslims in this age has also reached a similar state when the Book of God has been put aside and instead importance is given to folk traditions and stories. Apart from this there is another resemblance and that is in the form of the government. At the time of Jesus there was Roman rule and at this time there is a British government which is famous for its fairness and justice. I have already stated the fact that Jesus came in the fourteenth century after the Prophet Moses(as) and this century is also the fourteenth century following the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa).

In addition to all the above points, there is one other matter which completes the argument for resemblance and that is that the previous Messiah used to stress moral teaching and guidance and he had come to reform the form that Mosaic *Jihad* i.e. struggles took in that he never raised the sword. The same was to be the case with the Promised Messiah of the Holy Prophet's(sa) line. It was intended for the Promised Messiah that he should establish the beauty of Islam through the true practice of its teaching and guidance and remove the accusation that is levelled against Islam that it was spread through the sword. This accusation will be removed completely during the period of the Promised Messiah because he would reveal the truth of Islam to

the world through its living blessings and grace. This will prove the point that Islam is of benefit and has efficacy today, in the age of progress, just as it has always been the case in every age. This is because Islam is a living faith. This is the reason why the Holy Prophet(sa) prophesied *yaza-ul-harb*, that he, the Promised Messiah, would end war.

You should now put all this evidence together and say whether there is not the need in this age for the advent of a heavenly person [with a Mission from God]? Should this much be accepted that at the head of every century there must come a Reformer, and when it is acknowledged that there is a resemblance between [the Prophethood of] the Holy Prophet(sa) and Prophet Moses(as), then in accordance with this similarity, it is necessary that the Reformer at the head of this century should be a Messiah because at the head of the fourteenth century after Moses(as) came the first Messiah, the present century also being the fourteenth century [after the Holy Prophet(sa)].

The number fourteen has a great relevance. [Moon of the fourteenth is the full moon] and the 'moon' of the fourteenth century is a complete one also. It is to this that the [following] verse of the Holy Qur'an points:

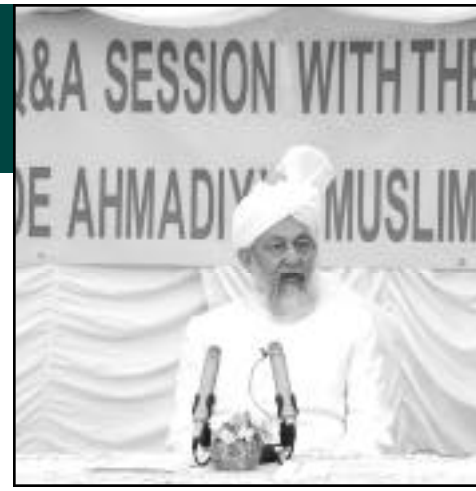


And Allah had already helped you at Badr when you were weak. (Ch.3: v.124)

That is, there was one *Badr* [which in Arabic means the 'full moon'] when the Holy Prophet(sa) gained victory over his opponents in the Battle of Badr, having a very small party of men with him and there is another *Badr* now, at the present time. Here the term *Badr* is pointing towards the fourteenth century [after the Holy Prophet(sa)] when the condition of Islam is becoming such that the term *azillah* meaning weak applies. Hence, it is in accordance with all these promises that the Almighty God has Appointed me [as the Messiah and Mahdi of this age].

(To be continued)

Distortion of Religion



Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, from time to time offers to people of all nationalities, faiths and beliefs the opportunity of raising questions and issues that are of interest to them. Presented below are answers to some questions raised in a session held in 1988 for students at Cambridge University.

Prepared by Amatul Hadi Ahmad

QUESTIONER

In most of Africa and possibly in most of the world there exist traditional beliefs that are condemned as 'heathen' and 'pagan'. What would be your view or the view of the Ahmadiyya Community regarding such traditional religions that still exist in various parts of the world, particularly in Africa.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad: From an Ahmadiyya point of view and that is, as I have explained before, from an Islamic point of view as we understand Islam, religion in its essence is seen as one entity - as one entire, undivided domain. With such a view of the religious domain, a general condemnation of a part of religion or a form of religion would create other problems as this would point to the notion that God has been revealing himself differently to different people at different times on this planet. [This could also lead to the view that there exist different gods] and that, in turn, would imply that there have to be at least two gods or as many as the number of differences. On the other hand, it may be that, (heaven forbid), there is a god who has lost control of his faculties completely and, as a result, one day he is thinking one

thing and another day something else which is completely different. In other words he is inconsistent about the world he has created. This is the reason why, as I stated earlier, according to the Ahmadiyya philosophy there has to be a single entity of religion not a divided one. It should be the case that religions should basically approve of each other's fundamental views but this is what we do not see. This is the dilemma that needs to be resolved instead of condemning other religions. Once this dilemma has been resolved, the need for condemnation disappears automatically as one begins to see the real nature of this issue.

According to the philosophy presented by the Holy Qur'an, every religion on earth was originally revealed by God. God came into contact with His chosen servants and a light was given to them and there was fundamentally no difference between that light - all the Prophets came with the same fundamental message that had two aspects. One was to bow to the authority of Allah the Almighty God, and not to bow to the authority of anyone else other than God and secondly, to discharge one's duty to others and to treat others kindly, justly and mercifully. According to the Holy Qur'an these are the two fundamentals that are to be found in every message given to all the Prophets. Hence, it was only Prophets who came [with a message for mankind] and never gods or manifestations of gods. What we see, however, is different. What we observe everywhere on earth, in every region we investigate, is that either sons of god, brothers of gods or partners of god and sometimes thousands of gods appearing as manifestations of god. The Holy Qur'an further explains how it is that this comes to be. The explanation it offers is as follows: Initially, when a Messenger of God proclaims himself to be from God and gives the message he has received from God to his people, he is vehemently opposed by the majority of those people and they wish to destroy him and annihilate him. That is the first trait of hatred found in the majority of people, that is expressed and manifested in the first stage of a Prophet's declaration of his appointment by God. After going through a long

period of sacrifices, the Messengers of God eventually gain wider and wider acceptance and, it is usually some time after their demise that they ultimately achieve widespread acceptance. Once accepted, a different process of distortion begins to takes place and that is one of raising the status of a Messenger of God from humanity to some sort of 'super humanity'. This, according to the Holy Qur'an, occurs everywhere and the same phenomenon continues to repeat itself.

In short, what happens in the first stage is hatred, distorting the person and the reality of the Messenger, declaring him to be something less than human and yet, later on, human beings with the same human psychology try to raise his station beyond his reality and elevate him to the level of 'super human'.

This, in brief, is how all the distortions creep into religion and instead of Prophets you begin to see gods and sons of god, brothers of god and relatives of god and other manifestations of God. This is what we believe to be the philosophy of religious development and hence if we see a distorted face of any religion, we do not condemn that religion at all. What we condemn is the trait in human beings of ultimately distorting whatever message they are given through a Messenger of God and all people are guilty of this and, therefore, condemnation of one group by another does not resolve anything. We all share this common trait and such has been the history of man. A deeper analysis would reveal that the forces working within human psychology are exactly the same - both the forces of hatred and the forces of elevating the Prophets of God to a super human level.

At one level the nature of the two forces are the same – we do not wish to be harnessed by another power. We do not want anyone to meddle with our affairs and to tell us what to do and what not to do. However, once the phenomenon of Prophethood takes shape, initially they are opposed and people try to achieve their objective by hate. They try to find fault in the Messenger by pointing, for instance, to his birth that it is lowly or not legitimate, and so on. Their argument being how was it that such a lowly and

'unfit' person became so close to God. Hence, he has absolutely no jurisdiction over them and he has no right to tell them what to do and what not to do. However, after his demise, he gains wider and wider acceptance as a person of God and once he has gone people now wish to create barriers in the way of the next Messenger of God. This occurs for the same reason – people do not want to listen to a voice other than their own. This time the barrier is created through love – not because the person from God was a man but because, in their eyes, he stood much higher than a man did and they bow to him not as a man but as a 'super human being'. Consequently, next time a Messenger of God appears, the majority of the people are prepared to accept him only if he is like the image they have created for themselves of the previous one having endowed him with divine powers. They are not going to bow to a man even though he may claim to be a Messenger of God. The basic phenomenon, therefore, is the same – man's non-acceptance of authority from God.

QUESTIONER

You were speaking just now of a basic 'defect' in man's personality which produces these tendencies. I now want to ask if you think whether at some stage in the future there will be a time when, as a result of the activity of one religion, this 'defect' will be solved. I ask this because, as I see it, this is one of the most important roles of the coming Messiah to fulfil.

Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:
This is a very pertinent question and you have understood me correctly that the fundamental role of the Messiah is to rectify attitudes and the rest is simply a matter of time. Attitudes have to be fundamentally rectified. It is, in fact, the case that the Prophets have repeatedly rectified attitudes and then they are repeatedly distorted. This is the high and low of religious development as observed in history. However, we are travelling from a regional concept of religion to one encompassing larger and larger

areas as man travels from tribal life to state life and now he is conceiving a life of global government. Similarly, religion has gone through the same course of evolution and we see that the meaning of concept of the 'Messiah' for the man of today is this that ultimately he would be the person who would usher in the new era of one humanity under one religion. The rationale and logic of such a development will gradually penetrate the minds of the people who hitherto had a distorted vision and ultimately they will begin to think differently.

The process of change in attitudes has been further aided by the spread of knowledge in the world today and the progress of general enlightenment. The man of today is much more enlightened than the man of the past. Although the task of bringing the whole world under the sway of new attitudes is very difficult, there are natural forces created by God which are assisting in this process and we see that people generally are displaying signs of discontent with the 'orthodox' views of religion that have been handed down to them for generations. Hence, we see signs of revolt all around us. The present age is a stage in the history of man where instead of being ready to accept a new positive value, they are being weaned away from the older inadequate values. Consequently, we see an increase in interest in new movements such as the Hippies, the Sufis, Hari Krishna, etc. Even the Americans are turning to sects such as the Moonies and Scientology, etc. These are symptoms of an unrest within. They sense that there is something wrong with their views – they feel what they have been given is wrong and they must escape. This desire to escape is creating that psychological atmosphere which will ultimately pave the path for the new philosophy based on truth. Until that path is paved we cannot hope for the world to be saved from an ultimate catastrophe.

One further thing that I must add here is this that the radical change in attitudes based on true values is not going to occur without a global catastrophe. Man today is in a paradoxical state of mind but at the same time he is not strong enough to wean himself away from the

pleasures to which he has become accustomed and addicted. Hence, there has to be a great jolt before he can really have the power or strength enough to change, to totally wean himself away from the past thoughts and practices and accept a new era and such a jolt can only come from a world wide calamity.

I would like to recount here an interesting conversation I once had with an English businessman while travelling from Dacca to Calcutta which is a very short journey, about half an hour or so. We were exchanging views about matters of religion and although the travel time was very short, we began to agree so quickly that I was surprised. However, when the journey nearly came to its end, he said, there is one last thing he must say and that is that although he agreed with my philosophy – he thought that it was right – but if I thought that he was going to become a Muslim and change his way of life or that his people were going to do that, then I was living in a fool's paradise or some words to that effect - that is not going to happen. I said that I totally agree with him on that point but added that he would also agree with me that there was a phase in the history of Japan similar to our present phase, before the Second World War, when all the efforts of the Christian missionaries failed to interest Japan in Christianity but once the Second World War broke out the pride of the Japanese was broken. The war also broke their attachments with the past and from then on it was just plain sailing. It is reported by some Christian scholars that within ten years, 25% of the Japanese population had converted to Christianity. Later on many of them drifted away but a radical change in their attitudes had occurred. I pointed out to my fellow traveller that this is what will happen again to which he responded, light-heartedly, that he would wait until the Third World War!

QUESTIONER

I wonder if you are suggesting that this calamity becomes an inevitability or do you see it as a secondary course because people refuse to listen to the Message?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:
The fact is that whichever way you look at it you cannot avoid the calamity because such has been the case in the past – the pattern of mankind's behaviour never seems to change. People generally do not accept the truth without paying the cost. First they extort the 'cost' from those people who are following the truth and then they have to pay the 'cost' themselves and without 'cost' you cannot gain a commodity. This is exactly what is going to happen again. It has happened before so many times that I cannot force myself to choose a different course for humanity today.

The inevitability of such a course of events is further supported by the fact that the controlling forces of power are immoral – a fact that is not hidden from any one. You can say they are atheists, Russians, Americans or give them any other name, fundamentally the politics at the top has become totally immoral – what they pursue is their own selfish ends and this is the 'morality' that controls their decisions. What is morality, after all? Apart from other things, it is religious application. Morality gives you the power to steer and the faster the 'machine', the greater must be your moral command. Should this not be the case, you are bound to be involved in some accident somewhere. Should the moral force not keep pace with the 'machine' it steers, that is the changing form of political, social and economic structures, then the ultimate course towards a great calamity is unavoidable. The 'morality' at the top of politics that is almost 'machiavellian' in its character, controlling such great forces as the H bomb, the neutron bomb and the nuclear bomb, is steering mankind unavoidably towards a catastrophe.

This seems a very grim outlook that I have described but in my view it is inevitable.

My Visit to Qadian

By Bockarie Tommy Kallon

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) has described Qadian as *'The Capital of His Messenger.'* The greatness of this remote hamlet cannot be under-estimated. Divine Wisdom had ordained this land to be the birthplace of that Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) who Allah Himself has described as *"The Champion of Allah in the Mantle of all Prophets."* It is from this tiny outpost that emanated that spiritual light destined to dispel darkness from the world. It is for this reason that I had a longing to visit Qadian, a desire became so strong, that I resolved to attend the Jalsa Salana, Qadian, in November.

I began with prayer. In humble prostration at His threshold, I supplicated that Allah Almighty may remove all obstacles from the way and enable me to undertake the blessed journey. I also sought to persuade other Khuddam to come along knowing the trip would be even more pleasant if I went in company. When I spoke to Farooq Mirza, son of Mirza Manan Sahib, he was full of enthusiasm. I was delighted to have found a travel companion.

Minarat-ul-Masih
Qadian, India

When the visa and travel arrangements had been finalised, I went to see Maulana Ataul Mujeeb Rashed Sahib, Imam of the London Mosque, to get whatever advice he may render by way of what to do while there. I was only half expecting a brief chat; however, I recall vividly the excitement and passion Imam Sahib showed once he realised why I called on him. With childlike exuberance, which demonstrated both his love for and attachment to Qadian, Imam Sahib spent nearly an hour telling me of all the sacred sites, places of interest and what to do. Before the conversation had ended, Imam Sahib had me wishing that I could further extend my planned one-week visit without even having stepped foot there. Imam Sahib was also gracious enough to send a fax to Mirza Waseem Ahmad Sahib,

brother of Hadhrat Ameer-ul-Momineen and Ameer Jama'at Ahmadiyya India, introducing both Farooq and I and requesting that as this was our first visit to Qadian, someone should be appointed to usher us around.

We set off on Royal Jordanian Airways on the afternoon of Sunday 4th November. Our flight via Amman arrived in Delhi 9:30am the next day and later that afternoon, we set off on the six-hour journey to Amritsar via the Shatabdi express. As we pulled into Amritsar at 10:30pm we were apprehensive as to whether anyone would be there to receive us. As we alighted, we spotted a Khadim wearing the typical duty badge. Alhamdulillah! We were in safe hands. The reception team organised our taxi to Qadian and as it was pretty late and dangerous, one of them volunteered to come along with us on the final one and a half journey to Qadian.

As we drove, both Farooq and I were anxiously looking in all directions hoping to catch the first glimpse of the Minarat-ul-Masih. We had seen the minaret on innumerable photos, banners and letterheads but here was a chance to behold the original in all its splendour and glory. The wait seemed like eternity but as we finally approached Qadian at 11:40pm, lustrous and radiant as the pen and personality of its holy architect, there stood the glorious Minarat-ul-Masih. No doubt this was a moment of prayer and instinctively did I raise my hands in prayer thanking Allah Almighty, celebrating His praise, invoking His blessings on His noble Prophet.

We were ushered into the European guest houses in Qadian. As we had not yet said our Maghrib and Ishaa prayers, we asked to be shown to the Mosque. On our way to Masjid Anwar closest to the guest houses, I casually enquired about Bait-ud-Dua and whether it was possible to say our prayers there at that time. To our delight the reply was in the affirmative. After a brief tour of Masjid Mubarak, the moment I had longed for all along the journey finally came - a chance to offer prayers in the simple yet incandescent Bait-ud-Dua.

I still recall my feelings as I took those first steps into Bait-ud-Dua. Fully conscious that a Prophet of Allah had built and used this room repeatedly and extensively for worship, I was so much in awe of the Divine presence, that in a manner similar to stage fright, all my senses deserted me. My mind went blank as I struggled to recall how to begin my Salaat. I had to compose myself: 'Inni wajjahtu

MY MATERNAL GREAT GRANDFATHER, MASTER NOOR ILLAHI JANJUA, WAS A COMPANION OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH (ON WHOM BE PEACE), AND LIVED IN QADIAN. HIS SON, MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER, MAULVI EHSAN ILLAHI JANJUA, WAS A MISSIONARY TO SIERRA LEONE IN THE 1940S. HE WAS TO MARRY THERE AND HAVE CHILDREN, OF WHOM MY MOTHER IS THE ELDEST. I ALSO HAPPEN TO BE THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF WALEEYA, THAT MOST FORTUNATE SIERRA LEONEAN GIRL ADOPTED BY HADHRAT KHALIFAT-UL-MASIH III AND TAKEN TO RABWAH. I THEREFORE HAVE A VERY DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH QADIAN AND THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT IN GENERAL. THUS, FOR ME THIS VISIT WAS A MOST FULFILLING EXPERIENCE BOTH IN TERMS OF VISITING THE SACRED SITES SO OFTEN READ AND HEARD ABOUT AND ALSO IN TERMS OF RETURNING TO MY FAMILY ROOTS.

wajhiya lilladhi...' And then the tears! We had travelled thousands of miles, over 24 hours with the single most overriding aim of praying in this room and there I was finally worshipping in the Bait-ud-Dua. I took my time, prayed long and hard, and just as well because as delegates poured into Qadian, the lengthy queue never afforded me the chance to pray there again.

The following day we met Mirza Waseem Sahib. By the Grace of Allah, he had received Imam Sahib's fax. He received us most affectionately and enquired about our journey and families. But it was when he asked one of his attendants to show us around Dar-ul-Masih that we both felt really honoured and privileged. We got to see some of the most intimate places of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and his family which we never would have dreamt of seeing, including the room where the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) was born, the room where he fasted for six months and met with many past saints and prophets including the Holy Prophet while fully awake, the room where Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote Haqiqatul Wahi and other books, the Hujrah room where he was

resting when the miracle of the red drops took place, Bait-ul-Fikr from where much of Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya was written and the Promised Messiah's guest house. We also got to see some other sacred rooms around Dar-ul-Masih including the room where Hadhrat Khalifat-ul-Masih II was born, where Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV was born and the room he stayed in after he married. It was a most splendid experience.

Much of Wednesday was spent touring the other sites in Qadian including Talimul Islam College, the Langar Khana, the Bazaar, Jalsa Salana and Khidmat-e-Khalq offices and the Jalsa Gah. In his fax, Imam Sahib had requested that I be permitted to address the Jalsa Salana assembly. I was informed that I would be addressing the opening session of the Jalsa. As I sat to write a short address to be presented beforehand for Urdu translation, I reflected on what a great honour it is to address Jalsa Salana Qadian.

By Thursday morning we had been in Qadian for over two full days and had yet not mustered enough courage to enter Bahisti Maqbara and behold the final resting abode of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace). It was just too awe-inspiring. After Tahajjud and Fajr prayers everyone traditionally proceeds to Bahisti Maqbara and says a silent prayer. Today we resolved to tread along. As we entered the main enclosure, I was momentarily distracted from what lay ahead by the beautiful scenery that Bahisti Maqbara presents. The trees, plants and flowers along the way to the main burial area were beautiful. But it was the view of the Minarat-ul-Masih from the walkway that simply captivated me. It is a truly remarkable spectacle. We reached the enclosure that housed the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), Khalifat-ul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) and past family members of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace). It was generally kept closed so that everyone could only watch from a distant. I stood there for a long while just staring at the tomb as everyone around me was engaged in prayer. Finally I raised my hands, beginning and ending with the Durood prayer, I prayed for the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and all who lay buried in this Heavenly Graveyard.

We were to return every morning from that day again only watching from a distance. However, on the final day we had the good fortune of being allowed to enter into the burial area of Promised Messiah (on

'As I raised my hands in prayer visibly shaking with awe and overcome with emotion, I had an over-whelming sense of sin and worthlessness. There lay the greatest ever follower of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a man who had truly lived his life for the sake of Allah and dedicated every moment of his time, every ounce of his energy, every fibre of his being and every interest of his life for the sake of Islam; a man for whose truth Allah Almighty caused the sun and the moon to eclipse in the same month and year; a man who was accepted as the Promised Messiah of the Latter Days by 81 million people last year alone - there lay a man whose greatness, glory and grandeur was never ever to be interred with his bones.'

whom be peace) and family. Our main chaperone had arranged for the gates to be opened just to us. As we walked towards the burial area I could already feel my eyes welling up with tears as I engaged in Durood prayer, silently wondering how I would feel when I stood next to the grave of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace). We reached and the gates were opened. Almost dazed we walked timidly towards the tomb. I nervously conveyed my salaams to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and conveyed the salaams of all that had requested me to. As I raised my hands in prayer visibly shaking with awe and overcome with emotion, I had an over-whelming sense of sin and worthlessness. There lay the greatest ever follower of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a man who had truly lived his life for the sake of Allah and dedicated every moment of his time, every ounce of his energy, every fibre of his being and every interest of his life for the sake of Islam; a man for whose truth Allah Almighty caused the sun

and the moon to eclipse in the same month and year; a man who was accepted as the Promised Messiah of the Latter Days by 81 million people this year alone - there lay a man whose greatness, glory and grandeur was never ever to be interred with his bones.

After that experience, we had a proper tour of Bahisti Maqbara and got to see the place where the body of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) was laid one final time for his companions to behold before burial, the place where the election of the first Khalifa took place and the Janazah Gah where the funeral prayers of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) were led by Hadhrat Khalifat-ul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him).

By this time the one outstanding thing on our 'to-do list' was to ascend the Minarat-ul-Masih. Again our chaperone arranged for the doors to be opened and we walked up the 92 flights of stairs stopping at each of the three stories. We reached the top and quite honestly my initial feelings were one of acrophobia. I never thought I would be scared of heights but, 105 feet up was quite a bit of an altitude! Nevertheless, it was not enough to stop me from having a good look at almost the whole of Qadian from this vantage point. It was only then that I was struck by the single most amazing thing that summed up Qadian for me. I had expected Qadian to be a simple place yet in the year 2001 not as simple as I found it. The streets and houses are pretty much the same as they were when the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) trod the earth. The town had expanded but little and its habitants were humility personified. Qadian truly was and still is a corner of the world. I was astounded by the fact that the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) acquired so much knowledge, insight and erudition, both religious and secular, from this simple and remote corner of the earth. How from this tiny hamlet the victory of Islam was to be manifested eternally by the Sultan-e-Qalam, the King of the Pen, which the Promised Messiah

'IT WAS GREAT TO HEAR SO MANY CONVERSION STORIES FROM THE MANY NEW AHMADIS WHO ATTENDED ESPECIALLY FROM THE FORMER NON-AHMADI MULLAHS WHO CONVERTED AND ARE NOW UNDERGOING THE MISSIOHNARY TRAINING IN QADIAN.'

Tommy addressing the Qadian Jalsa

(on whom be peace) undoubtedly was. At the same time, I felt very fortunate and blessed indeed to be able to see Qadian in this state for even as the Holy Kaaba in Makkah and the Holy Prophet's (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Mosque in Madinah today stand in resplendent glory and lustre compared to 100 years after the demise of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), I know with absolute certitude and conviction, that despite being inconspicuous to the contemporary eye, the day would dawn when the Minarat-ul-Masih and its surrounding precincts would be enlarged to wider and loftier dimensions. So would be the aims and ideals which inspired its construction. The greatest of man-made structures built for worldly purposes would stand dwarfed in comparison to this humble Minarat-ul-Masih. All light will pale before its light. It would be a place of pilgrimage for future generations. They would look back and wonder what Qadian must have looked like in the days of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace).

Jalsa Salana itself was a splendid experience. There was assembled a concourse of thousands of modest, unpretentious Ahmadis all pro-claiming the glory of Allah, affirming His Unity, supplicating His forgiveness and compassion, eager

to follow in the footsteps of Qadian's illustrious past holy personages, keen to enhance their religious knowledge. It was great to hear so many conversion stories from the many new Ahmadis who attended especially from the former non-Ahmadi Mullahs who converted and are now undergoing the missionary training in Qadian. But it was the exceptional hospitality that stood out for me, even from the most senior members of the Jama'at. In consonance with the gracious spirit, noble aims and lofty aspirations of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), our hosts worked tirelessly, day and night, to provide us every possible comfort, at the same time always maintaining a pleasant demeanour. The people of Qadian genuinely practised the motto: *'Love for All, Hatred for None.'* As an African, I felt no barriers, no discrimination, no prejudice just love, affection and brotherhood. I have been amongst the ethnic minority in many places before yet I have never been so warmly received as by the people of Qadian. I quickly learnt the meaning of the Urdu phrase *'Ek tasweer'* as almost everyone wanted a photo with me, perhaps because I stood out from the rest. The subcontinent had been plunged into turmoil since the events of September 11th yet it is in Qadian, Darul-Aman, (a place of peace and security) that I truly found peace and brotherhood.

When the time came to depart it was only with a heavy heart that I was able to do so. I had suspected from the onset my stay would not be long enough and so it proved to be as I left Qadian for Delhi to catch my return flight. I was heartbroken to leave a truly spiritual colony. Yet I was grateful for the many pleasant memories I was taking with me. I felt privileged to have seen the birth-place of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace); that humble place from where the renaissance of Islam was initiated. And I definitely felt blessed indeed to have walked the same streets as did a Prophet of Allah and to have prayed in the same places where he had prayed.

May Allah Almighty bless all sincere Ahmadis with a visit to Qadian, Dar-ul-Aman, an abode of peace, a place of security, a town of tranquillity. Ameen.

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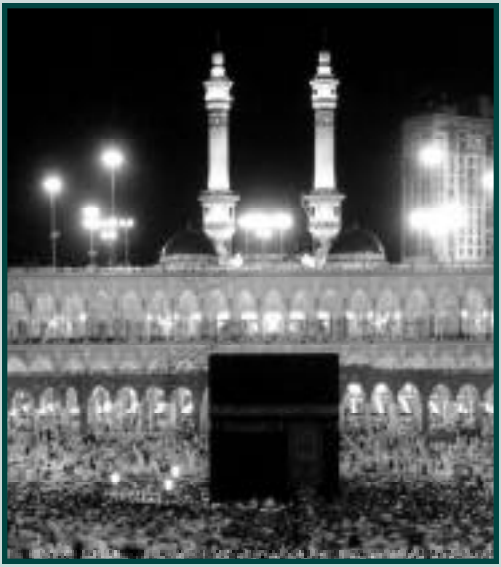

The Holy Ka'aba

MECCA, ARABIA

The First House of Worship, and The Spiritual Heart of Islam

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