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Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah

**Distribution:**  
Muhammad Hanif

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**Review of Religions**  
**The London Mosque**  
**16 Gressenhall Road**  
**London, SW18 5QL**  
**United Kingdom**

© Islamic Publications, 2002  
ISSN No: 0034-6721

# Editorial

The qualities of humility, worship and duty are repeatedly stressed in all religions. Yet they are rendered meaningless if only practised at a personal level and not on a macro level. For if a community of God-fearing people decide to take the law into their own hands even when there is no direct threat to them, and fail to follow the directives of their governments, then they have negated the spiritual training that they had gained through religion.

There is much to be said about showing restraint and respect for the rules of society, and behaving in a dignified manner. This is the mark of religious people rather than revenge, abuse and bad behaviour. The article titled the 'Road to Social Peace' explores the role of both the individual and of people in authority towards each other from a religious context, taking into account the teachings of various faiths on the subject. Similarly the article entitled 'Continuity of Divine Guidance' covers the

scenario of Prophethood and Messiah, and the restraint and dignity that should be shown when determining whether a claimant is true or false.

To make a quick judgement and then to abuse other people, these are the traits of people of low moral character, whereas Prophet Confucius(as) often described the characteristics of people of a higher moral character.

In the news in recent months, we have seen several groups taking drastic action supposedly in the name of religion, and encouraging people to commit murder or even suicide in the name of religion. All decent people understand that such actions are against the teachings of all faiths, and contrary to the actions of all Prophets.

If we are to be truly elevated as individuals, we must nurture good characteristics within us, but then the proof of these should be in the way that we deal with family and neighbours, government and laws, and people of other cultures and faiths. That should be the aspiration of all religious people.

**Fazal Ahmad**

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# Notes & Comments

## GOOD HOSTS - *by Tanveer Khokhar, UK*

Billions of people around the world have been watching the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Korea and Japan over the last few days. While it has been easy to criticise the ticketing procedures, some of the refereeing decisions or maybe even the weather, the one thing that all observers have noticed is the hospitality extended by the Koreans and Japanese to fans from around the world.

From the start, fans from all nations have been treated with respect, and been given a warm welcome wherever they have been. Even those nations who carried a reputation for bad behaviour have been afforded a warm and friendly welcome. At each game, the local people have taken to wearing the shirts and colours of visiting teams to give them encouragement and to make

them feel at home, and I am sure this was particularly appreciated by the smaller nations who had a small number of fans in attendance. Respect has been shown to the playing of the national anthems of each country. The local fans have set the standard by providing fanatical yet well mannered support for their own teams.

There has been no unruly behaviour, and fans, police and organisers have been surprised at the positive atmosphere created. Even the fact that the event has been jointly hosted by Korea and Japan, two erstwhile rivals, sends a positive message of hope to the Asian world.

Hospitality is a trait which has been given great prominence by religions. Good treatment of family, friends and

neighbours features highly in most religious doctrines, and has often manifested itself among religious people. The Muslim Arabs were known for offering gifts to their guests. Sikhs are known for the welcome and food they offer to visitors to their temples. Jews and Christians were taught to look after the wayfarer. And the same situation is found time and again among spiritual people.

Showing respect and kindness to guests and acquaintances, or even to hostile people, can have a disarming effect. Even when trouble is brewing, such an attitude can rapidly dissolve anger and change the atmosphere and outcome for the better. At the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam, his non-violent approach when re-entering Mecca not only prevented any loss of life on that historic occasion, it had a positive effect on the hearts of the Meccans who up to that point had been extremely brutal and hostile towards the Muslims.

We must learn from history and from the wisdom of spiritual teachings. Korea and Japan should be congratulated for the way they handled visitors at their great tournament. Irrespective of who won the World Cup, Korean and Japanese behaviour and approach would live long in the memory.

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# Religious Beliefs of North American Indians

By Zakaria Virk, Canada

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The Indians were the indigenous peoples of North America before the arrival of the Colonial Powers from Europe. At that point they were subjugated and in terms of religion, they were exposed to Christianity. However, research has shown that they had their own strong religious beliefs and concepts of morality and spirituality long before the advent of the Christians. The article takes a closer look at their culture and beliefs.

The author lives in Canada and has had direct contact with some Indian peoples as part of his research.

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## Discovery of the Indians

For more than five hundred years the American Indian has been the most recognised symbol of the New World. To call the Native Americans Indians is a misnomer. When Columbus reached the islands of the Bahamas, he thought he had reached the Indies (India, China and Japan). The people he saw on the islands he called *Los Indios*, or the Indians. The term Indian or Red Indian has been used since then to refer to all aboriginal peoples living in the Americas except the Inuit of the Arctic and Eskimos of Alaska.

Native Americans have lived

here for thousands of years. The Vikings explored the East coast of North America around 1000 CE and made some contacts with the Natives. There is strong historical and geographical evidence to suggest that Muslims from Spain and Africa had made contact with the Natives long before Columbus arrived in 1492. According to one source the first identifiable individual Muslim to have come to North America in 1539 is one Estevanico, a navigator with Marcos de Niza.

As to how many Natives were there when Europeans arrived in

the New World, some have estimated it to be one million living within the present US, divided into 540 tribes, with more than 500 spoken languages. Some famous Native tribes are Cherokee, Navajo, Sioux, Blackfeet, Shawnee, Mohican and Cree. Today only 221 languages survive. Many scholars have tried in vain to relate these languages to Asia but it has proved inconclusive. All of the languages can be transcribed with a total of 100 letters, with a great variation in the order of the letters.

Many languages still exist and are used in daily conversation. For instance on the reservations of the Western US, one can hear people converse in Sioux, Crow, Blackfeet and Navahos. In Peru more than 5 million people speak Quechua, the language of the Incas. In Paraguay, Gaurani is the official language of the country along with Spanish. In Canada many Natives speak Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Athapascan.

At present there are close to 3 million Natives living in the US and more than 600,000 living in

Canada. Most of them enjoy special treaty rights; they are citizens and have the right to vote. They are exempt from paying taxes; they carry special identification cards, can fish and hunt in any season. They live in tribes, speak their native tongues but most are conversant in English. Their names are distinct and sound strange to a listener i.e. George Longfish, Gerard Cornfoot, Tehanatoken, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Dull Knife, Geronimo. They live on the allotted pieces of land called reserves. Reserves (or territories) are lands set aside for the exclusive use of Natives. In Canada there are close to 2250 reserves, the closest reserve to Kingston (where I live) is Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. There is neither a single Indian nation nor a single Indian language; they have a wide range of racial characteristics and cultures.

The Native Americans have been classified as a sub-division of Mongoloid race and of Asiatic origin. Scholars have spent long years trying to figure out the origin of Aborigines, whether



they were Chinese, or descendants of one of the Lost Tribes of Israel.

The social organisation of Native Americans (a name they prefer to be called by) is based on family and clans or tribes. In the clans people traced themselves back through the male or the female line to a

common ancestor. The clans were named after animals known as totems, which is an Algonquian word meaning brother. (In Kingston's Lemont Point Park there is a 20 feet tall totem pole, with a variety of colourful faces painted on it).

The clan shared with the family the responsibilities of raising

children. To many Native Americans each animal and each tree had its own spirit with which the individual could establish contact through his or her own spirit. Some believed in a combined spiritual power that was unseen and filled the entire world. Some believed in personal guardian spirits and tried to have contact with them through dreams and visions. Several tribes worshipped a single creating force, a Supreme Being, or *The Great Spirit*.

#### Four Groups of Native Americans

There are four Native American groups that need to be mentioned here.

1. The Lakota were the 'typical' nomadic, equestrian Plains Indians who lived in tipis and hunted buffalo. They were notable, historically, for destroying Custer's forces at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876.

2. The Apache consisted of six tribes ranged over the American southwest. Their religion centered on the concept of a supernatural power that

manifested itself in almost every facet of the Apache world. They believe that they can develop a healthy and co-operative relationship with this power. The power is believed to offer its services to the Apache through visionary experiences.

3. The Navajo live primarily on the Navajo Nation, a reservation in northern Arizona and New Mexico.

4. The Iroquois comprised of five nations: the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk. They inhabited central New York State and claimed the Ohio Valley. Their federation of five tribes was the most complex of any Indian group.

#### Ownership of Land

The Indian leaders were talked of as spiritual guides, wizards, witch doctors or medicine men. At the heart of the conflict between the Europeans and the Natives were such fundamental concepts as individual's use of land, or private ownership. Even to this day Natives do not understand the need for working all year round, saving for the future, or the reason for

'TO MANY NATIVE AMERICANS EACH ANIMAL AND EACH TREE HAD ITS OWN SPIRIT WITH WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL COULD ESTABLISH CONTACT THROUGH HIS OWN SPIRIT. SOME BELIEVED IN A COMBINED SPIRITUAL POWER THAT WAS UNSEEN AND FILLED THE ENTIRE WORLD. SOME BELIEVED IN PERSONAL GUARDIAN SPIRITS AND TRIED TO HAVE CONTACT WITH THEM THROUGH DREAMS AND VISIONS. SEVERAL TRIBES WORSHIPPED A SINGLE CREATING FORCE, A SUPREME BEING, OR *THE GREAT SPIRIT.*'

cutting the mother earth with a plough. Many have a strong reverence for nature, and find the idea of dominion over the birds and beasts as repugnant.

For Native Americans the land and its produce, the air and water were free for the use of the tribe. No one owned the land as personal property, however a tribe could claim certain lands as its territory for hunting and farming. Some Natives regarded the Earth as the mother of all life and would shudder at the thought of selling their mother. At Taos Pueblo (New Mexico, USA) Natives walked about on the land in soft soled shoes during the spring as they believed the Earth was pregnant. Some hated

to use the steel bladed ploughs, so as not to open the breast of mother Earth.

### Religious Beliefs

The Native Americans believed that the world started with a spirit world in the sky from where men and animals descended to live on the earth. At first the earth was covered with water, the animals dived to the bottom of the sea and brought up the mud from which the earth was made.

The Cree people of Alabama and Georgia (USA) believed in a Master of Breath, equal to the sun and in the spirits of the stars and the winds. All Native tribes believed in the life of the Spirit after the death of the

body. Magic and the technique to compel people to do certain things by muttering incantations were quite prevalent. All Indians possessed amulets to protect them from harm or to cause harm to the enemy.

### **Ceremonies**

Whereas western religions typically consider ceremony the servant of theology, Native American religions barely recognise the distinction between myth and ritual. There were ceremonies around the time of planting or harvesting of plants. There were rituals associated with menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and death. There were restrictions on sexual activity.

The religious ceremonies were performed by medicine men that uttered prayers or performed rites including offerings, prayers, painting of the face or body and unfolding of packages containing sacred objects. The supplicant vowed that he would offer gifts if his wishes were fulfilled.

Songs taught in a vision were given much importance. Plains

Indians (such as the Apache) repeated songs according to their mystic numbers, the most prominent being four as well as seven.

### Sweatlodges

The Inipi Ceremony is a purification ceremony common among many Northern Plains tribes. This is an Ikce Wicasa (common man) ceremony that means this ceremony does not require a medicine person; however, a person may be selected to lead the ceremony. This ceremony may serve several purposes such as healing (in which a medicine person would be required), or to assist one in tapping into the Creator that dwells within each of us, or for several other purposes.

This ceremony is conducted inside a small lodge made of willow tree branches placed in the ground forming a circle. Then the branches are bent towards the centre and tied together at the tips, thus forming a dome-shaped structure about waist high. This structure can be built to fit in as many people as required for any particular type of Inipi

ceremony. Buffalo robes and/or other blankets are then thrown over the branches creating a small lodge with a small hole to be used as the entrance. The direction to which the entrance of a sweatlodge faces depends on the medicine person's vision. Some sweatlodges have their entrances facing east, while others face west. Sage is also placed on the floor inside the sweatlodge for the participants to smudge themselves, or with which to wipe themselves.

Other necessary items such as rocks, wood, and water must also be gathered. The wood is placed in a certain manner around and in between the rocks, which allows the rocks to be heated effectively. The person designated as the fire keeper is responsible for heating the rocks and for bringing the rocks into the lodge. The lodge is heated by fire, and then water is poured over heated stones to produce steam, which causes the participants to perspire. This was designed to purify the body, cure illness and influence the spirits.

Prayers and songs are recited, after which water is placed on the rocks causing steam to rise, and the temperature begins to rise inside the lodge. More songs are sung. Then the medicine person begins to pray. Next, the participants begin to pray beginning from the medicine person's/ceremony leader's assistant and proceeding in a clockwise manner. Prayers may be said aloud or silently.

Sweatlodges are distributed throughout North America. The modern Sauna is strikingly similar to a sweatlodge. The favourite incense used in ceremonies was made of sweetgrass. In Sun Dance lodges buffalo skulls were arranged in an excavated area called the altar. Masks were also used in these ceremonies. The Bull Dancers for instance wore Buffalo heads, and Iroquoies used a variety of masks.

### The Sun Dance (Wiwanyag Wacipi)

Dancing, drumming, and singing accompanied all rituals and ceremonies. Some dances were sacred, and some were for pleasure only. All tribes used

the drum. Young men who were courting maidens used the flute. In some tribes an eagle-bone whistle is used in ceremonies like the Sun Dance.

The Sun Dance is a most powerful ceremony. The dance is performed for four days and is usually held annually during the summer solstice. The Dance was held for various reasons such as healing, in thanksgiving of surviving a near death experience, dancing for someone who was physically unable to do it or who is too ill, or to give thanks to the Creator for miracles they had received. Another reason is to make a vow to the Creator in asking for something from the Creator. There are other reasons kept personal between the Sun Dancer and the Creator. Before Sun Dancing, one must first have Hanbleciya (vision) to learn if he should perform it or not because not everyone is required to perform it. If his vision tells him that it is all right for him to Sun Dance, then he will prepare to perform the ceremony a year in advance.

The Dance was held in a lodge made of a suitable tree. Before

raising the pole the builders put a bundle of brush, a buffalo hide and some offerings into the fork of the log. This was called Eagle's Nest. The lodge was in fact a huge tipi with a circular enclosure whose cross beams rafters extended to the fork of the central pole. Inside the lodge buffalo skulls were placed at the altar.

The dancers fasted and thirsted for several days, gazing at the top of the central pole as they danced and prayed for power. [Interesting that just as in more established monotheistic religions such as Islam and Judaism, fasting was used as a means of attaining spiritual enlightenment]. The dance itself was very simple, rising on their toes while blowing whistles. In some tribes the dancers were tortured by medicine men (like piercing the chest, arms or the back). Hence the US Government temporarily banned it in 1904.

The Plains Indians performed the Buffalo Dance that would ensure success during the hunting season. The Green Corn Dance celebrated the summer's

first corn crop. The ceremony lasted for four days. On the eve of the ceremony old clothing and household utensils were destroyed, and all house fires were extinguished. A new fire was started in the town's central location. Women carried torches of the new fire to their homes to rekindle their hearths; new utensils were made to replace the old ones. In the Hopi Snake Dance, snakes were released to ask the rain god to send rain.

### Shamans (WAKAN)

Many tribes believed in a spirit power, the Iroquois called it ORENDA, while the Sioux called it Wakonda. They believed that the Guardian Spirit helped guide a person through the hardships of life. When boys, and in some cases girls, reached their early teens, they went through a ceremony to help them find a Guardian Spirit. This was referred to as *Vision Quest*. The participant went without food, sleep, and water until he saw a vision.

The Shamans were individuals with strong supernatural powers. In some tribes they

were the medicine men or *Wakan* to native people. A shaman was believed to have close contact with the spirit world (just like pagan priests in Europe). He interceded for the individual or sometimes for the clan. They played different roles among different tribes from soothsayers, magicians, and trained priests who presided over the rituals.

The Natives believed that an object in the body caused some disease. Shamans usually blew tobacco over the sick person as it was considered to have magical powers. They sucked on the body of the sick person until they found the object causing the sickness. They would spit out the stone or a stick, which was hidden in their mouth.

Besides treating sick people, they could set bones and employed various herbal remedies. Many plants they used hundreds of years ago are still used by doctor's today i.e. Curare Arrow poison to treat hydrophobia, and tetanus. They also used quinine which physicians prescribe to treat malaria. The treatment included

herbs, therapeutic potions and home-made remedies. Some Shamans specialised in certain treatments such as treating a woman at childbirth or someone bitten by a snake. Other medical techniques included massage, smoking, bleeding and cupping.

To prove his extraordinary powers, a Shaman would summon people to a meeting and establish his superiority by performing tricks. These Shamans had an elaborate organisation, the master having a number of disciples. The Pawnee shaman handled burning corn-husks with his bare hands or stood on red-hot rocks. The Dakota Shaman could perform a fire-walking feat. The Crow Shamans took part in a public competition of their powers, one man trying to overcome those pitted against him.

In Middle America the priests were ranked according to the gods they served. High political officials were priests as they had been formally trained. Their calendar was geared to the solar calendar with a name for each day of the week.

### **Priests**

The priests performed public ceremonies for a given tribe, but a Shaman helped only an individual or a family. Priests went through an extended period of training. They used equipment and had places of worship for performing ceremonies.

The Pawnee Shamans were priests as well because they had undergone special instruction. Before ordination each priest had to demonstrate his skill to the tribe. The priesthood was hereditary, passing from its holder to the next of kin in the maternal line.

### **Belief in the Hereafter**

The Aborigines believed in the survival of the soul after death, but they did not believe in the notion of reward and punishment. They believed that the dead lived just as they had lived when they were alive, hunting buffalo, playing games, and living comfortably in the Tipis (tent shape living quarters). The Pawnee Indians believed that some souls travelled to the sky to turn into stars, while the Chiefs travelled

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to a known destination. People who passed away from sickness joined with spirits in the South Star's home, while White Morning Star held the fate of all others.

The Crow Indians divided the souls into two groups, one that haunts in the grave and the other that travels to the here-after.

Life after death was regarded as a continuation of man's existence in another world. Later Europeans who understood it to be a land where everything will be easier than it had been in this world invented the term 'happy hunting ground'.

### **Dreams and Visions**

Most Native Americans (Sioux in particular) attached great importance to visions. The Great Spirit (Wakan Tanka)

would become audible to him during the vision giving him instructions. In order to have a vision, he would go into solitude, fast and stay thirsty for four days, and supplicate to the Spirit to have pity on him. A Crow Indian would usually cut off a part of the fingers joint of his left hand to arouse pity from the Spirit. The boys in a tribe were admonished that all success in life derived from visions. Hence the boys would go out to a solitary place to fast and pray for some benefit. A mature person would seek a vision if his children were sick, or if he longed to revenge a killing or wanted to recover lost property. The Ojibway Indian's parents instructed their boys who were over the age of seven to fast to have the vision.

In an auditory type of vision a person would hear sounds like the call of a bird, the rustling of

leaves, the speech of an alien tribe. In a visual type of vision he would see animals like buffalo, elk, bears, eagles, sparrow hawk, dogs or rabbits. Many coveted a revelation but few obtained it.

Men and women in the Plains Indians sought visions through dreams. After fasting or self-torture the youth would dream that he was visited by a supernatural being who became his personal guardian. The spirit would teach him magical songs, prayers, good behaviour and tell him what objects to bring together to form his own personal charm. The sacred objects were wrapped in a skin that the Europeans referred to as '*medicine bundle*'. All tribes employed smoke signals and hand mirrors that reflected the Sun's rays for communication across long distances. (It is noteworthy that the US government used Indians to send secret coded messages in their native tongues during the Second World war).

The Plains was the scene of the last conflict between the Indians and the non-Indians.

Systematic slaughter of buffalo herds that were the largest source of their food finally ended their ability to resist the Europeans. They were confined to live on restricted areas called reservations.

### **New Religions**

Many new religions sprang up among the Native Americans. Most new religions started with a prophet, and they died with the death of the prophet. However in some cases there was a succession of prophets like Neolin among the Delaware. The new religions arose from the need to reassert, and redefine traditional cultures as they were threatened by assimilation into a foreign culture.

John Eliot, who was considered to be the Apostle of the Indians in New England, converted many Indians to Christianity in Massachusetts. He translated the Bible into the Algonquian language which was published in 1663, the first Bible to be published in North America.

### Hiawatha

After the arrival of the Europeans a new type of leader appeared among the Natives who urged his followers to give up liquor (just as Islam had taught many centuries earlier). As this person could predict future events, the Europeans called him a prophet. One of the famous Indian prophets was Hiawatha, the Iroquois leader who formed the Iroquois League (of six nations Mohawk, Oneida, Onandaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora) to end the wars between various tribes.

### Handsome Lake

Another Iroquois prophet was Handsome Lake (1735-1815), who founded the Longhouse religion that combined elements of Christianity and Iroquois religion. The Longhouse religion is a religious tradition of the Iroquois people, active from 1818 to the present day. The central rite is the periodic recitation of the Code of Handsome Lake by acknowledged preachers during a three-to five-day ceremonial. The very first teaching in the Code is his teaching that the creator was saddened by his people's

use of whisky. His visions were the beginning of his prophetic career. In one vision he is reported to have a conversation with Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>.

In 1802, Handsome Lake received a letter from President Thomas Jefferson advising the Iroquois nation to follow him which enhanced his position against opposition on some reservations.

### Wovoka

Another prophet Wovoka (1856-1932) founded the Ghost Dance religion in 1888. According to this religion the Great Spirit would one day restore the Indian way of life as it was before the Europeans arrived. Wovoka enjoined his followers to live in peace with the whites. He blended Christian ideas with pagan traditions, even pretending to be Christ returning to renew the earth. Renewing the earth was an age-old Indian idea. People from distant places came to visit Wovoka the messiah. The new faith gained followers among Dakota, Arapaho, and Cheyenne Indian tribes. The famous Wounded Knee battle was

fought in 1890 by one of Wovoka's followers in the Plains that resulted in the massacre of the Sioux tribe. This movement tabooed the white dress and fostered the vestiges of old life. In huge gatherings men and women danced into trances and told of visions when they came to their senses. This was called the Ghost Dance. To counter this movement, an inter-tribal Native American Church was founded.

#### Native American Church

Besides the traditional Native American religions, there are a large number of modified sects. The Native American Church (The Peyote Religion) claims a membership of 250,000, which would constitute the largest of the Native American religious organisations. Though the church traces the sacramental use of the peyote cactus back to thousands of years, the Native American Church was founded in 1918. The church incorporates Native traditional elements (visions, curing, seeking power through ordeals), with Christian teachings (references to Jesus, use of the Bible, and symbols like a cross), and the use of the

peyote plant. The principal ceremony is an all-night ritual consisting of praying, singing, preaching, testimonies, and ingesting pieces of hallucinogenic peyote cactus. A person who is troubled by his health or sickness in the family sponsors the ritual. The ritual is believed to offer curative powers of both botanical and spiritual medicines. The church encourages Christian moral values like generosity, chastity, family solidarity and abstinence from alcohol.

The Native American Church illustrates a trend of modifying the traditional Native spirituality.

#### Indian Shaker Church

The church originated in the spiritual experience of John Slocum, a member of the Salish tribe who received instructions from God while in a deathlike state in 1881. The church reached northwestern California in 1926, and Yurok, Hupa, and Tolowa congregations have built churches there. It remains strong today, often accompanying, rather than replacing, indigenous religious practices.

The church incorporates Protestant and native shamanistic traditions, although outwardly rejecting 'Indian' religious beliefs, and paraphernalia. Meetings are held in specially built churches featuring simple altars with white-painted crosses and white candles. Singing and hand bells are used to induce trances in which God's power is manifested by physical trembling, called 'the shake.'

### **Debt to the Natives**

In many Native societies individual's freedom of choice and the right to say in one's affairs was part of the pattern of daily life. The Natives of the Atlantic seaboard taught the Europeans much in regard to freedom, dignity of the individual, democracy, representative government and the right to participate in settling one's affairs. Many European philosophers and political thinkers were profoundly influenced by Native Indian political thought.

When Europeans landed in the New World the Natives supplied the newcomers with food taught

them how to plant, fish and hunt with Native methods. The newcomers were introduced to new utensils, tools, clothing and a peaceful way of life. No one in the Eastern Hemisphere knew of the useful crops such as potato, corn and tobacco. Today the Natives originally grew half of the world's food supply of corn and potato. Also the Europeans were introduced to more than 80 plants like: peanuts, pumpkin, pineapple, avocado, chicle (for making chewing-gum), many kinds of beans, cocoa (for chocolate), sweet potato, tobacco. All cotton grown in the US as well as the cotton raised in Egypt is derived from the species cultivated in the US. Tobacco spread to the Old World from the New World and at least 59 new drugs were introduced including coca (for cocaine) curare (a muscle relaxant), cinchona (the source of quinine); datura (a pain reliever) and ephedra (a nasal remedy).

International Boys and Girl scouts movements were predominantly inspired by the lessons learned from the Indian way of life. Today the con-

ervation movement finds itself turning back to Indian land ideas. We have come to realise that the unborn children also have a claim on this land as much as we do. We all need to live in total harmony with nature just as the Natives have for thousands of years. Child psychologists are studying Indian methods of raising, educating and disciplining children. Rousseau was thinking of free Native Americans when he said 'man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.'

### Summary

There is no one religious expression common to the 250 distinct Native American peoples still surviving in the US and Canada. Few Native American people today can say for sure how their ancestors worshipped before the onslaught of the Europeans. Too much death lies between the present and pre-Columbian America, too much cultural devastation, and too many forced conversions to Christianity. For Native Americans the struggle to survive and to maintain some sense of identity is an on-going concern. Life on the reserves is marred by

gambling, alcohol and without purpose.

However, a study of the beliefs and practices of their ancestors shows a focus on the spiritual aspects of life, even if their practices were slightly different to conventional monotheistic faiths of the middle east. They believed in a Creator and turned to Him for help and sustenance. A deeper study would show a much more intricate and involved religion.

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# The Purpose of Initiation

Presented below are two excerpts from the collection entitled *Malfoozat*. First is an address delivered in 1895 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. The second is an excerpt from an address by the Promised Messiah delivered in 1907. For the purposes of translation, the original Urdu text of the two excerpts is taken from the collection entitled 'Malfoozat', Vol.1, pp.2-5 and Vol.10, pp.93-95 respectively.



**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<sup>(ra)</sup>. Where the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> has himself stated a certain interpretation of the Arabic verse, this is incorporated in the main body of the text].

**Compiled and translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad**

One should know the benefit of becoming initiated through the act of Bai'at, that is, taking the Oath of Allegiance [at the hand of the Promised Messiah] and why it is necessary. It is the case that until the value and benefit of something is known, its true worth cannot be gauged. In any home there are all manner of things such as, for example, currency in both large and small denominations, wood, and other such things. The method of guarding different possessions is decided by their value and worth. A person will not

care for pennies as he would for pounds. As for pieces of wood and such like, these are usually just thrown to one side of the house without much care for their security. In short, greater care is taken in safeguarding things whose loss would cause greatest hardship. Similarly, in Bai'at, the thing that has the highest position is repentance or '*tauba*' which mean 'returning'. This is the term that describes the act of 'returning' from the state of sin in which a person finds himself - sins with which he has developed a deep relationship and hitherto had considered them his 'abode'. It is as if he has made 'sin' his place of residence. The meaning of repentance or '*tauba*' then is to leave such a place of abode and the meaning of repentance or *rujoo'u* is to adopt the virtues of purity and piety. It will be known that to leave one's own land where one has been living is a very heavy burden and one undergoes a multitude of difficulties in doing so. When a person leaves even a house, he suffers so much. When he has to leave his country, he has to break off ties with all the

friends he has known there. He also has to leave behind all the household items such as beds, rugs and bid farewell to his neighbours, the streets and lanes, the shops - all that he has to leave behind when he has to go to a new country never to return to his old country. This is what is meant by '*tauba*' or repentance.

The friends of sin are different from the friends of righteousness. Sufis have referred to such a change, from a state of sin to righteousness as 'death'. He who repents has to cope with a great deal of disturbance and interruption to his life and at the time of true repentance there are many great obstructions that appear before a person. However, God is Merciful and Beneficent. He does not take the life of a person who has repented until He has granted such a person better alternatives [for all that he has had to give up].

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ

*Allah loves those who turn to Him. (Ch.2: v.223)*

This verse points to the fact that a person who repents becomes poor and helpless, that is why God likes him and loves him and grants him entry into the fold of the people of goodness. Other nations do not consider God to be Merciful and Beneficent. Christians consider God to be cruel and the Son merciful in that the Father did not forgive but the Son had to give up his life to get that forgiveness. It is foolishness of the highest degree to consider that there should be such a great difference between the Father and the Son. It is more usual to expect that there should be some similarity of manners and morals between the father and his progeny but in Christianity no such similarity is proposed. Had it been the case that God was without mercy, it would have been difficult for man to exist even for a moment. God who created thousands of things prior to the human being in order that his acts may have a beneficial outcome for him, how could it even be imagined about such a God that He would not accept repentance and acts of goodness!

The nature of sin does not lie in this that God should create sin and then thousands of years later. He should think of a way to forgive. Just as a fly has two wings, one wing containing cure and the other poison, likewise, a human being has two 'wings' - one of sin and the other of shame, repentance and a deep concern [over his own misdeeds]. This is a common sequence of events like, for example, a person who beats his slave and then feels regret [about his cruelty]. It is as if the two 'wings' are working together, the poison along with the antidote.

The question here arises as to why the poison was created? The answer to this is that the poison itself becomes the antidote after it has been made to undergo certain changes. The poisonous elements having been removed, it becomes an elixir. Had there been no sin, the poison of arrogance, conceit and haughtiness would have become excessive in man. Repentance lessens the development of the extremely dangerous attitudes of arrogance, pride and haughtiness.

When the Innocent Prophet [the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam] asked for repentance seventy times then what should we do? It is only the person who is happy with sin, who does not repent from sin. He who knows sin to be sin will ultimately abandon it.

In the Hadith, the traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, it is stated that when a person repeatedly weeps before Allah, asking for forgiveness, ultimately, Allah says: 'I have forgiven you. You can now do whatever you wish'. This means that his heart has been changed and now sin would be naturally as repugnant to him as when a person sees sheep eating grass, he does not desire to do the same. Likewise the person who has been forgiven by God will not indulge in sin. Muslims develop a natural aversion to eating pig flesh whereas they indulge in all kinds of other acts that have been forbidden. The wisdom of such an aversion is this that it sets an example of repugnance to make people understand how they should hate sinfulness.

No matter how numerous are a person's sins, he should never stop himself from praying. Prayer is an antidote. Such a person will see how it is that through persistent prayers sinful deeds will come to be disliked by him. Those who allow themselves to be without hope having drowned in sin without turning to repentance, such people ultimately reject Prophets and the efficacy of their blessing.

This is the true nature of repentance. [The question here arises as to] why such a repentance forms an essential part of Bai'at, that is the Oath of Allegiance at the time of Initiation? The fact is that the human being generally lives in a state of thoughtless carelessness [with regard to spiritual matters]. When he offers to become an Initiate at the hand of a person who has been granted by God a spiritual change in his own life, he seeks to partake of this change. Just as grafting on to a tree changes the essential nature of that which is grafted, so this relationship [of the Initiate through his Oath of Allegiance]

should bring about the same effect. The light and blessings that are the mark of the one at whose hands one takes the Oath of Allegiance, begin to manifest themselves in the life of the Initiate provided the relationship is sincere and true. If the relationship is like that of a dried branch that has been grafted on to a tree, there can be no change. True benefit comes only when a new Initiate becomes like the branch of a tree - the greater is this relationship, the greater will be the spiritual benefit.

Bai'at or Initiation that is merely verbal and customary does not give any benefit. A person can only truly share in the benefit when he abandons his selfish desires and with sincerity and love joins the one to whom he has sworn his allegiance. The hypocrites at the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> remained without true belief because they did not develop a truly sincere relationship with the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. That is why a mere verbal assertion of La Ilaha illallah [that is, there is no God but Allah] was of no avail to them. Hence, it is necessary to

develop a relationship based in sincerity and true love [with the one at whose hand one has become Initiated]. The lack of a true relationship together with the lack of any inclination to develop such a relationship brings no result. The regret and complaints of such a person are of no use. The relationship of love and sincerity should be developed and inculcated. As far as is possible, the new Initiate should aim to become like the person at whose hand he has taken the Oath of Allegiance by following his practice and by adopting the strength of his convictions. The selfish soul of man promises him a long life but this is deception. There can be no reliance upon the length of one's life. One should hasten to lean towards truthfulness and towards worship and one should take account of one's deeds from morning till night.

[*Malfoozat*, Vol.1, pp.2-5]

The best and satisfactory state of a human being is one in which he is correct and clear in what he does and what he practices. The state of his deeds should vouch for the fact that the

blessing of God is with him and that he is always supported by extraordinary and powerful divine signs. It is only then that he is with God and God is with him. Satan creates an opportunity for himself in everything to deceive and divert people [from the right path]. It is because I have repeatedly presented my own revelations that some people have had the idea that they too should do the same. This is a trial for them in which they have been assisted by Satan and taken to the path of destruction. Consequently, they began to receive satanic revelation and to hear voices from within themselves. People such as Chiragh Din, Ilahi Bakhsh, Faqir Mirza and many other met their destruction in this path and there are many others still who are treading the same path.

Members of my Community should move away from such matters. On the day of Judgement God will not ask them how many dreams they had, rather, they will be questioned about righteous acts and as to how many good deeds they performed. Revelation is

an act of God - it is not an act of man. To consider an act of God to be the cause of pride and joy is the work of an ignorant person. Observe [the life of] the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and see how he used to worship. Sometimes he would stand up all night such that his feet became swollen. Upon enquiry from his wife as to why he strove so hard when he had been purified of sin, he replied: 'Should I not be a grateful servant (of God)'?

A person should never give up hope. The onslaught of sins is very severe and reform seems difficult but one should not despair. Some people say that they are sinners and as such they are overwhelmed by (demands of) the self so how is it possible for them to become righteous? They should consider that a believer is never without hope. He who despairs [and believes that there is no hope] is none other than Satan himself. A believer should never be weak. No matter how much a person is overwhelmed by his sins, God has placed such ability in man that he eventually does overcome sin. God has placed in man a power that burns away

sin and this power is there in man's nature. You will know that no matter how much water is heated and it can be heated so much that it burns whatever it touches, but even then if this water is poured over fire, it will quell the fire. This is because God has placed this characteristic in water such that if it is poured over fire, the fire is put out. Likewise, no matter how much a person is immersed in sin, no matter how much he is drowning in bad deeds, even then he has the capacity to put out the fire of sins. If this ability had not been given to man, he could not have been held accountable for himself. What is more, even the appearance of Prophets and Messengers would have been unnecessary. The reality is that the nature of man is pure. It is the case that for the body if there is hunger and thirst, there is also food and water. If we need air to breathe, there exists air. Hence, when it is the case that all that is required for the physical body is provided, why then should there not be a provision for the requirements of the soul? God Who is ever Merciful and ever Forgiving and

Who covers up the faults of his servants, has provided all the necessary provisions for the preservation of the soul. If a human being were to search for the spiritual water, he will find it. If he searches for the spiritual bread, it would certainly be given to him. Just as there is a law of the physical world, so there is a similar law relating to the spiritual world but the condition is that one must seek. He who seeks shall find. He who strives to find God will certainly meet the pleasure of God.

[*Malfoozat*, Vol.10, pp.93-95]



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# Organic Systems and Evolution

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

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An organ in medical terms, is defined as any differentiated part devoted to a specific function. There are many organs in the human body which need to be studied in-depth to determine whether they evolved gradually over a very long period of time, or were created spontaneously in their finished form as some of the clergy believe. They defy the evolutionary theory of Darwin in its specifics, yet, we insist here that they do not defy evolution itself.

It is a complete misunderstanding on the part of the naturalists that the divide between them and the creationists is the real contention. The religious clergy they often allude to is the extremist faction among the Christian scholars who deny evolution at all levels and believe in spontaneity instead. Spontaneity means that each animal was created separately in its finished form with all the organs it contains. This is certainly not the Qur'anic concept of creation which we have been explaining throughout the book. It is completely different from the creationist's view found among the Christians. As such we should not be misunderstood - and confused with the creationist when we discuss the creation and development of organs. One thing, however, is certain about the organic systems that even at their most rudimentary stage, they displayed four things simultaneously:

- 1 . The creation of an outer component which in itself is entitled to be called an organ.
2. The creation of a transmission system like nerve cords which carry

the information gathered by the outer organ.

3. The creation of an internal highly complicated recognition system which we refer to as a specific part of the brain. It is designed to receive the information and break it into components and to visualize the central message correctly.
4. Having done that, the brain centre has to transmit all the gathered information to a great number of other centres in the brain which take care of recording and re-distributing them to similar nerve centres in other parts of the body.

The purposefulness and design in the making of every organ which makes a component of this extremely complex organic system are but evident.

Our contention is that eyes and ears etc. are erroneously described as single organs which can perform a meaningful function by themselves. As organs they do not mean anything. They only begin to mean something when they are viewed as integral parts of the whole system to which they belong. Again, when minutely examined within their own confines, they reveal that they themselves are sub-systems comprising many smaller organs within them. Thus in their totality they acquire a relative role of sub-systems. Even at the rudimentary stages such organs are split into components which perfectly accord with the above description. The mechanism of sight, for instance, found among animals which existed hundreds of millions of years before humans were born, shows the same complexity of well-organized systems. Their visual system is also composed of many organs. By what logic can this be attributed to natural selection or any other Darwinian principle is completely beyond human understanding.

We also intend to present to the reader the example of not just one sort of eye that we are familiar with, but some differently constructed eyes which serve the same purpose of connecting the outer world with the inner universe of the living. There is no exception to this universal rule. Again, it is our purpose to demonstrate to every

sensible reader that in all these cases the structural details could not have been possible without pre-design and without the complete scientific know-how of a designer who conceived them. It should be remembered that each component comprises sub-components which themselves are highly complex and need a lot of explanation with regard to their internal composition and the nature of the material they are made of.

The two most vital organs which separate the living from the dead are the ears along with the auditory system they belong to, and the eyes as part of the optic system. We begin with the faculty of hearing in sequence as in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

*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.*<sup>1</sup>

(Ch.16:v.79)

The reader should be reminded that the Arabic word (*al-Fuad*) which is translated here as heart in fact always refers to the final seat of human understanding and not the physical heart. Many verses of the Qur'an strongly support this contention. For instance,

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى

*The heart of the Prophet was not untrue to that which he saw.*<sup>2</sup>

(Ch.53: v.12)

This verse refers to the vision of God's attributes by Prophet Muhammad(sa). Evidently the translation 'heart' is a figure of speech which customarily refers to mind because it is not the physical heart

which envisions the attributes of God, it is the human mind which does so. With this brief essential remark we return to the preceding discussion and demonstrate the anatomy of the human ear.

The visible external part of the ear is called the auricle (pinna), slightly differently shaped in different individuals, some having big pinnas and some tiny ones. The purpose remains the same - to enlarge the catchment area of sound waves which are directed towards the outer opening. This makes the beginning of the external auditory canal. It extends into a tube about one inch long lined with skin which secretes some soft wax and is connected with the tympanic membrane (tympanum or the eardrum). Here ends the external ear. The tympanic membrane marks the boundary between the external and the middle ear. The air pressure on both sides is kept equal by means of a special tube, called the eustachian tube, which connects the middle ear cavity and the throat (pharynx). This mechanism is highly essential because it permits the eardrum to vibrate freely in both directions.

The middle ear is a slit-like cavity located between the external auditory canal and the internal ear. It contains air and three ossicles, or small bones, which are connected so that they amplify and transmit sound waves from the tympanic membrane to the inner ear. The three bones in the chain are called the malleus, the incus and the stapes. The American counterpart of this terminology is the hammer, the anvil and the stirrup. The first of these connects with the tympanic membrane and the second is joined to the first and the third ossicle. The third (stapes or stirrup) connects with the membrane of the oval window which in turn vibrates and transmits the vibration to the fluid in the internal ear.

The internal ear is a series of sacs and ducts which together perform the function of hearing and balance. This is the most complicated part of the whole ear comprising three separate spaces hollowed out inside the temporal bone. These spaces make up the bony labyrinth, comprising the vestibule, the cochlea and the semicircular canals, all filled with a fluid called *perilymph*. The membranes are lined with nerve endings extremely sensitive to the movement of fluid. In the

fluid of the bony semicircular canals are the membranous canals which contain another fluid called endolymph. In a similar fashion, a membranous cochlea is situated in the perilymph of the bony cochlea and it is also filled with endolymph. The sound waves cause the tympanic membrane to vibrate as they strike it. These vibrations are enormously amplified by the ossicles and transmitted by them to the perilymph. The perilymph conducts them through the membrane to the endolymph. The waves of the endolymph are transmitted to tiny hairlike receptors which are stimulated and conduct nerve impulses through the nerve fibres to the brain centre (cerebrum).

The function of balance is performed by the three loop shaped tubes of the semicircular canals which lie at right angles to one another in three different planes. The fluid within them rocks when the head is turned, even slightly, in any of the three planes. The signals are constantly transmitted to the cerebrum through nerves and are interpreted there. By this interpretation we learn which way we are positioned and in which direction our position is changing. Right, left, front, back, above and below are all precisely covered. The slightest change in one direction to another is recorded and a corresponding awareness is created in the brain.<sup>3</sup> A sketch of the ear is presented in plate 7 to help the reader to visualize what has been described above.

We have briefly outlined the shape and the functions of parts of the ear. This description could be further elaborated with reference to the cells and tissues which constitute the parts and their internal complexities. Whatever we have described is quite sufficient to prove the point that the outer ear is an organ which defies all evolutionary theory for its gradual sequenced construction, slowly and bit by bit. Each part of this organ is essential for hearing, which if diseased, can either damage or render it completely out of order. We invite the attention of all who depend entirely on Darwinian principles as causative and commanding factors of evolution and request them to explain how such a perfect artifact of science and technology could have been created step by step in a billion or even a trillion years under the influence of the said principles. Can scientists, with all their advanced knowledge of the mechanisms of life, physics or advanced

chemistry, design even the structure of this organ to make hearing possible? Now that they know the complexities of the hollowed temporal bone through which this labyrinth passes, can they copy and reconstruct it with a suitable material which they have synthesized themselves? Could they honestly believe that such a wonder could have ever been created without a purpose and without a functional design, precise to its minutest detail, merely under the mindless influence of natural selection? The greater the time span taken by the blind forces of nature to create such a wonder as the human ear, the more impossible it becomes to organize, bit by bit, its constituent parts into a meaningful sequence. There has to be a conscious operator with perfect knowledge of natural laws which could be pressed into service to create a human ear.

But the outer organ we have discussed is not the only problem blind evolutionists will have to face and resolve. Now let us return to the nerve cords which transmit the pulses received by the ear. The making of these nerves in itself is an impossible task without there consciously being a design. Suitable material for their making has also to be synthesized and the electrical currents have to be provided to them in a precisely controlled manner. The nerve coatings have to be prepared from a special material which should insulate each nerve from its outer surroundings and protect it from the danger of short circuiting. This nerve must be attached in the right place to the inner ear while the other end needs to be connected to the precise spot in the cerebrum for it to deliver even the minutest vibrations, which when read together by the cerebrum make a complete message. We do not intend to explain the cerebrum itself, a task which lies beyond the scope of even the most knowledgeable scientists. The complexities of how it is made, how it performs all its functions and how it precisely transmits a meaningful message, which it has itself deciphered in the language of pulses, transmitted to the whole of the brain and further to the entire living body is impossible to have happened by itself. How the memory of that message is separately stored and preserved in the relevant receptacles, which may run into billions, and how the instant a particular message is required to be brought to the surface of our awareness, it is suddenly done without any apparent delay is yet

another impossibility to have happened without having been specifically designed. For each such message to be brought back to the awareness requires an efficient computer far greater and more complex than any computer so far built by humans.

Let us visualize some moment of our childhood when we laughed at a sound created by an animal or a human around us. It is quite possible that even seventy years later we hear a similar sound and it tickles the stored up sounds of seventy years ago instantaneously and makes us smile again. This system of similar sounds is so minutely and precisely designed that it baffles the most advanced experts who excel in the science of acoustics. Can any devotee of Darwin ever believe that all these complexities of the hearing system could have been created by the blind hand of natural selection? But we are not talking simply of their separate individual creation. The most exasperating part of this exercise relates to their simultaneous coordinated development, completely independent, yet most perfectly corresponding with each other. As the outer ear began to grow, at that very moment, by chance, a nerve must have started to grow by itself and by the same forces their counterpart in the plane must also have begun to be shaped. Each totally unaware of each other, each totally incapable of designing itself, each having no purpose or design, yet each serving a grand scheme and collective purpose. This is the multiple dilemma we face, which relates only to a single organ or a combination of organs, each of which is essential for the sense of hearing.

What we promised, however, was not only to discuss the human ear and its complex organic system but also to discuss some other ears in the animal kingdom whose complexities are fathomless. Some of these still pose a challenge to the specialists to design on their drawing boards such animal ears with the same singular faculties.

Let us begin with the owl, the symbol of wisdom in the West and that of utter stupidity in the East. Wise he may be but even the wisest among them could not have designed any auditory system let alone his own, and the most exquisite functional mechanism of his ears. To highlight its unique features we advise the reader to compare it with

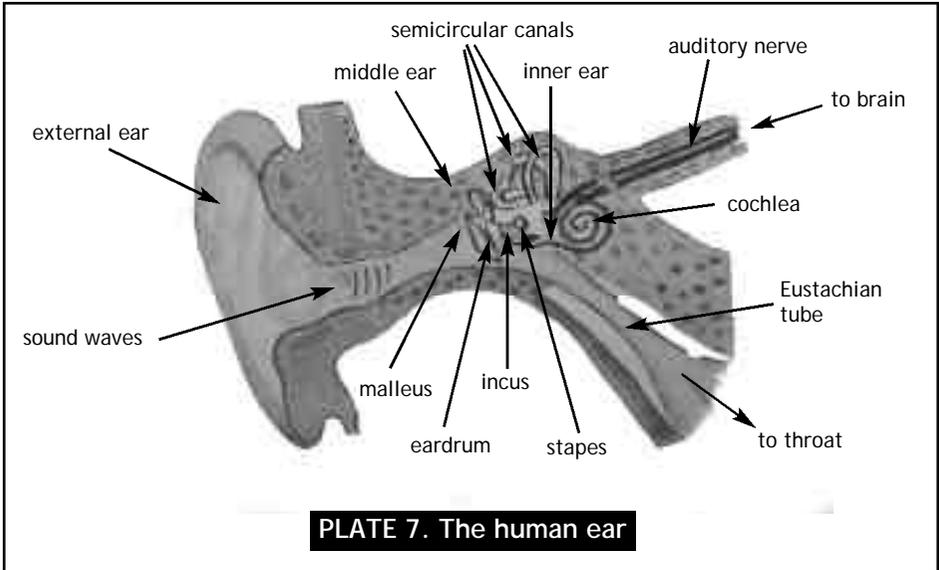
the human auditory system. The human ear, as in most animals, is divided into two receptacles. In most animals of advanced species they are similar and serve the same purpose. The information collected by both ears is harmonized by the brain as a single sound yet it informs us with regard to the direction and location of the sound. Those who are hard of hearing in one ear always find it difficult to locate a sound. The separate placing of the two ears in itself pays great homage to their designer. But the naturalists refuse the existence of any design pertaining, to this most masterly product of acoustic engineering.



The ears of the owl are not only in line with an overall complicated design, but they also stand out among all animal ears. The right and left outer ears in an owl are directed slightly differently in bearing to each other

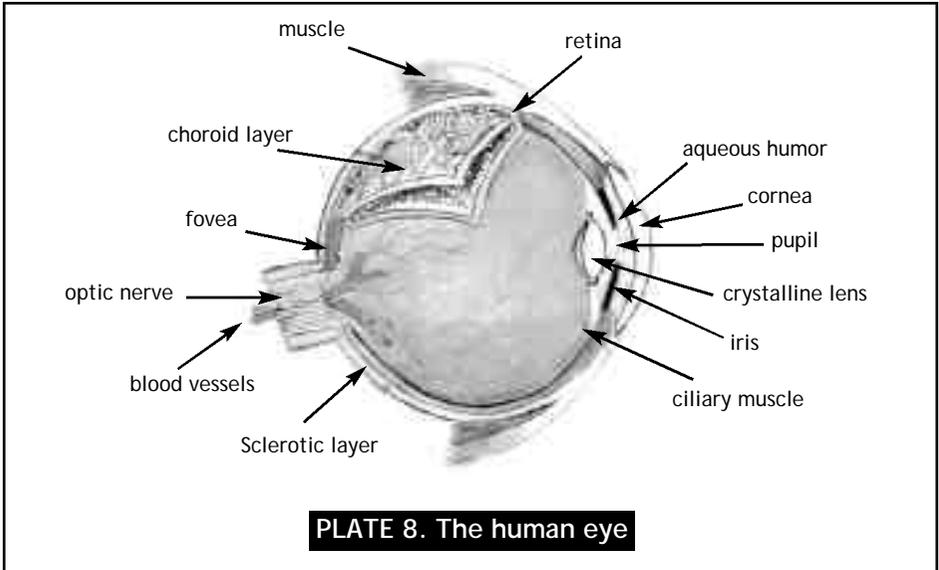
Yet if one suggests that this was neither wilfully designed nor created but must have happened under the influence of a non-creative mindless principle, how happily they would break into a smile and say *yes, now you have got the point!* Could a wise owl's smile be essentially different from theirs at such moments? But here we do not intend to elaborate this point further.

The ears of the owl are not only in line with an overall complicated design but they also stand out among all animal ears. The right and left outer ears in an owl are directed slightly differently in bearing to each other. This difference in their orientation is so well-measured and precisely designed as to serve a specific purpose. The slightest random variation in this intricate design could have rendered them useless. The sounds they emit to the internal ear are transmitted to the brain which deciphers them perfectly despite their complexity. The whole system is so unique and precise in its intricacies that it enables the owl to hunt for its prey in absolute darkness without ever making a mistake.



Intrigued by this uncanny ability of the owl, the scientific community of the world has performed the fantastic task of exactly defining the owl's hearing system with the most sophisticated electronic devices. To our knowledge the greatest work on this was carried out by Masakazu Konishi, Bing Professor of Behavioural Biology at the California Institute of Technology and his colleagues. Their work was published in *Scientific American*, April 1993.<sup>4</sup> Although we bank largely on this article for the following information our brief description does not do justice to the great intricate work. Anyone interested in more scientific and mathematical data would be amply rewarded by reading that great scholarly thesis.

The unique auditory mechanism enables the owl to detect the feeblest sound emitted by the flutter of a mouse beneath fallen leaves in the dead of night. He knows exactly how far, in which direction, and at what spot the mouse is hiding. He correctly reads the distance down to the scale of millimetres. In total darkness, with soundless fluttering of his wings, he swoops down upon the mouse and scoops him up in his claws with such precision as not even the soil under the mouse is disturbed. Who shaped these ears and how? Can even the most



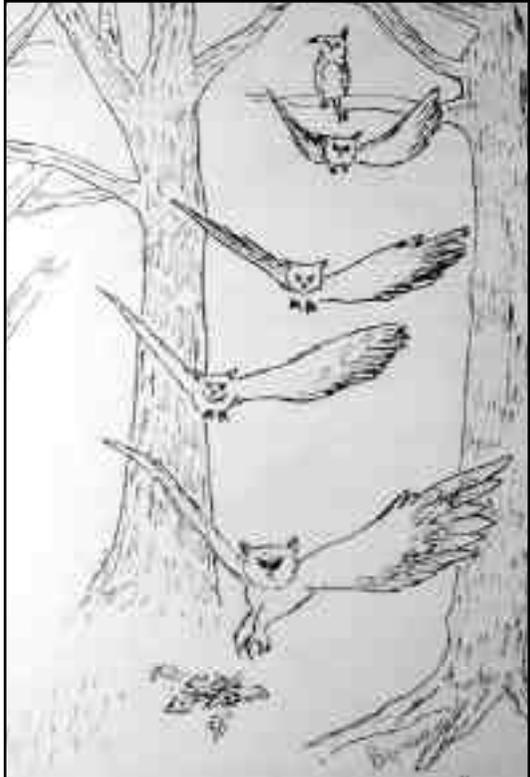
talented plastic surgeon alter the position and shape of any human ear of a blind person, ever so slightly, so that he can be compensated for his loss of sight and negotiate as freely as an owl does in total darkness?

Blind evolution, they tell us however, chanced upon such a masterpiece of craftsmanship and natural selection, playing no creative role, just selected it for survival. How naturalists can keep calm over their exasperating beliefs and contradictory realities of creative processes is beyond human comprehension.

The anatomy of the ear of the bat is also a complex subject difficult to compress in a short description. The constructional detail of their middle ear and their internal ear, though generally in line with that of humans, has some specific additional features which are unique to them and perfectly harmonized with their requirements.

Of special note are the ears of insect eating bats. Their sonar system is so intricate that it can put to shame even the most advanced sonar system designed by highly competent scientists. These bats can fly at

amazingly high speeds in pitch darkness and their vocal cords and ear receptors are perfectly harmonized to the environment. An insect eating bat can chuckle at staggeringly fast speeds at such high pitch that if a perfect protective system had not been devised, the sounds it emits could damage its own ears. This problem is resolved by the creation of the stapedius muscle in the middle ear attached to three tiny bones, the malleus, the incus and the stapes, which are responsible for transmitting the sound waves to the internal ear. At each click the bat emits, this muscle pulls aside the stapes which touches the eardrum; hence, no sound of the click is directly



Because of the twist in the owl's ears, the owl can measure the exact distance between it and the prey. In total darkness, the owl can swoop down on the prey, picking it up without disturbing the soil underneath. (Figure 1.16)

transmitted to the internal ear. The frequency of clicks and such momentary breaks of contact is a make and break system which never fails despite its high frequency. Such bats are known to emit these sounds more than 200 times per second and this muscle can keep pace with these rapid variations. Yet when the sound strikes against a solid object and returns to the ear, the contact of the bone with the drum is immediately renewed so that no echo is ever missed by the bat during the innumerable intervals of disconnection.<sup>5</sup> How it can perform this magic beats comprehension. Imagine, 200 sounds per second with not a ripple transmitted to the internal ear and yet it connects 200



The bat uses its sonar beam to pick up the position of a moth. but the moth has its own defence mechanism and makes a weak sonar image. It abruptly changes its path to avoid attack but the bat anticipating the moth's evasive action moves into position and catches the moth. (Figure 1.17)

times again in order not to miss a single echo of the returning sound signals. The bat's ear does it in an amazingly complex world of sound and echoes which are delivered in different pitches with different frequencies. Thousands of bats flying in a small chamber in total darkness continue to click at different pitches. The bats do not interfere with each others' signals as if each sound is tagged with a different frequency that is recognized by every bat.

The conscious command of frequency is the most amazing part of the system. The faster the clicks are emitted, the faster information is updated in fractions of seconds, so that

bats can negotiate with perfect ease every interfering object, be it another bat or a physical obstruction. They can safely negotiate through innumerable branches in the lush growth of dark forests without striking against any of them. In the bat caves they can manoeuvre their flight in accordance with the contours, or rocks and their undulating surfaces. They never strike their heads against other bats or protrusions, barring some very rare accidents. They can perceive a thread thinner than a hair and avoid collision. All this is done with signals, their frequencies and pitches, entirely at the command of acoustic bats.

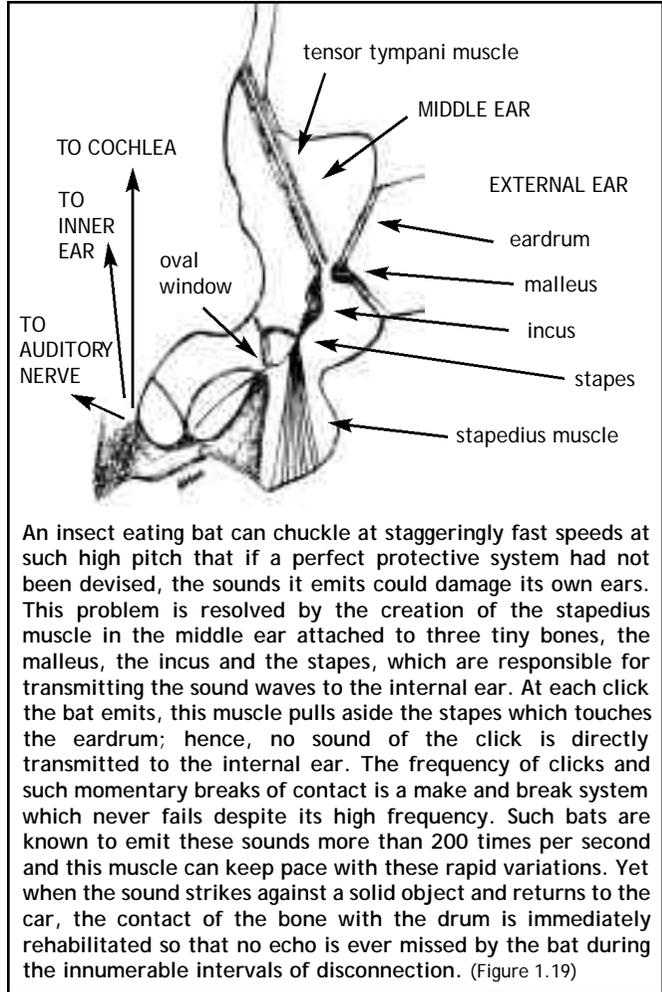


The bat uses its conscious command of the frequency of the clicks it emits and can thus negotiate with perfect ease every interfering object. (Figure 1.18)

When necessary, some bats can emit 200 clicks per second, each lasting only one thousandth of a second but kept apart sufficiently from other similar signals so that the internal make and break system constantly keeps pace with it. Within one thousandth of a second the contact of the bone, the counterpart of ossicles in humans, is broken from the eardrum and before the signal arrives back as echo it is made again, never failing within this extremely short space of time.<sup>5</sup> All this is intentional. The bat knows how to raise the frequency of signals, fully commanding their pitches and changing them exactly, as needed. It can choose the frequency which does not interfere with other hundreds of thousands of bat signals. One really wonders how the hand of natural selection could have shaped the ears, the throats and the brains of the bats with such profound precision and such complete harmony. If a man happens to be there, the clicks may not be heard by him at all. Most of them are at a pitch which cannot be heard by human ears. All this profusion of sound signals if audible to man would explode his eardrums, yet luckily, all that he perceives is perfect silence in a jungle full of bats.

The disuse of eyes over a very long period of time has a shrivelling effect, like a human limb when it is not used for years is rendered useless. Prolonged effect of disuse will always continue to shrivel an organ until it becomes smaller and smaller, and may finally become obliterated. This phenomenon is common to life and spares nothing. Thus the eyes of the insect eating bats are also reduced to such a

miniature size as to appear like mere holes to an observer. The fruit eating bats however have large beautiful eyes which can see, discern and locate. Returning to the construction of the bat's ear, over and above what we have said about the complexity of the human ear, the extra muscle which works as a most precise make and break machine offers an unanswerable challenge to the evolutionists. Remove the specific function of the tiny muscle, which it performs only in the case of bats, and the whole



hearing system of the insect eating bats would become totally ineffective. How could natural selection have played any role in the creation and selection of that muscle? Its precise construction and location can certainly not be attributed to it. The only part natural selection could have played was to wait until random and mutational changes had created so many possible variations of this muscle from which it could finally choose. But it is impossible to visualize that this



The system is exceptional and unique which protects the brain of the woodpecker from being damaged by the impact of the extremely powerful shock waves produced by the rapid striking of its beak. (Figure 1.20)

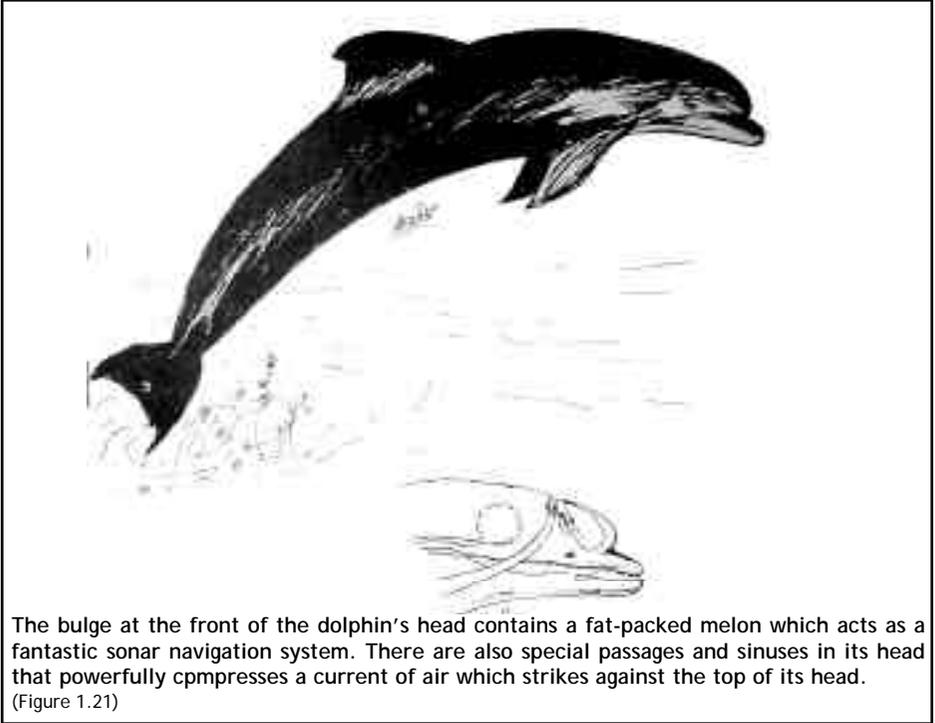
specific muscle with its specific functions could have been created by the random creative forces of life at work, without design, perfect know-how and precise technology. Made-to-measure precise instruments such as these are created to perform specific tasks in specific contexts and cannot be dismissed as random.

Incidentally, there is another similar example from among the birds which is also singular and precisely tailor-made. It saves the animal from the ill effects of its own functional ability - an ability unique in the entire animal kingdom.

The beak of the woodpecker rapidly strikes at such points upon the trunks of trees where it locates the presence of worms by acutely listening to their crawling movements. It begins to strike so rapidly that hundreds of strikes are powerfully made in a second which scare the worms out of their hideout

for the woodpecker to scoop them up with its long elastic tongue. It is so fast that humans cannot distinguish between different strikes which appear to them as a single blur. That functional availability is exceptional among birds. More exceptional and unique is the system which protects the brain of the woodpecker from being damaged by the impact of extremely powerful shock waves produced by the striking beak.

Between the beak and the brain there is a separating impact absorbing tissue which prevents the shock waves reaching the brain directly. No other bird can strike at such a rate and no other bird is provided with such a protective device. This is another example of how animals are protected against the possible harm of their own specialized functional abilities. We wonder if any naturalist could suggest any random



methodology to explain how natural selection could have chanced upon this.

Let us now return to the main topic of discussion on the ear, sound waves and sonar devices. From the birds of darkness in the air let us delve deep to the bottom of the muddy seas and rivers such as the Indus, the Ganges and the Amazon and see how animals confronting such murky habitats can shift and negotiate.

Dolphins are provided with a fantastic sonar device which they employ to their advantage both in the open seas and thick muddy bottoms of oceans and rivers. The thick stagnant mud would not permit them to see what lies even a few inches in front of them. What they need is not merely their eyes but a complete sonar system with which all dolphins are equipped. This system is so complex and interdependent as requires a special study. Special passages and sinuses are created in its

head through which it most powerfully compresses a current of air which strikes against the top. There happens to be on the forehead of these dolphins a large fat-packed, oval shaped organ called a melon. The compressed air, when it strikes against the melon, activates it to initiate a strange incomprehensible phenomenon. That lump of fat immediately turns into a fantastic sonar station. It works like a sound lens that emits a sonic searchlight which can move ahead uninterrupted by the turbid waters or mud.

The dolphin can emit 700 such sonar signals per second which are echoed back when they strike against any solid object. The echoes are perfectly calculated by the dolphin's brain to indicate to it the exact distance between the dolphin and the object, and also the precise nature of that obstruction. It can perceive a small metallic object at some distance and know exactly whether it is filled or empty. It can distinguish between living and non-living objects. The dolphin employs the same device in the open seas to detect fish even miles ahead. Aided by the same sonar device, it rapidly homes in on them constantly calculating how close it has reached the shoal before it begins to rapidly swallow them up, one after the other.<sup>6</sup> Could natural selection create this complex sonar system with an exactly corresponding receptive apparatus in the brain which could precisely decipher the echoes? Can any naturalist create a similar bulk of fat to produce a well-directed sonar beam? Whatever modern technology he may employ, let him try his hand at producing even a single sonar wave from such a fatty bulk. Yet a dolphin's melon can somehow produce 700 such waves per second.

The great brainwave of Darwin, which the naturalists believed solved the riddle of life, could only produce three dead principles: struggle for existence, survival of the fittest and natural selection to carve and modulate life. The naturalists prefer to forget that all these three principles are dead, deaf, dumb and sightless. They are not creative principles. They only operate when some creator has already produced something for them to work upon. The naturalist has to demonstrate first the creative processes of the dolphin's hearing system, only then can they talk of what natural selection might have done to them. We

only demand from them not to confuse the two issues of natural selection and creative factors. How and which creative processes were at work in the case of the dolphin, or the bat for that matter, and how did they gradually begin to develop these systems to perfection? How did Darwinian principles aid the anonymous creator at each creative step before they were finally consummated into their present form?

Now, we shall move on to discuss the faculty of sight and commence with a brief overview of the human eye.

The eye as we shall demonstrate, is a very delicate and intricate organ. As such it is carefully and naturally protected. The dorsal part, or the back half of the eyeball, is protected by the skull bones while the eyelids and eyelashes aid in protecting the anterior part, or the front half of the eye.

A sac separates the anterior part of the eye from the eyeball itself and is lined with an epithelial membrane which aids in the destruction of some pathogenic bacteria that may enter from the outside.

Should any small foreign object enter the lid area the natural defence system is immediately activated. Swift eyelid movement and tears released by the tear glands, containing an antibacterial enzyme, try to wash it away. These tears then drain away into tear ducts located in the lower corners of the sockets and leading to the nasal cavity. The eyeball itself rests against protective cushions of fat within its socket, and is attached by pairs of muscles extending from the inside of the socket to the eyeball. These are the muscles which move the eye.

The eye (see plate 8) has an almost spherical shape. The wall of the eyeball consists of three layers:

- 1 .The sclera: the outermost layer made of tough white connective tissue, commonly known as the white of the eye. It bulges and is transparent at its front, forming the cornea.
2. The choroid layer: the middle layer made of a delicate network of

connective tissue and richly supplied with blood vessels. This layer completely surrounds the eye except for the pupil which is a small opening at the front of the eye, directly behind the cornea. Around the pupil the choroid layer is pigmented, known as the iris, giving eyes their different colours, either brown, blue, green, hazel or a combination of these. It is the pupil which controls the amount of light entering the eye onto the convex crystalline lens attached to the choroid layer by ciliary muscles. These muscles, when they contract, allow the eye to focus on objects whether they are near or far. The aqueous humor is a watery fluid filling the area between the cornea and the lens and helps to maintain the forward curve of the cornea. Behind the lens, the entire space is filled with a thicker transparent substance, the vitreous humor, which is necessary to keep the eyeball firm and in its spherical shape.<sup>7</sup>

3. The retina: the innermost and perceptive layer *less than a millimetre thick*. It includes some 10 different layers of cells known as the receptors, ganglia and nerve fibres.<sup>8</sup> The receptors, better referred to as photoreceptors, are of two types: cones and rods. There are about 130 million rod cells for black and white vision and only 7 million cone cells for colour vision in the human eye.<sup>9</sup> Cones are conical in shape. The light which is focused on the retina stimulates the cones and rods. The cones perform the major function of splitting the light into various colours. If defective, the person would become colour-blind. During the full light of day the cones are sufficient to perform all the functions of sight. Rods are rendered useless yet they have their own importance in dim or night vision. In dim light, or total darkness, it is the rods which perform the function of vision but they can only differentiate between black and white. Cones cannot work at all under such conditions. During very dim light, colours become faded or totally disappear. When a person moves from a brightly lit place to a dark room the time he takes to begin to see things again is the time taken by the rods to become fully reactivated. The cones and rods transfer their stimulation to the ganglia which are situated near the front of the retina. When stimulated, they start impulses which stimulate the ganglia in front. From the ganglia more than half a million nerve

fibres carry the impulses to a large cranial nerve called the optic nerve. The spot where the optic nerve joins the retina is called the blind spot because there are no cones and rods there.

From the back of each eyeball, separate optic nerves take up the function of transmission of sight to the occipital lobe of the cerebrum which make the centre of vision. This centre is divided into two lobes, one for each eye. Some of the optic fibres cross from the right eyeball to the left, and from the left to the right. Thus what one sees with each eye is interpreted in both lobes<sup>10</sup>. The image formed by the retina is inverted but the centre of vision re-erects it. The centre of vision performs other fantastic things as well. The image is in fact very tiny but is enlarged to life-size and what we see enlarged is sometimes a hundred thousand times or billions of times greater than the original image. Cast a glance towards the stars. The vision of vast space which fills the tiny spot in the brain is many trillions of times greater than the original image cast on the retina. This act of wonder is performed not by the organ, the eyeball alone, but by the entire visual system of the three major organs involved. However, the grandest display of resultant imagery is performed by the centre of vision in the brain.

The retina also does some other wondrous things. It works as a film that captures visions, washes them instantly and new visions replace the previous ones; a task which is impossible to be performed by man-made films and videotapes. Far more amazing things are done by the centre of vision. It immediately preserves the image in life-size somewhere in the intricate filing system of the brain. Billions of such images can be recorded and preserved during the lifetime of a person. A man with a healthy mind can, in an instant, invoke an image cast during his early childhood with the same colour, environment and lifelike size. Again, the stimuli which are related to a particular image, however remote they may have been in time, are also invoked with the resurrection of the image. Thus, the brain makes the third organ of the organic system of sight.

Profound scientific research has been made on the fear stimuli in various animals and their effect on the receptive organ of sound and

vision referred to as the brain. They have discovered that the imprint of fear on the relevant brain tissue, whether caused by sound or sight, is permanent. Its response can be subdued or erased by psychiatric or medical treatment but the image itself remains permanent. The whole optic system frustrates all attempts by the modern scientists to fully understand it. No man-made optic or auditory system comprising the three organs we have discussed can ever match the intricacies of these amazing coordinating machines. This should have been the area of the naturalists research to discover which forces play a creative harmonious role. That is what they do not attempt, perhaps because evidently the fingers of these composite systems would be raised in the direction of God and not in the direction of Darwin. We are talking here of internal biology and mechanisms of life, not of the external forces which blindly operate and have nothing to do with the mechanisms just described.

As we have suggested in this book before, the beginning of vision does not begin with the creation of eyes. It is a composite sense of awareness which grows in an animal resulting in organic development. Recent, intense scientifically controlled tests have been carried out in the dark underwater world, hundreds of metres below the sea surface and the research is being extended beyond to the sea bed several kilometres below. At around 200 metres, light practically disappears. During this probe, it was discovered that the dark underworld of oceans presents some completely eyeless animals who show reaction to the weak glimmer of light emitted by phosphorescent animals. This discovery was made with the help of a highly advanced electronic machine called the Ventana. It carries no pilot and is remotely controlled via cables which also guarantees a constant supply of electricity to the Ventana. The same cables carry the information back to the scientists sitting in the ships above, closely watching the experiment day and night. A fascinating report of this experiment was published in *Scientific American*, July 1995<sup>11</sup>. Among so many other amazing things it shows that Medusa, a jellyfish, possesses no eyes whatsoever yet showed a reaction to the robots, light by sinking deeper. This is exactly what we claimed earlier, that it is the diffused awareness of the living at the lowest level of their existence which is employed by the Creator to give birth to the sensory organs. Every

beginning is often a tiny beginning yet it is likely to grow to higher stages of fascinating developments. The next step to this general awareness, as explicitly displayed by Medusae, has to be an eye like a pinhole camera without lenses and this is exactly what we find in nature. But even this pinhole eye cannot be modelled by any Darwinian principle because even at this rudimentary stage it presents a full optic system and not a casual hole. These animals have two pinholes instead of one, converging a mutually coordinated information to a receptacle behind, which in turn passes it on to an inner sense of awareness that can be referred to as a sort of elementary brain. Moreover, the system we observe in humans is also found as fully developed in the optic organs of ancient animals which lived many hundreds of millions of years before. It remarkably reduces the time left at the disposal of blind evolution from the beginning to the creation of such animals. Most insects are found with complete optic systems and some fish fossils in Australia have been dated as five hundred million years old, with holes indicating large eyes<sup>12</sup>. This further reduces the time for bit by bit development of animals' eyes to a mere five hundred million years which is incredibly small for their evolution to take place. Take note that this expanse of five hundred million years has to be divided further into subsections, a portion of which has to be employed for the creation of the bricks of life. However, the entire time available from the beginning to the end of the ultimate consummation of life is in itself far too short - as though it were a mere tiny speck compared to what was needed. The building of the bricks of life alone requires a time unimaginably greater than the entire time spent evolution, yet that too has to be accommodated within the short period. This is the magnitude of the dilemma the scientists face. Whether to weep at them or to laugh is dilemma for the rest of the world to resolve.

All eyes, wherever they are found in the animal kingdom, perform a scientific function for which they are perfectly designed. They are completely harmonious with their surroundings. Purposelessness negates the existence of an instrument which performs any function. If even a rudimentary instrument is created before it is put to some function, that function has to be presupposed. This is simple logic of the realities of life.

Man began to work with stones. These stones we apparently without a purpose but the moment we see the shaped into axes with a handle attached, no sane man c declare that even this rudimentary machine was created t chance without purpose. What life offers is billions of tim more complex. Each creation of life serves a purpose and exactly designed to serve it. To call it a purposeless creath journey is blindness supreme.



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(Aslo worthy of study are his other works on fishes like *The Rise of Fishes* (1957)).

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# The Road to Social Peace

By Fazal Ahmad, UK

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Throughout history, society has been plagued by wars, crime and hatred, both within a community or society, and between societies and cultures. Often, religion has been misused as a vehicle to instigate such events even though the issues at hand have had nothing whatsoever to do with religious ideology.

Is there a role and message that religion brings which can help to achieve a safer and more peaceful world? This is the subject covered in this article.

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## Introduction

In everyday life, there appears to be a rise in poverty, crime, wars and hatred. Religion is just one of many features of a society used as an excuse to create tension and war, even though more often than not, religion is not the subject of the dispute or even of the grievance.

There are countries within which groups of differing ethnic backgrounds and faiths have begun to turn on each other and to effect 'ethnic cleansing' as we have seen in the Balkans, central Africa, the Far East and India recently. There are other scenarios in which groups have been forced to establish their own ethnic cantons and as a

result have witnessed the emergence of an environment of hate such as in Ireland or Palestine, or in the ghettos of multi-cultural cities, even in the developed world.

So are there differences in people which mean that they can never get on with each other, and are the different religions doomed to always be the subject of war and hatred, or are there deeper trends in society?

In order to create a better world, we first need to understand the cause of problems as well as the symptoms. Through a study of the various religious scriptures, it is possible to get an insight into religious philo-

sophy related to social order and the means to maintain stability in society. The following article examines this subject in greater detail.

### Religious Superiority?

We start with the issue of whether certain religions automatically provide their followers with superiority over others, and whether this means that tension is inevitable.

We have actually seen great periods of advancement in which religious tolerance led to an environment in which society grew and was enriched. Such was the case of Islamic Spain or *Al-Andalus*, in which the Islamic rulers gave equality and liberty to Christians and Jews and therefore everyone in the whole society came to respect each other and learn from each other. This was the catalyst for what became known as *Islamic Science*. Huge advances were made in medicine, astronomy, mathematics and technology. In fact, many of the great 'Islamic' scientists were also Christians and Jews but thriving under the Islamic climate of tolerance and harmony. Islamic Spain fell into

decline when the rulers became family factions and created discord in their people. So it was harmony and unity that enabled that society to prosper, underpinned by a religious conviction of equality.

Where religions have been manipulated to teach superiority of a race or religion, this leads to conflict. This is not because the religions are different [often the moral teachings are remarkably similar] but because the instigators use differences to create an unjust hierarchy in society, and to deny rights and opportunities to certain elements within their societies. Thus it appears that Muslims and Jews and Hindus and Christians are at war with each other, but actually the perpetrators have used religion to create divisions in society, and religion has become a convenient tool in their hands. They could equally have chosen colour, tribe or even preferred football teams to create the same havoc.

To understand whether any religion could ever allow its

followers to abuse worshippers of another faith or to give others a lower status, let us take a closer look at the various teachings on this subject. Islam teaches the following:

*O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognise one another. Verily, the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you.*

(Holy Qur'an, Ch:49, Vs.14)

Here, the Qur'an describes the variety of 'tribes and sub-tribes' as a means of distinguishing and testing people, and removes any thought of superiority of any one race over others. This is backed up by the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> which include the following quote:

For the white to lord it over the black, the Arab over the non-Arab, the rich over the poor, the strong over the weak or men over women is out of place and wrong.  
(Hadith of Ibn Majah)

Now let us take a brief glimpse at the teachings of other faiths, starting with Hinduism:

I look upon all creatures equally; none are less dear to me and none more dear.  
(Bhagavad Gita 9.29)

The teachings of the Jews recorded in their Mishnah states:

But a single man [Adam] was created for the sake of peace among mankind, that none should say to his fellow, "My father was greater than your father."  
(Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4.5)

The eastern religions of Confucius<sup>(as)</sup> and Buddha<sup>(as)</sup> also contain the following wisdom:

By nature men are pretty much alike; it is learning and practice that set them apart.  
(Confucius' Analects 17.2)

So what of all these titles, names and races? They are mere worldly conventions.  
(Buddhism, Sutta Nipatta 648).

Here we have seen in the teachings of various faiths including Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism that none of them tolerate discrimination on racial grounds. In fact the underlying message in all faiths is that individuals are judged on their own deeds and merit, and do not acquire a higher status simply through ownership of a specific clan or religion.

Different faiths were sent to all of the tribes around the world, and according to the Holy Qur'an, none have been denied Divine spiritual guidance.

Obviously as man has evolved, the capacity to understand has also matured and therefore not all of the teachings are preserved in written form, and not all have the same level of detail.

The Qur'an being the last written message, is the most comprehensive and therefore offers the easiest route to spiritual fulfilment. However, Muslims are taught to respect all of the Prophets, those that are explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, and those that are not. Muslims are also taught to

respect the beliefs of pagans such that they in turn respect the God of Muslims and of all other monotheists.

So there is no question of 'superiority' of one person to another on religious grounds. It is actually how an individual uses his other religion to forge a closer link with the maker that determines the spiritual elevation or otherwise of the individual, but this cannot be assumed from a religious affinity alone.

Therefore if religion cannot be used as a basis for creating inequality unless it is misused, what does religion teach us about the liberty and equality of citizens within a society?

### **Equality and Charity**

Conflict often stems from inequality and injustice. Where people in a society are turned into an underclass for various reasons, they may easily turn to crime in order to rectify the social wrong that they perceive through being part of that under-privileged group. Any society which becomes too polarised (extreme differences

between the rich and the poor) is bound to be prone to crime and corruption, and this is what we see across the world.

Islam teaches equality and balance. Equality between men of different backgrounds, and balance such that society should not allow itself to become too polarised. As the Qur'an states:

*I will allow not the work of any worker from among you, whether male or female to be lost. You are from one another.*

(Holy Qur'an Ch.3: V.196)

And in the Old Testament we read:

'When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.'

(Leviticus 19:33 - 34)

No country or religious faction has a monopoly on philosophy and good teachings. It is very

easy for people to criticise the material western world where the thirst for wealth has blinkered many people. But here too are traits that the rest of the world can admire and learn from. The spirit of charity is very strong, and there are many people who make sacrifices of time and wealth in order to go and help needy people out of a sense of duty.

In a similar manner, the opportunities and respect that is afforded to disadvantaged people such as the disabled are admirable. These aspects of liberty and equality for the blind, the deaf, the dumb and the immobile shows a regard for the very weakest members of society, and should not be forgotten when we think of social deprivation.

For this message to be put into practice, it requires good government. What does religion teach us about government and positions of authority?

### Government

Government often has a pivotal role in promoting social justice, equality and harmony. For this

to happen, people need to respect and follow the dictates of government, but equally there is a heavy burden of responsibility on the government to act righteously and fairly.

Hearing and obeying [those in government] are the duty of a Muslim both regarding what he likes and what he dislikes, as long as he is not commanded to perform an act of disobedience to God, in which case he must neither hear nor obey.  
(Hadith of *Bukhari* and *Muslim*)

Other faiths also discuss the role of administration and government in positive terms:

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.  
(Mark 12:17)

When the right principles of man operate, the growth of good government is rapid.  
(Confucius - Doctrine of the Mean 20)

Here we have different accounts from religion instructing followers that they must respect and obey authority unless it teaches them to move away from God. Similarly in the quote from the Bible, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> teaches his followers not to mix or confuse politics with religion. Hence he commands that things of a religious nature are in God's Realm while political issues are in Caesar's realm.

Even local traditional faiths such as that of the Yoruba in Nigeria show the virtue of obeying authority:

Lack of respect to the constituted authority is the source of most conflicts in the world.  
(Yoruba Proverb)

But just as people are told to respect authority and government, there comes with authority a strong sense of leadership and responsibility that should not be taken lightly. People given authority have a greater burden to be seen to be just and God-fearing in order that they gain the respect of their people.

If [a ruler] enjoins fear of God, the Exalted and Glorious, and dispenses justice, there will be great reward for him; and if he enjoins otherwise, it rebounds on him.

(Hadith of Muslim)

The best of your rulers are those whom you love and who love you, who invoke God's blessings upon you and you invoke His blessings upon them.

(Hadith of Muslim)

These two quotes illustrate the need for those in authority to act righteously and thereby gain the affection of their people through their own conduct and sense of justice. This is seen so many times throughout history in the great empires where rulers come to power through their sense of justice and empathy for their people and as a result great empires grow such as the Ottoman and Roman empires. But in later generations, when the rulers think they are above the Law and get embroiled in corruption and back-biting, even these great empires fall.

Other texts also talk about the responsibilities of good government:

Lay no burden on the public which the majority cannot bear.

(Talmud, Baba Batra 60b)

When loss is above and gain below, the people's joy is boundless. When those above exhibit no pride to the ones below them, their virtue is brightly illuminated.

(Confucius, I Ching 42)

Guardianship is not to give an order but to give one's self.

(Nkiya Proverb - Kenya)

When the king is deceitful, who will not be deceitful?  
When the king is unrighteous, who will not be unrighteous?

(Jainism - Somadeva, Nitivakyamrita 17.183)

Here we have wisdom from several faiths showing that leading by example and through duty, and having empathy with people is central to good government.

So taking action (armed or otherwise) against a government should be a last step. And taking such action in the name of religion is not permissible unless the government itself is preventing people from discharging their religious duties.

At the same time, governments have a duty to act fairly and to give opportunity and equality to all, whilst also gaining the respect of their people through their own good conduct. How often do we see ministers in governments behaving badly, or getting involved in corruption. There is a saying that:

'Power corrupts; and absolute power corrupts absolutely'.

There are danger signs when people in authority abuse their power. That is often what leads to rebellion and disorder.

It is also essential that the spiritual and worldly powers concentrate on their own issues and challenges. Politics is for politicians, and spiritual matters are for the clergy. It is often the case that when religious clergy start to gain

political power and to distort the boundaries between politics and religion that unrest ensues, particularly in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. Even sects of the same religion can be set against each other as we have seen in Ireland recently. Christianity teaches people to 'turn the other cheek' in the face of provocation, and yet here we have two Christian sects at war with each other, even though there is no religious difference to cause such hatred.

### **Conclusion**

It is far too easy for the world's media to conclude that religions lead to war, but in reality, religions all preach equality and social justice. It is in the way that religion is practised and abused that conflict arises.

Moreover, religions all show the responsibility of the individual within a community and of communities within tribes and countries. The message is that we all have a duty to look after our families and neighbours, and that charity is not so much an act of righteousness, but also a duty. If we allow societies to

polarise too far, social unrest is inevitable.

It is this phenomenon that we see so often today. People talk about 'ghettos', 'national debt' and 'ethnic cleansing'. It is often poverty or injustice that leads people to turn to violence and crime as a means to get their message heard or to seek revenge even though they may cloak it under a religious banner. In reality, there are hardly any religious wars as there are virtually no scenarios where people are being deprived their religious rights. Ironically, where people are being denied their religious rights, they are actually turning to non-violent protest and prayers rather than violence as a means of getting justice as they understand that their power only comes from God.

If mankind were to take proper care to impose equality and justice for all, and to ensure that no party is allowed to become too deprived or to lose hope, then it would ultimately lead to social peace.



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# Continuity of Divine Guidance



Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the Fourth 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 that were raised in a session held at Mahmud Hall, London Mosque on 18 April 1999.

*Prepared by Amatul Hadi Ahmad*

## QUESTIONER

Could you please advise me as to which verse in the Holy Qur'an refers to the appearance of another Prophet after the Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad: The Holy Qur'an has addressed this issues in a number of ways. Firstly, the Holy Qur'an informs us that God took a covenant from all his Prophets [and through them from all

their followers] that they would accept the Prophet who was to follow after them, provided the Prophet that followed did not disagree with the principles of the preceding Prophet. [In Chapter 3, Verse 82 of the Holy Qur'an, it is stated]:

الَّذِينَ لَمَّا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ

*And remember the time when Allah took a covenant from the people through the Prophets, saying 'Whatever I give you of the Book and Wisdom and then there comes to you a Messenger, fulfilling that which is with you, you shall believe in him and help him'.*

(Ch.3: v.82)

This Covenant was also taken from the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and the Holy Qur'an states this clearly:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ  
مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ  
تُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى  
وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ  
وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمُ  
مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ۝

*And remember when We*

*took from the Prophets their covenant, and from thee, and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary, and We indeed took from them a solemn covenant.*

(Ch.33: v.8)

In other words, God is stating that He took this covenant of Prophets from all the Prophets and He is now taking this covenant from Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> Prophet of Allah. This indicates that there was a Prophet of God yet to come or this covenant should not have been taken from Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>. Moreover, the essential qualifications of the Prophet yet to come were to be the same as of all the previous Prophets, [thus qualifying him for the title of 'Prophet']. In other words, should a Prophet appear after you [O' Muhammad, Prophet of God] who supports the principles enunciated by you and the teachings which have been founded by you, then that Prophet should not be rejected. In fact, you should

advise your people to support such a Prophet. In my view, this is the prime verse which supports the Ahmadiyya interpretation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's<sup>(sa)</sup> lofty status as the Seal of all the Prophets, that is *Khataman-Nabiyeen*.

Another way in which the Holy Qur'an deals with the issue of the appearance of a subordinate Prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, is by issuing the following edict in Chapter Al-Nisa where it states:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ  
 فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ  
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ  
 وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ  
 وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ  
 أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا ۝

*And whoso obeys Allah and*

*this Messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs, and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these.*

(Ch.4: v.70)

In other words, after Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, those who follow Allah and this Prophet, Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, would be among the people who are the recipients of rewards from Allah. What are these rewards? The recipient of these rewards would be persons from among the Prophets, from among the Truthful who would form the second order. These are people who adhere to perfect truthfulness and attain the status of the Truthful. After this category is the reward of those who are martyrs in the name of Allah and then those who are pious and do righteous deeds. These are the four spiritual rewards that were bestowed upon persons before Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> and these are the four spiritual

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THERE ARE MANY OTHER REFERENCES IN THE HOLY QUR'AN TO A PROPHET WHO WAS TO COME AFTER THE HOLY PROPHET<sup>(SA)</sup>, IN HIS UMMAH, AS A PROPHET SUBORDINATE TO THE HOLY PROPHET<sup>(SA)</sup>.

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rewards that would be bestowed upon persons who, in following the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, attained the four stations mentioned above.

There are many other references in the Holy Qur'an to a Prophet who was to come after the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, in his Ummah, as a Prophet subordinate to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. However, for the time being, the above two references should suffice.

### QUESTIONER

I came to know that the Ahmadiyya Jama'at was introduced about a hundred years ago. If this is correct then where was Ahmadiyyat thirteen hundred years ago?

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** Fourteen hundred years ago they existed in the form of the Muslims who followed the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>. In fact, the word *Ahmadiyya* was chosen to indicate that this community is referred to as a sect by the rest of the Muslims and it was to identify them that the term 'Ahmadi Muslim' was to be applied. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, the Founder of this Community, did not call it a sect. This is one thing that people do not generally understand.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, called this community 'Jama'at Ahmadiyya', that is, he called it a 'Jama'at', and a

وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُمْ  
لِتَأْيِدُوا بِهَمَّ

Jama'at is not a sect. He called his followers 'Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at'. In this form an Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at existed fourteen hundred years ago as the true followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>. That there would be another Jama'at like the one that existed at the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> had been prophesied by the Holy Qur'an as it is stated in the chapter entitled Al-Juma'a:

*And among others from among them who have not yet joined them.*

(Ch.62: v.4)

That is, the persons who would truly represent the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> in the latter days would bridge the gap between the earlier people and the followers of latter days and they would be made one. That is why I claim this on the authority of the

Holy Qur'an and do not state it just from myself. The Holy Qur'an has stated it in so many words that the true representative of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> in the latter days would link his followers spiritually to the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> so that they could be described as one people. His followers would be truly the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>.

### QUESTIONER

**What is the relationship between Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> and Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>.**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> claimed to be a spiritual representative of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> following the same attitude in life which denounced the use of force and coercion in the name of religion, that is the spirit of Christianity or rather, *should* be the spirit of Christianity that was taught by Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>.

This teaching was that in the face of coercion or oppression in the name of God, one should try to show patience and 'if struck on one cheek, offer the other one as well'. This form of sacrifice would eventually win more hearts than would be the case with the use of sword. This is exactly what is happening in Ahmadiyyat under Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian<sup>(as)</sup> and so we believe that he was true in his claim that he is a true representative of the spiritual Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup>.

### QUESTIONER

**What is the difference between a Messiah and a Prophet?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** Prophets are so many but all of the Prophets were not called Messiah. A Messiah teaches supreme sacrifice in the name of religion while other Prophets were given permission by God to defend themselves with the sword, if the sword was raised against them. Messiahhood lies

in this central attitude of supreme sacrifice and it is this that differentiates it from Prophethood.

### QUESTIONER

**The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> claimed Divine Guidance in establishing the Ahmadiyyat Jama'at. Can the same be said about those who founded the other seventy-two sects in Islam?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** You can ask them but they will tell you that this is not the case. None of the other sects were founded by a direct message to their leader by Allah. This can be verified by them. Ask any one, except for Shi'as - they claim that their beginning is authenticated by Allah's word. That, however, needs to be subjected to some scrutiny, of course. As far as all the Sunni sects are concerned, none can claim that a divine person from Allah, having been commanded from Allah to do so, had instituted a new

organisation in Islam - none will be found among the Sunni sects - not a single one.

### QUESTIONER

So much evil is going on and is allowed to continue against the forces of good, justice and humanity. Will there be a time in the future that the forces of evil will be stopped or eradicated forever?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad: That is, in fact, impossible. The fight between the forces of evil and the forces of goodness will continue forever. At times you will find goodness more dominant against evil and at times you will, unfortunately, find evil becoming more dominant. Sadly, the time we are presently passing through is when evil seems to be dominant all over the world. However, I am quite sure that in the longer run, as God's Will be done, evil will be totally defeated, at least once. When this purpose is

achieved, should mankind then gradually return to evil ways, then Allah will not care for them and, according to the Holy Qur'an, a time will come when evil will ultimately dominate once again. At that time mankind will be wiped out from the face of the earth and a new form of existence will come into being that will displace mankind. This view is based on many verses of the Holy Qur'an. There is not enough time now to give all the references from the Holy Qur'an. However, in principle, one can understand this point with reference to Noah. What happened in the time of Noah was that evil had dominated and very few true divine people were left on earth. For the sake of Truth, Allah destroyed a number which was overwhelming - the number did not even matter. The people were destroyed almost as a whole and Allah did not care for them as He did not create mankind for the sake of evil. If God has done this before, He will surely do it again should evil prevail. If

mankind as a whole is rejected ultimately, having fallen back to its evil ways then Allah will wipe out the whole of mankind from the face of the earth and a new creation will come into being that will behave better than the previous creation of mankind.

### QUESTIONER

**Why is religious music not encouraged in Islam?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** Religious music can mislead people because it is something that has its own effect on people [which is often misunderstood as a spiritual effect]. If one is lost to the effect of music, then there is very little room left for the remembrance of Allah. Religious music is just a guise, just an excuse - no more. That is why at the beginning of all religions, music was not employed. When the religions begin to drift away from the original sources then gradually, in order to attract people, they start to make use

of devices such as music. They think the influence of music would bring people back to religion - but it only brings them back to music, not to God. In my experience such music lovers do not change in their style of life, or their practice is under the influence of music. I can quote some examples of 'qawwaals' who have gained world wide fame in reciting religious songs in a manner that influences the listeners very profoundly. However, after this when they return back to their normal life they are as far away from religion and spirituality themselves as they were prior to giving the performance.

Religion has its own music and that music is the spiritual music caused by the memory of Allah. If your emotions throb with the memory of God, that creates music which leaves no room for seeking help from any outward music.



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# Moons of Light

By Maulana Bashir Orchard, UK

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The purpose of this short treatise is to reflect upon that intangible light which pervades and illuminates the countenances of those persons who experience the presence of God to a lesser or greater degree. It is not the light of the Solar System generated by the Sun or electricity. It is Divine Light which manifests itself in different measure according to the individual in the same way that the light of the Sun manifests itself in different measure through the moon and planets according to their phase of positions and movements. Everyone is not the same. The faces of some individuals are more effulgent with the light of God than are the faces of other individuals. Alas, some show no light at all.

No doubt a person's face does light up due to various causes such as on receiving good and happy news; on meeting somebody whom one loves etc. In this treatise, attention is

being focussed on the emanation of Holy Light which is of its own distinctive nature radiating from the countenance of those who are infused to a greater or lesser degree with the presence of God. This Divine Light has a beauty and effulgence of its own.

Prophets of God hold a special relationship with their Maker. Their spiritual status is very high. According to the Holy Qur'an, they are sinless and exemplars of the Laws of God. The Glory of God shows in their faces. They may be likened to the spherical moon reflecting the light of the sun.

As is the way with Prophets, Moses<sup>(as)</sup> enjoyed communion with God to which his face bore testimony with holy light. We read in the Old testament:

'When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in his hands as he came down from the mountain,

Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.' (Exodus 34:29)

'The People of Israel saw that the skin of Moses shone'. (Exodus 34:35)

Similarly, in the New testament there is a description of the bright countenance of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>:

'And his face shone like the sun ...' (Matthew 17:2)

Reverting to the Old Testament, there is a clear prophecy foretelling the advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam who was raised in Arabia in the seventh century. His appearance has been described in glowing terms:

'His glory covered the heavens and the earth; and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was of the light.' (Habbakkuk 3:3-4)

Turing to the radiant appearance of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam, we learn:

'The face of the Holy Prophet shined like the full moon' (Shamail Tirmidhi)

'I have not seen anybody who has smiled more than the Holy Prophet'. (Abdullah bin Harith)

'He met everyone cheerfully and courteously'. (Husain bin Ali)

'Every time he saw me he smiled'. (Hareer bin Abdullah)

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> was the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community which he inaugurated in 1889 in Qadian, India. He claimed to be the expected Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi by Christians, Muslims and followers of other religions also. He was in regular communion with God. He was suffused with the presence of God which he exuded at all times. We are moved by the inspiring prayer:

'O Allah, diffuse light into my heart and ears;  
Diffuse light on my eyes and on my tongue;  
Diffuse light on my right and on my left;

Diffuse light above me and under me;  
Engulf me in Thy light.'

Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad, son of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) has written that one of his devout disciples known as Munshee Sahib was asked what impressed him most about his personality. He replied:

'I have known Hadhrat Mirza Sahib from a time earlier than the day he put forth his claim. Another face so pure and lit up with such spiritual light I have never seen in my life. That light and his magnetic personality were for me the greatest argument in his favour. What we constantly hungered for was just an opportunity to have another look at that illuminated face.'

Bahai Abdul Rahman was another devoted disciple of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as). He described his countenance during the last moments of his life:

'There was a peculiar lustre on his face and a deep inner reflection tinged with an indefinable peace and joy and a kind

of bright spiritual light which shone on his countenance.'

In the Holy Qur'an, God states that his righteous servants who offer diligent prayers and strive to win His pleasure carry a distinctive mark on their faces:

'Thou seest them bowing and prostrating themselves in prayer, seeking grace from Allah and His pleasure. Their mark is upon their faces, being traces of prostration.'

The mark upon their faces is that of Divine light and not the mark which sometimes appears on the forehead of a worshipper from prostrations. It results from righteous living and prayerful devotions. There are many who go through mechanical prostrations from which they may even acquire a mark on their foreheads; but it is not an indication of piety. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) has pinpointed the significant reality of this spiritual sign which lights up the faces of His righteous servants:

'When a man is pure of heart, he does not need a multiplicity

of miracles. One sign is enough to lead such a one to the right path if there be the fear of God in the heart.' (*Braheen Ahmadiyya*)

The *East African Times* published the following tribute to Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad after his death. He was immersed in spiritual light which this humble writer has witnessed on many occasions:

'God has Blessed him with ample means and affluence but he led a very simple and a saintly life. He was accessible to everybody and dearly loved and revered by all. Tall in build and possessed of a charming personality beaming with love and kindness for all, he walked with the dignity of a prince very much like his holy father (Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) the Promised Messiah. With a halo of piety about his face and his resonant voice, he captivated the hearts of those who met him and listened to his inspiring words. There is no doubt about it that with the passing away of Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad the world has lost the Moon of Prophets.'

Righteous devotees of God thrive on Divine Light both in this world and in the world to come. They hunger for it and manifest it in every way. The departed souls are forever praying for more light.

'... Their light will run before them and on their right hands. They will say, 'Our Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us; surely Thou hast power over all things ...' (Holy Qur'an, Ch:66, V.9)

May we be worthy of receiving more light. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.



**Bashir Ahmad Orchard** - served as a missionary in the UK for many years after the Second World War when he had been stationed in India. He also served as the editor of the Review for over 9 years.

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