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Editorial

In matters of religion, it is easy to get sidetracked into customs, traditions and practices at a rudimentary level, without understanding the reasoning and philosophy behind religion. But when we examine the purpose of religion, life and even of the *Review of Religions* itself, we see that actually it is to achieve personal renewal and enlightenment, and to distance oneself from worldly matters in order to refresh the soul.

These are the subjects covered in the context of the five pillars of Islam in the *Malfoozat* article this month. In this key work, the Promised Messiah^(as) describes the real purpose and meaning of fasting, praying, monetary sacrifice and the pilgrimage of Hajj. The article shows how enlightenment is gained by whole-heartedly partaking in these activities without a care for how the world views such activities. It is also interesting in our centenary year of this prestigious magazine to refer back to the original objectives of the magazine a hundred years ago. Again, the Editorial from 1902 talks about the moral decay of society, and the need to direct people towards the essence of religion(s) rather than the outwards differences. The editorial talks about

the need to cause a change in peoples lives such that they develop their spiritual side with at least as much zeal (if not more) than they would devote to worldly affairs.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we report the demise of Maulana Bashir Orchard, the first European Muslim missionary, and a dedicated author of this magazine for so many years in the 1980's and 1990's. We have reproduced his autobiography *Life Sketch* in which he brings all of the concepts described above into the context of the transformation of his own life. He shows how the teachings and practices of Islam transformed his life from an English Army officer to an outstanding Muslim missionary who provided inspiration to so many people around him based upon his own conduct and appearance.

Perfection can never be reached, but the quest for perfection is in itself perfection. This issue of the *Review of Religions* tackles the subject of the purpose of man's life and the quest to improve through these inspiring articles. May Allah enable us all to take inspiration from these works and to change our own lives for the better. Amin.

A Century Ago

Reproduced from the archives obtained from Khilafat Library Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Rabwah. From the *Review of Religions*, [Vol 1 No 1: January 1902] the longest running English Magazine of the Islamic world. Adapted with the least amount of re-editing (mainly punctuation marks and shortening of sentences and explanatory words in square parenthesis).

Under the heading: 'PROSPECTUS' the Editor of the *Review of Religions* swings into uncharted territory by stating the objectives of the Magazine:

The *Review of Religions* has been started by the Anjuman-i-Isha'at-i-Islam, Qadian, and shall be issued from Qadian on the 20th of every month. Its objects are stated further on. It starts with the solution of the all-important question of 'How to get rid of the bondage of Sin.' (Please see *Review of Religions* June 2002). It offers not only an impartial review of the various religions in sifting truth from error, but also the solution of the vital questions for which religion exists and upon which it is founded. It further undertakes to refute all objections against Islam, the Holy Qur'an and the noble Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of God be

upon him. For this purpose, the Editor shall be glad to receive all such objections for which sufficient grounds are stated, and an answer to these shall appear from time to time in the pages of the Magazine.

We are further bound to state that in setting before us the grand and all absorbing object of revolutionising the existing forms of religion, and in understanding the tremendous responsibility of pointing out the true method for release from the bondage of sin and breathing into the seekers after truth the spirit which would invigorate them to act upon the principles of truth, we would have undertaken a

task quite beyond our power or that of any mortal, had it not been for the guidance vouchsafed to us in this matter by the All-Wise and All-Powerful God through the foundation of the heavenly mission known as the Ahmadiyyah Ahmadiyyat Ahmadiyyah.

This [movement] has been established by the hand of God in accordance with His eternal and unchangeable laws. A Messenger has come from heaven when all eyes had been looking up to it in the expectation of his appearance. The Prophets of God had spoken of this time and the sacred writings gave the glad tidings of the holy man from the east in the latter days. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, whom God has chosen to be His Messiah, has come in fulfilment of the prophecies given to Jews, Christians and Muslims. Where and for what purpose this sun of righteousness has arisen, we shall state elsewhere. Here we wish only to point out that in almost

every number of the Magazine we shall be able to give translations of his learned and masterly expositions of different religious questions.

Contributions from the pens of other learned writers shall, however, not be excluded from its pages, and the Editor shall feel obliged to receive contributions from all gentlemen, of whatever persuasion, who have any sympathy for the objects with which this Magazine is started.

We do not start the Magazine as a speculative venture but with the sincere object of doing our duty to man. Nothing but the tottering condition of religion has aroused us to undertake this heavy responsibility. We are conscious that the Magazine shall not suit the taste of gentlemen whose religious prejudice does not allow [them] to consider if there is error in the religion they profess or [any] truth in any one of the systems to which the rest of mankind adheres. We have started it to

satisfy the search after truth and we do not care for the approbation or disapprobation of any particular sect. There is not a single instance in history in which abuse has not been hurled at the man who proclaimed the truth. Not one of the prophets and reformers is an exception to this rule. Human nature has not undergone any such alteration as to make us expect any other treatment, but we will in true sincerity advise every seeker after truth and well-wisher of humanity to weigh our reasons before forming an opinion against us.

The Object of this Magazine

Our object in starting the *Review of Religions* is twofold. Firstly, to draw the world to truth, viz., to teach true morals, to inculcate true beliefs, to disseminate true knowledge, and last though not least, to make men act upon the principles of truth ordained. Secondly, to draw them with magnetism so mighty in [attraction] that it may create in them a power to

act upon the doctrines taught. Admittedly, mere knowledge of the virtues cannot make a man good. [The need] has always been felt, on the other hand, of the appearance in every age of a person who is naturally endowed with the power of drawing and electrifying other persons.

Who is not aware of the founder of the religion which now has so large and highly-paid an episcopacy to build up the Church of Christ 'from within, in the true faith of God, and in holiness of life,' supported by thousands of philosophers? It squanders wealth like water in employing millions of missionaries to gain fresh adherents. Yet, notwithstanding its plentiful of resources, the absence of true magnetism which was the vital force in its conquest over sin in the days of its founder, makes Christianity [appear like] a 'dead log' devoid of true worth. One would seek in vain in so-called Christian countries that purity of soul and righteousness of heart that the

Gospels taught. The large cities of Europe and America are, to put it mildly, theatres where horrible and odious scenes of obscenity and debauchery are commonly represented. Were it possible for Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, to rise from among the dead and witness the state of millions who call themselves the flock of Christ, it would indeed strike him with wonder. The generation of people whose lawlessness knows no bound, who have abandoned themselves to passions of the flesh, and who are overcharged with the cares of the world, go by his name and claim to follow in his footsteps. It cannot be denied then that the fold of Christ today is walking in a path different from that in which it walked in the days when the presence of its holy keeper exercised its wholesome influence over it.

What is the reason of for this marked difference? What causes have led to this change for the worse? Why is it that

the vast majority of the professing Christians, departing from paths of purity and righteousness, have taken to licentiousness, intemperance, luxury and bestiality? What has led the people who were told to 'take no thought for the morrow,' and 'lay not up treasures upon earth' to hanker after earthly advantage and the amassing of wealth? How are we to account for the depth of immorality and the existence of hundreds of thousands of harlots amongst a people whose Book contained the plain injunction that 'whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart?' Where are we to seek for that purity and chastity upon which Jesus, peace be upon him, laid so much stress? Is it in the people among whom the man who commits adultery with an unmarried woman is not deemed guilty of a crime, but if he marries her, he is a criminal? Is this the morality of Christianity? Can the pure

conscience of a man bear witness that this was the purport of the teachings of Jesus, peace be upon him? Were the elect of God and the holy messengers of heaven, whom He appointed to teach truth and purity to generations of men, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David and Solomon, peace be upon them all, who stuck to polygamy to their very death, guilty in the sight of the Lord? Is the wholesale debauchery and excessive drinking of Christian Europe in accordance with what Jesus, peace be upon him, taught? Do Christians follow the injunctions of their Master who told them to turn the left cheek when smitten on the right? Are these not matters of the deepest concern? What factor causes the result to be so different? What is the cause of the total failure of Christianity as a reforming agency? Is it not true that it is all owing to the absence of the holy personage who worked so wonderful a transformation in the apostles? Jesus, peace be upon him, its is true, has not

ascended to heaven, and his sacred body lies entombed¹ in the sacred soil of Khan Yar Street in Srinagar, Kashmir, as we shall show elsewhere in the pages of this Magazine.

It is equally true that the magnetism and the transforming power that came with his person into the world has long since disappeared and ascended to the heavens. It is also written in the sacred writings that the magnetism shall once more descend upon earth in another manifestation which, on account of the identity of the motive force, shall be looked upon as the Second Coming² of the Messiah. But these are things to which only passing reference can be made here, their full discussion being reserved for another place. Here we wish only to point out that books are not sufficient to impress upon the heart moral and spiritual virtues, nor is power granted to a man for the performance of deeds of virtue through their sole agency.

Release from the bondage of sin and the slavery of passion cannot also be effected by preachers who are themselves slaves to their passions. They go out preaching virtue and righteousness in the streets, but when alone in their homes, take a glass too much and lie intoxicated till late in the day. The fact is that none can inspire a heavenly life and enable human beings to soar to the heavens but only he who comes from heaven. He who sees, can alone show to others and he who comes himself purified and transformed, can alone purify and transform the human race. The secret of God's existence is a deep one, and he only can break the seal who, cleansed of all impurities, leads a pure life.

This again brings us face to face with the question, how to be enfranchised from the bondage of sin, and how to get out of the impurities of life? There is only one answer to this all-important question. Such a regeneration can only be effected by the one who

comes with a magnetism from heaven, who on account of the extreme purity of his soul and the surpassing cleanliness of his heart is metaphorically called a manifestation of the Deity. He removes the poisonous matters, gives the elixir vitae in their stead, burns the carnal passions and low motives of worldly life and ennoble the soul with the pure and exalted divine morals. Look at the sun and the moon: each new day requires a new appearance of the glorious orb of light. The holy one that rose in the days of Pilate among the Jews was, no doubt, a sun of righteousness, but only so long as his magnetism attracted the hearts and his light worked a heavenly transformation in the souls of his followers. He is now a sun but one that has passed below the horizon. The radiant light which shone from his face and the brilliant lustre which he cast around him is shorn of its beams and grown quite obscure, not the least trace of it being visible among those that call themselves

after his name. The holy one that sheds such light is not and cannot be God, but there is no doubt that he is one with God and his soul is in constant and close communion with God. He is the fountainhead of the divine powers, and the rare and hidden manifestations of the powers of the Almighty which are not generally disclosed, are revealed through him. Such persons are called the manifestations, 'incarnations' and representatives of God. In the manifestation of the divine powers they sit on the throne of God's glory.

God is One and without any partner or rival, but persons of this type, the elect of God, whom the world has seen, may be counted by thousands. We may see a single face reflected in a thousand looking-glasses, and yet there are not really a thousand faces but only one face of which there are so many reflections. This world is a grand reflector; in other words, it is a place of glasses for the reflection of the 'face'

of God and the face of Satan. God, so to speak, stands against some of the mirrors and therefore the 'image' of God is seen in them. Against others, Satan makes his appearance and his likeness is consequently witnessed in them. But from these reflections it should not be imagined that the images are so many different gods. There are thousands of the manifestations of God, and thousands of those of the Devil. To allow multiplicity in the manifestations of the evil one and to limit those of the Deity to a single one, is both irreverent and unjustifiable. God made Adam in His image and after His likeness, and the Prince of the Devils manifested himself in the person of Cain. The manifestations of the Deity and the Devil have since then been appearing in the world, and therefore it is unreasonable to assert that in the whole world and during all ages there has been but a single manifestation of God. Every age stands in need of new light and a new repre-

sentative. Whenever this light grows dim in a people and the influence of a heavenly magnetiser is not felt among them, they bend down solely to the earth and its mean cares. They are carried away by the current of carnal desires and drown in a flood of sins and impurities, unable to get out of it. History bears strong evidence to it.

As already stated, the vast difference between the spiritual conditions of those followers of Christ amongst whom he lived and taught and the Christians of today, points to the same conclusion. With the death of a great Teacher and his apostles, there came a change over the people, and as the distance of time from the great Founder increased, the faith in God gradually lessened and their moral condition became worse and worse. Such has been the lot of Christianity; and Islam, although in some respects it has fared better, presents a similar history. The mighty and powerful magnetism of the

Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of God be upon him, ennobled the souls of his Companions not only so far as to make them bow to the glory of the Eternal and Living God instead of images and creatures. He exchanged their false religions for the truth concerning God. But at the same time, he breathed into them the soul which annihilated all their passions for and hankering after the world and its advantages. They saw God and sacrificed their lives in His way with such zeal and resigned themselves so completely to His will that each one of them was an Abraham, peace be upon him, in his relation towards God. The great and noble deeds they did with true sincerity, to declare the glory of the Living God and blot out the false dignity of the images from the hearts of men, are unparalleled in the history of the world. Their sincerity was blessed by the Lord and achieved for them successes in the conquest of countries. When we consider on the one

hand the darkness which spread over Arabia and the unbelief and image-worship which disgraced the whole country, and cast a glance, on the other hand, at the transformed peninsula and its sons after the Companions of the Prophet^(sa) had done their part in the cause of their benighted countrymen, we are obliged to confess that a new spirit of truth and zeal had been breathed into them.

The holy zeal and sanctity of the Prophet, may God pour His eternal blessings upon him, exercised its saintly influence over them. They shunned every vice and transgression as if they stood in the awesome presence of God's majesty. Their only ambition was to vie with one another in virtue and goodness. Such was the righteousness of the Companions of the Holy Prophet of Islam, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Nearest to them in sanctity and virtue was the generation that followed them. Even the people who saw and learnt from the

followers of the Companions of the Holy Prophet^(sa), was so pre-eminent in righteousness compared with the generality of the following generations that the third generation could have hardly recognised subsequent generations as following the precepts of Islam.

What was the reason of this? It is the same that we described in the case of the change that passed over Christianity. The time in which they lived was so remote from the time of the great magnetiser that they hardly felt the influence that had operated upon the Companions, or those that were directly or indirectly their disciples. Hence they could not abide by the righteousness which so eminently distinguished the first three generations of Islam.

Notwithstanding this change that has passed over Islam, we evidently find the Muslims 'superior' to the Christians in four respects. Firstly, they

believe in the one living and true God, and do not worship or deify creatures. Secondly, intoxication which is the root of all evils the great enemy of all good morals, is so rare among them that, compared with the wholesale drunkenness of Christian nations, they may be declared to be relatively free from the pestilence. Thirdly, the great Christian vice of gambling is also comparatively rare among them. Fourthly, God has protected their men and women from the wide spread of prostitution that forms a sad feature of the Christian communities. This difference is to be attributed to the appearance in different ages among the Muslims of reformers who draw people to virtue. It is, however, true that in the intervals when such reformers were not to be found in their midst, their righteousness and love for God have also been on the wane.

All these facts point to but one conclusion. For the true reformation of the world, it is of

the first importance that when one great magnetiser has passed away from the world and over time his influence too is not felt over hearts, another magnetiser should appear. The succeeding magnetiser should re-establish the influence which vanished away with the lapse of time, and draw the souls of all those who unite themselves with him towards spiritual and moral progress in the same way as the steam-engine draws the carriages that are annexed to it. In short, this principle is the key to the guidance of mankind. It is established by the combined evidence of all the prophets and messengers of God that regeneration can only be effected by one whom Heaven has granted the magnetism to draw all people into one society and one fold. He establishes and strengthens a twofold relation in them: (1) close communion with God and complete resignation to His will, and (2) mutual relationship which establishes a brotherhood among men in the true sense of the word.

It is clear from these remarks that there must be some peculiarity in the person of the magnetiser who works a pure transformation among his followers and draws people towards truth by the power nature has granted him. From the word of God we learn what that peculiarity is. It tells us that the man who guides people to the path of truth and virtue combines two excellences in his person.

Firstly, his love towards God is so deep that his own personality is consumed in the fire of love, and the Divine lights attract him with their own pale. His person becomes a manifestation of the Divine attributes in the same way as iron under the heat of fire becomes like fire. The first stage is that in which his soul feeling aversion to the sensual worldly life is naturally inclined to get out of darkness. He, therefore, breaks off all bonds that could keep him tied to darkness and removes every obstacle that could keep him away from God. His soul is

freed from the trammels of earthly passion and cleansed of faithlessness, vanity, selfishness, the fear or hope of others than God and regard for one's own ends when pretending to serve God, which is the root of all evils and low motives. Thus relieved of every weight and freed from every obstruction, his soul soars higher and higher towards its Creator, and flowing like a drop of water, at last attains the desired proximity to that ocean of existence and is fully invested with the divine morals. The result of this complete union is that as God in His very nature loves man and provides for his good, so does the transformed and perfect man naturally love his fellow-beings. Such a man has at heart their well-being in this world and the next, and this is the excellence which he possesses. For sympathy with man, he is granted a simple heart free from cunning and craft. When he speaks, it is only out of sympathy for man and for his guidance, and not under the fear of losing or the

vain desire of being able to sustain well a part in a religious controversy. He is granted the Divine attributes of true Providence, Mercy and Justice. Divine morals are represented within him as a reflection, through the mirror of his pure and transparent nature. In this sense, he really becomes a substitute or representative of God upon earth. When the perfect man reaches this stage, God, Who does not waste any energy or capacity in man, seeing in him the admirable qualities of sympathy and philanthropy, charges him with the message towards the people that delivering them from sensuousness he may lead them to a higher and spiritual life. The Holy Qur'an refers to this in the verse Ch.53, Vs.9-10, i.e. the perfect man upon whom the revelation of the Qur'an was sent down, became so near to God that vested with divine morals, he was sent back [to mankind] with the mission of deliverance to the world. As his nature was gifted in the highest degree with two

forms of zeal, viz., a zeal for the love of God, and a zeal for sympathy with mankind. Therefore, the chord of his soul fell within these two arcs. Just as the chord which is common to two arcs, being semicircles, the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, occupies a position bearing the same relation to God as to man. His spiritual position is therefore intermediate between the Creator and the created.

In brief, this is the real philosophy of God sending His vicegerents upon the earth. No prophet was ever charged by the Almighty with the message of reforming the world unless he had attained the perfection to which reference has above been made. The assertion that the prophets of God were themselves involved in sin and darkness and therefore not able to release others from the bondage of sin, is both erroneous and irreverent. Even worldly governments cannot take such a foolish step as to entrust the administration of a

portion of their territory to incompetent and unprincipled governors who, instead of doing anything for the welfare of the country, should lead them to certain ruin by their evil example. Worldly governments exercise their powers judiciously in the selection of their officers. It is but heresy to assert that the Almighty and All-Wise Ruler of the universe, upon whose choice of a reformer hangs the everlasting destinies of the human race, could not exercise even so much judiciousness in His selection as the weakest ruler upon earth?

The truth is that the earthly people do not know the man that comes from heaven, for he is not of this world. He is subjected to cavils from the blind, for the blind do not see him. As darkness is eternally hostile to light, it does not like that light should come into and illumine the corners of the world. The sons of darkness are up in arms against light, and after a great spiritual struggle light is victorious, and

the overhanging clouds of darkness are dispelled.

It must also be pointed out here that the Divine Law according to which the vicegerents of God have been appearing upon earth for the guidance of men is not a dead letter now. If it is true that God wills now as He willed in times past that men should repent of evil and be righteous, we undoubtedly stand in need of an inspired reformer. Like the former prophets, the reformer should have the magnetism to draw people to goodness, who possesses Divine attributes, whose life stands out in purity eminently above others, whose teachings have the power to attract and who can show extraordinary signs.

Our object in this Magazine is to show:

- who this inspired reformer is;
- what arguments and signs there are which support his claim;

- what his moral teachings are;
 - what beliefs he inculcates and what he rejects;
 - what truths and knowledge he has brought and in which of the Divine books they are to be found; and
 - what path he teaches for seeking union in God.
1. The spiritual death of Christianity is important evidence of the death of its founder, for if Jesus, peace be upon him, is living, why does his influence not work [today]?
 2. The advent of John the Baptist was regarded as the Second Coming of Elias for that very reason.

Under these six heads fall the vast variety of the subjects to which the pages of this Magazine shall be devoted. Besides these, it undertakes to refute every objection against Islam, the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may the blessings of God be upon him, and the great Reformer, the Holy Founder of the mission to which reference has above been made. It shall defend the cause of truth and oppose every false doctrine or erroneous teaching which is in violation of the rights of the Creator or the created.

The Pillars of Islam

Presented below is a compilation of excerpts from the volumes of *Malfoozat*, in translation. *Malfoozat* is the title of the ten volumes containing the collection of discourses, speeches and addresses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Compiled and translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad



The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

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.

Remember this well that if a person states that he believes God to be one, without any partners and also believes in the Holy Prophet Muhammad and likewise, believes in other matters of faith, but if the declaration is limited only to being a verbal statement and the heart does not acknowledge it, then these will be mere utterances that cannot lead to deliverance.

Deliverance cannot be attained until such time as the heart believes and this is manifested only when deeds and actions testify to it. Until this is achieved nothing is of any avail. I state the truth when I say that the real objective is achieved only when one turns to God having left all other diversions to one side, when religion is given

true precedence over the actualities of this world.

Remember! A person can deceive other creatures. People can be deceived in their observation of a person who offers the five daily prayers or does some other good deeds but God cannot be deceived. Therefore, good deeds should be performed with a genuine and true sincerity - this is the one thing that adds beauty to one's deeds and enhances them.

It should be well remembered as to what the meaning is of the *Kalima* [the declaration of the Unity of God] that we recite daily. The *Kalima* means that a person affirms verbally and testifies with his heart that for him the One who is worthy of worship and love and the One who is the real objective is God Almighty and none other besides him. [The words of the declaration of Unity of God include] the word *Ilaha* which has the meaning of being 'the beloved', 'one who is the true objective', 'the one

who is worshipped and adored'. This declaration is the whole teaching of the Holy Qur'an in a concise form that has been taught to the Muslims. As it is not easy to remember a great and detailed book, this *Kalima* has been taught so that a person can keep the essence of Islamic teaching constantly in mind. The truth is this that until this reality develops within a person, there is no deliverance. That is why the Holy Prophet of Islam has stated: *He who declares there is no God but Allah will enter Paradise*. In other words, he who truly believes in '*la ilaha illallah*' [that is, 'there is no God but Allah'] such a person will enter paradise.

People deceive themselves if they think that a parrot-like repetition of the words will grant them entry into paradise. If that were the only reality to be found in it then all deeds would become redundant and useless and the *Shari'a* [the religious law] would (God forbid) be deemed

irrelevant. This, however, is not the case. The reality of this is that the meaning that is contained within it should enter the heart in practice - when this occurs then a person does, in fact, enter paradise. It is not after death, but in this very life that such a person is in paradise. [Malfoozat, Vol. 9, PP 102- 104]

After that, pay heed, the second thing is *Salat* [Islamic form of worship], the compulsory practice of which has been repeatedly stressed by the Holy Qur'an. Remember also that the Holy Qur'an rebukes those who stand for *Salat* but are oblivious to the reality of *Salat* and are mean towards their fellow human beings. *Salat* is in reality a plea before God Almighty that He may safeguard one against all kinds of ills and bad deeds. A human being is in a state of grief and loneliness and wishes that he may acquire inner peace and contentment that are the consequence of deliverance but it is not something that can be acquired

through one's own cleverness or skill. Until God calls, one cannot go to Him - until He purifies, one cannot be purified.

There are many who are witness to the fact that on numerous occasions there is the desire to rid oneself of some sin or other with which one is afflicted but one is not successful even after repeated attempts to achieve this. Despite the fact that his own conscience, *Nafs-e-Lawwama*, the self-accusing spirit reproaches him, even then he fails and slips. From this we can learn that a person's purification from sin is God's work. One cannot achieve this simply by one's own efforts. However, it is also true that effort in this path is absolutely necessary.

Salat [the Islamic form of worship] is for the cleansing of that inner self that is full of sins and that has strayed far from God. It is for bringing such a soul closer to God that the instrument of *Salat* exists

IT IS AMONG THE NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS OF PRAYER THAT THE HEART MELTS AND THE SOUL FLOWS LIKE WATER, FALLING AT THE FEET OF THE MOST NOBLE LORD, WITH FEELINGS OF PAIN AND ANGUISH WITHIN.

through which evil is removed and hearts are, instead, filled with pure feelings and emotions. This is the reason behind the statement that *Salat* removes ills or that it prevents one from committing indecent and immoral acts.

What, then, is *Salat*? It is a prayer full of pain and anguish and this is why it is called '*Salat*'. It is a supplication before God, with anguish and grief, to the effect that God may remove from one's inner self all bad thoughts, ill feelings and negative emotions and that He may purify one from within by creating therein pure love through the general bounty of his beneficence.

The word '*Salat*' points to the fact that it is not sufficient to pray with words alone, rather it is necessary that words be

accompanied by feeling and a sense of anxiety and deep concern. God does not listen to any prayer until the person offering the prayer reaches a kind of death [with the anguish of supplicating before God]. Praying is a difficult task indeed but people are not familiar with its true nature. There are many who write to me that they prayed for such and such but their prayer did not have any effect and, consequently, they come to hold a negative view of God and are destroyed through their own sense of hopelessness. They do not know that unless prayer is accompanied with the necessary requirements, it cannot be of any benefit.

It is among the necessary requirements of prayer that the heart melts and the soul

flows like water, falling at the feet of the most noble Lord, with feelings of pain and anguish within. A person should not, however, be impatient and seek quick results. On the contrary, he should persevere in prayer with patience and steadfastness. It can then be expected that the prayer will be answered.

Salat is a prayer of a very high level. Sadly, however, people do not appreciate its worth and they consider its true nature merely to be the performance of a few customary acts of standing upright, bowing and prostrating combined with a parrot-like repetition of a few sentences, with or without any comprehension. There is yet another sorry development and it is that the Muslims [of today] were already unfamiliar with the true nature of *Salat* and were not being mindful towards it, then there sprang up some sects that did away with the discipline of *Salat* altogether and replaced it

with a few chants and repetitions of certain words. Among these sects were *Noshahi* and *Chashti* sects and some others. Such people attack Islam and its teachings from within and, having broken away from the discipline of Islam, they seek to establish a new *Shari'a* , [religious law].

Remember this with certainty that we do not need any innovation when we and all seekers of truth have the blessing of *Salat*. Whenever the Holy Prophet of Islam faced some difficulty or trouble, he immediately stood for *Salat* and our own experience and that of all the people of truth is this that there is nothing greater than *Salat* for taking one towards God.

When one stands in *Salat* one is adopting a posture of respect. When a servant stands before his master, he always stands with his hands held together. The position of bowing is also one of respect but is greater than that of

standing and prostration is the ultimate position of showing respect. When a person finds himself in a state of complete engrossment and submission, he throws himself in prostration. Woe is upon those foolish and worldly people who wish to shorten *Salat* and object to bowing and prostrating. On the contrary, these are aspects that are very commendable. The true fact is this that unless one partakes of the realm from where *Salat* has come, {unless one has knowledge of the realm with which *Salat* reaches its ultimate point, until then a human being gains nothing}. But how can he who does not believe in God believe in *Salat*? [Malfoozat, Vol. 9, PP 108-110]

The third pillar of Islam is fasting. People are also unaware of the true nature of fasting. The reality is that the country to which one does not travel and the world with which one is not familiar makes it difficult for one to describe its condition. By fasting is not

meant that one should remain merely hungry and thirsty - fasting has a reality and an effect that can only be known through experience. It is in the nature of the human being that the less he eats, the more he gains in spiritual purification and the more his capacity to have visions increases. What God wishes here is this that people should decrease their intake of one kind of food and increase the intake of another kind of 'food'. A person who is fasting should always keep this in mind that its purpose is not merely that he should remain hungry but rather that he should spend his time in remembrance of God in order that he can turn away from the world and move towards God. Hence, the meaning of fasting is this that by foregoing one food that nourishes the body one can attain another 'food' that nourishes and satisfies the spirit.

People who fast only for God and do not do so by way of custom and tradition, they should remain engrossed in the

BY FASTING IS NOT MEANT THAT ONE SHOULD REMAIN MERELY HUNGRY AND THIRSTY - FASTING HAS A REALITY AND AN EFFECT THAT CAN ONLY BE KNOWN THROUGH EXPERIENCE. IT IS IN THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN BEING THAT THE LESS HE EATS, THE MORE HE GAINS IN SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION AND THE MORE HIS CAPACITY TO HAVE VISIONS INCREASES.

praise and glorification of God as well as self-analysis in order that the other kind of nourishment is granted to them.

It is the same with *Hajj*, [that is, the fourth Pillar of Islam, the Pilgrimage to Mecca]. By *Hajj* is not meant merely that a person should leave his home, travel across the ocean, utter some customary words and then return. The reality is this that *Hajj* is a thing of the highest order and that is the ultimate point in a person's sincere relationship with God.

This point should be understood that when a person distances himself from the worldly desires of the self, the self has the right to expect that the person loses himself completely in the love of God.

Moreover, that the passion of this love develops to such an extent that in comparison no difficulties of travel, nor the danger to one's life or possessions nor the pain of separation from loved ones should be of concern to him. Just as a lover is ready to sacrifice all for his beloved, so should a person [who loves God] be ready to do the same. The symbolic example of such a relationship is contained in the performance of the *Hajj*, that is, the Pilgrimage.

Just as a lover circles around the beloved, so there is the orbiting [around the Ka'aba] during the performance of *Hajj*. This is a very fine and subtle point. Just as there is the House of God, so there is one above, a higher one. Unless one 'orbits' around that

one also, there is no benefit from the one performed [on the ground] and hence there is no reward. The state of those performing the higher level of 'orbit' should be similar to the one seen [on the ground] in that a basic cloth only is wrapped around the body. Similarly, those who 'circuit' around the higher ['House of God'] should also take off the 'garments' of worldliness and become humble and meek and circle around in a state of ardent love. *Tawaaf* [that is, the act of circuiting around the *Ka'aba*] is a symbol of the ardent love of God and the meaning of it is this that the pleasure of God should be the point around which one 'orbits' and that there remains no other purpose but this.

Similarly, there is *Zakat* [the tax collected for redistribution among the poor]. Many people pay *Zakat* but they do not even think as to what it is that they are paying the *Zakat* on. If a dog or a pig is killed in an Islamic manner, it would not make that dog or that pig *halal*

[that is, permissible for eating under Islamic law].

The word *Zakat* is derived from the word *tazkia* [which means 'to purify'] - purify your wealth and then pay *Zakat* from it. He who gives from that [the purified wealth], his truthfulness is sustained. But he who does not discriminate between *Halal* and *Haram* [that is, between the permissible and the forbidden] such a person is far from its true meaning.

One must be distanced from such errors and should understand well the reality of these Pillars of Islam. Only then will they become the cause of deliverance not otherwise because a human being can wander off a long way in the wrong direction. [Malfoozat, Vol. 9, PP 122-124]

TEOTIHUACÀN - Religious Capital of Central America

By Fazal Ahmad - UK

In the second century BCE, one of the largest cities in the world suddenly sprang up in Central America. The entire city was planned with a grid pattern of parallel roads, and the city centre was focussed around two huge religious pyramids. The community was very advanced for its time and extremely powerful. Then suddenly, around 700 CE, the city and its inhabitants disappeared. What actually happened at Teotihuacan and what was the religious significance of this city and its fate?

Introduction

At a time when Rome was starting to consolidate its empire around the Mediterranean, the Great Wall was being built in China and the Egyptians were in decline, in Central America a new city emerged close to modern Mexico City known now as Teotihuacàn. The region had undergone development through successive civilisations such as the Olmecs, and would later be followed by the Toltecs, Mayans and Aztecs. The city of Teotihuacan sprang up very quickly, and with its population thought to be in the region of one hundred thousand people (some sources suggest over 125,000), it would have been one of the largest cities in the world at the time.

The Olmecs had left behind a legacy of religious ceremonial buildings, sculpture, artwork and even writing. But Teotihuacan was to take these concepts several stages further, and for the first time within the confines of a vast city.

Archaeologists and historians have been trying to determine why such a city sprang up suddenly and was so advanced, and then equally became uninhabited just as rapidly almost a millennium later. This article explores the significance of this city in the cultural development of the region, and in particular the religious beliefs and rights practised here.



Pyramid of the Moon, Teotihuacan

(Photo courtesy of Tony Turner)

The City and its Culture

Teotihuacan is an Aztec name meaning '*place of the gods*' so it clearly held a religious significance to the people of Mexico over a thousand years ago. The Aztecs encountered this place many centuries after it was abandoned, and regarded it as the origin of civilisation where religion and cosmic order was formed. The dedication of the pyramids to the Sun and Moon is also retrospective by the Aztecs, although we have a few clues as to the original meaning of the pyramids. Our earliest recorded information about the city is from around 1521 when the Spaniards led by Hernan Cortes had

conquered Mexico and enquired about this mysterious and vast city from their Aztec subjects. In particular, they were intrigued by the Pyramids which were as large as the structures encountered in Egypt. The Aztecs viewed this as a holy city once host to pilgrims from across the region, and this is preserved in the history recorded by the Spanish invaders.

The city structure resembles a modern planned city with streets running in straight lines across each other in a grid pattern seen in modern cities such as Washington DC. Even the San Juan River was routed into canals as it passes through the city in

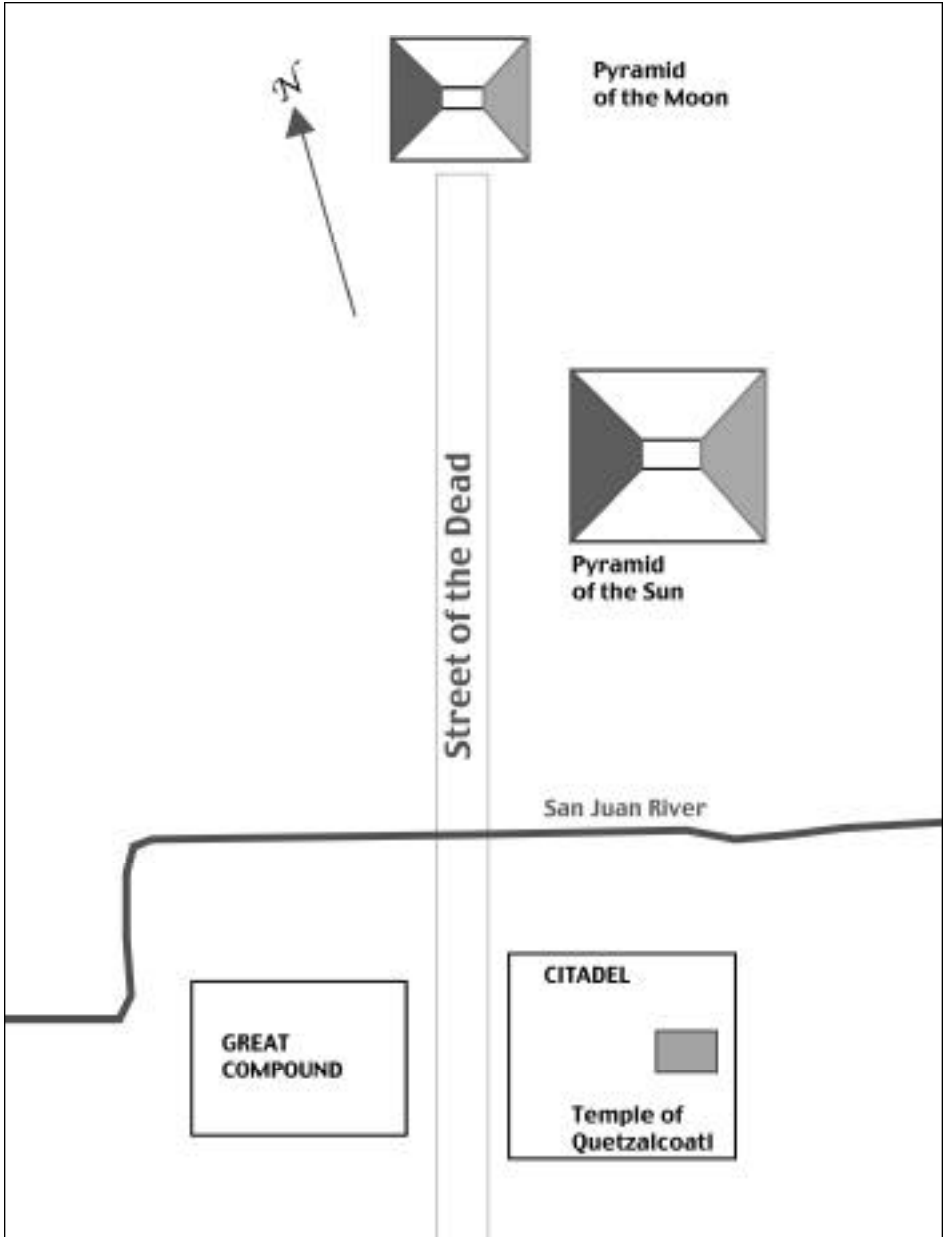
order to conform to the grid system of the planners. In its heyday, the city covered an area of eight square miles. This shows a degree of advancement in the culture which developed this city 2000 years ago.

A lot of archaeological effort has centred on this site, and as a result, it is possible to build a picture of life in the city. The economy was focussed on agriculture, and it is thought that most of the people would go out every day to tend the fields around the city. The same pattern was also seen in other cities such as Tenochtitlan later. It is interesting to note that whereas in Europe, when cities emerged, the economy was different to that of the rural population, in Central America cities sprung up around agriculture, and this remained the focus of the economy.

Teotihuacan is laid out with a long central main road known as the *Cala de los Muertes* (Street of the Dead), and at the north end is the imposing Pyramid of the Moon standing 150 feet high. Just to the south and on the right is the Pyramid of the Sun standing 240 feet high. In the heart of the city

was a public square with the Citadel and the Great Compound. There was the elegantly carved Temple to QuetzalCoatl on the Citadel which appears to have been a religious courtyard. The Compound probably served as an administrative hub for the city with various offices dotted around it, but virtually no temples. There were around 2000 structures in the city, many with advanced drainage systems. Some scientists believe that the orientation of the city 15.5 degrees east of North is significant and that features of the city align to the star cluster known as Pleiades, although this is conjecture. The possible significance of Pleiades would have been to herald the two days of the year when the Sun was directly overhead at Teotihuacan, and they would perhaps have believed that their deities were at their closest on these days. Similar alignments have been claimed for Stonehenge in the UK, and the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt.

The city also had links with other communities in the region for trade purposes. Local craftsmen were renowned across central America for their crafts using



Rough Plan of the Teotihuacan City Centre



Map of the Teotihuacan Region

Obsidian (volcanic glass), seashells and basalt. But in order to get some of the raw materials of their various trades, they probably would have had contact with the Gulf of Mexico or the Pacific Coast for seashells, with Veracruz for Rubber, with Oaxaca for cotton, and with the Yucatan peninsula for exotic feathers.

There is also some evidence to suggest that people from the city conquered the Mayan city of Kaminaljuyu (near modern

Guatemala City) and built a new city to mimic Teotihuacan, but at the same time adopting elements of Mayan culture, so clearly they had contact with other peoples in the region. At the dawn of Teotihuacan, there were other religious centres nearby such as Cuicuilco to the southwest of the Valley of Mexico, and Cholula to the east of the Puebla Valley which may have had an influence on the initial development of the city.

Religious Practice

Modern research suggests that the people worshipped Quetzalcoatl (we shall cover this in more detail later). They also worshipped Tlaloc the rain god, and revered the Jaguar, a wild cat found in the region. Along the Street of the Dead, there were over 100 religious shrines and temples lining the route as well as the two Pyramids and the temple of Quetzalcoatl, so this would have been a very significant religious area. It is even suggested that pilgrims from as far as Guatemala may have visited the city. Teotihuacan was to have a great influence on the religious architecture and beliefs in Guatemala including their great city Kaminaljuyu.

Teotihuacanos believed in a cyclical universe in which the universe would be born and then at its end, be destroyed and then reborn again as a new world. Similar concepts were understood elsewhere in the world such as by the Hindus of India. Teotihuacanos believed that this was the 5th Universe and that Teotihuacan was the birthplace of this new Universe. Interestingly they also believed that their deities had sacrificed themselves

such that the new world could be formed (similar to the Christian concept of the son of God sacrificing himself for the sake of the human race in an act of atonement). Also very interesting is the idea that the 4th world was destroyed by a global flood. While many of these concepts may have been stretched over time, the concept of the rebirth of the universe is interesting. Modern Cosmology and the Holy Qur'an (Ch.21: Vs.105) also refer to the cyclical nature of the universe. Also the idea that a civilisation was destroyed by a global flood is well-known in the great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

Probably the most well-known feature about cultures in this part of the world is the ritual human sacrifices that took place. In the case of Teotihuacan, there is not so much discussion on this subject, rather this was a trait of the later Aztecs. Sacrifice was seen as essential to safeguard the lifestyle of the Aztec people, and as such, if they were ever in battle, they would prefer to take prisoners rather than slay their victims such that they could use them for sacrificial purposes. Perhaps we can start to under-

stand the sacrifices in a new way when we consider their views on how the 5th universe had been created and the sacrifices made by their deities on their behalf. Certainly later Aztec pyramids were used to perform these horrific rites, but Teotihuacan seems to have been less prone to this futile practice.

The two pyramids also have a religious significance just as they did in Egypt. On top of the pyramids were temples, and the pyramids themselves consisted of five layers which could be climbed by worshippers with a resting platform between the climbs. Both the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon would have had great religious significance for their people, and could be seen from long distances. In fact the Pyramid of the Sun was built on top of an earlier shrine, and later archaeology also revealed a series of tunnels and caves under the Pyramid. It is difficult to know whether the pyramids were positioned for astronomical reasons, or just to provide an inspirational platform for worship (more likely to have been the latter). Either way they held a central position in the religion of the people.

Quetzalcoatl

The people of the time had a complex religion with deities such as Quetzalcoatl (the feathered serpent) and Tlaloc (the rain god). Images on their major structures of Quetzalcoatl are prominent in the architecture of the city. Quetzalcoatl would later be known as Kukulcan by the Mayans and Huemac by the Toltecs. In later mythology, Quetzalcoatl is described as the sun-god, creator of man and the bringer of rain.

Other traditions have recorded Quetzalcoatl as an ancient fair-skinned king who taught agriculture, weaving, arts and also religion to the people. He taught the importance of the reckoning of time (of greater importance to the Mayans) and abhorred war and animal sacrifice. The Toltecs held a tradition that Quetzalcoatl demanded peaceful sacrifices whereas his enemy Tezcatlipoca demanded more bloodthirsty rituals and evicted him from the land (this may be in line with the evidence of human sacrifice at other temples in the region). Quetzalcoatl went to the Gulf of Mexico, fasted for four days and then set sail, promising to return

in the latter days according to the Toltecs. In such myths, Quetzalcoatl appears more as a king than a god, and was inspirational in establishing the new city and the new order.

As Quetzalcoatl has disappeared into mythology and legend, it is difficult to diseminate the truth from fiction, but it is possible that he was originally a prophet of God and hence had such a huge impact on the people and signalled the building of Teotihuacan. After all, even Prophet Jesus^(as) was soon venerated as the Sun-god, son of God and as the Trinity, so with the passage of time, for Quetzalcoatl to have been deified in this way would not be uncommon.

There is even a tradition that the white-robed Quetzalcoatl was forced to leave because of the trickster and warrior-god Tezcatlipoca (*Smoking Mirror*) who forced him out and deceived him. Quetzalcoatl wept as he buried his treasure, left his city heading for the coast, and finally sailed east, promising to return. Again, this is similar to the Jewish tale of the Teacher of Righteousness and the Wicked



Quetzalcoatl Images

Priest as recorded in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The difficulty with this story is that there are no written documents such as the Dead Sea Scrolls left behind in Teotihuacan to authenticate it.

Tlaloc is also a complex character. In later times, Tlaloc was associated with rain, but in earlier cultures Tlaloc was actually considered the King of the gods, the creator and source of all things.

Mayans

At the same period that Teotihuacan had been coming to prominence, the Mayans of the Yucatan Peninsula began to develop their own culture. The Mayans were prominent in the period 300 - 900 CE, while Teotihuacan was in existence from 200 BCE - 700 CE. The Mayans too had religious cities such as Palenque and Tikal, but these were only populated by priests who performed religious duties for the scattered rural population, and their role was to serve the outlying villages (the geography of living in rainforests was also less conducive to major cities than in the Valley of Mexico). Their religion was strongly associated to the natural cycles of the Universe, and the exploitation of man's position through knowledge of the Universe. Therefore they developed very elaborate calendars based on the Moon, Sun and even the planet Venus.

Their priests often made personal sacrifices of blood to keep their deities 'fed'. This was also tied to their concept of afterlife with heaven and hell. In their concept, only those killed in sacrifice or children who died were entitled

to go to heaven, so sacrifice had an elevated position, something which would have been exploited to extremes by the Aztecs.

Demise of the city

There is evidence to suggest that the climate would have been worsening in the 6th century CE, and this would have had a significant impact on the harvests upon which the city relied. Some scientists suggest that the region began to suffer droughts from 536 CE based upon their analysis of mineral deposits and tree-rings. If the rains had been failing as well, then there may have been a knock-on undermining of the deities such as Tlaloc which were supposed to safeguard the rain and the harvest.

Evidence suggests that at around 700 CE, Teotihuacan suddenly came into decline and people abandoned the city. There are theories that the city was raided by violent foreign invaders and was burned down. Certainly there is evidence of a fire in over 150 of the temples and palaces of the city centre. What is more striking is that although some 60 per cent of the temples and palaces were torched across the city, only around 10 per cent of residential

PROPHETS OF GOD THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE BEEN THE CATALYSTS TO GREAT SOCIAL CHANGE, AND HAVE OFTEN IGNITED ONCE-DORMANT CULTURES SUCH AS THE ARABS INTO GREAT EMPIRE BUILDING, FANTASTIC ARCHITECTURE AND SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT. COULD THIS HAVE BEEN THE CASE IN TEOTIHUACAN, AND COULD QUETZALCOATL HAVE BEEN THAT RELIGIOUS CATALYST?

buildings were affected (see Ref. 8). This may suggest that the fires were deliberate rather than the victims of a natural disaster or a more general fire in the city, as natural fires tend not to be so selective in their destructive urges. Recent theories have begun to link the climatic change to social unrest, and claim that this would have been sufficient to cause rioting against the religious elite of the city.

Whatever the actual cause, all the evidence suggests that around 750 CE, the city was looted and burned, and the temples were ransacked, possibly even from within. The fall of this great city had ramifications for the rest of the region as first Monte Alban, then Mayan centres further south all suffered a similar fate.

Cultural Development after Teotihuacan

After the demise of Teotihuacan, other cultures sprang up in the region, many of which preserved the arts and culture of this great civilisation. The Toltecs emerged around 950 CE in Tula, Northern Mexico. They were a warring race with a warrior aristocracy, and they expanded in the region rapidly. They retained the crafts, religion and architecture of the Teotihuacanos. It was actually the Toltecs who created the legend of the return of Quetzalcoatl back to Tula. The Toltecs conquered many Mayan regions and created the great centre at Chichen Itza.

Much later, the Aztecs also continued the Teotihuacan culture, although their main deity was now Huitzilpochtli.

They built a new capital Tenochtitlan on an island in Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico. Legend has it that when the Spaniards led by Cortes arrived to conquer Mexico and loot its gold, they faced little initial resistance as their demeanour and timing co-incided with the Aztec anticipation of the return of Quetzalcoatl. History records how Cortes and his troops were able to conquer Latin America rapidly, and perhaps there is some truth to this story. This again shows the depth of religious sentiment that people would rather die than defy what they believed to be a returning deity.

Conclusions

The Qur'an tells us that all races and regions received some form of revelation and Divine Guidance:

And We did raise among every people a Messenger preaching: 'Worship Allah and shun the Evil One'. Then among them were some whom Allah guided and among them were some who became deserving of ruin. So travel through the Earth, and see what was the end of those who treated the

prophets as liars!
(Holy Qur'an, Ch.16: v.37)

And again we read:

And We sent some Messengers whom We have already mentioned to thee and some Messengers whom We have not mentioned to thee.
(Holy Qur'an, Ch.4: v.164).

As such, the elaborate societies of central America would have been no exception in their ability to have contact with the Creator. According to the verses quoted here, all races and lands including the peoples of Central America would have been the recipients of prophets and divine guidance, although trying to trace these events with our scant clues and no written documentation is a major task today. Sudden cultural changes such as the dramatic emergence of Teotihuacan may have been triggered by Divine Guidance, although over a period of centuries, the original messages that inspired them may be lost to us. Given the prominence of Quetzalcoatl, it is possible that this was a real character who was divinely guided. Certainly

traditions held by the later Toltecs show him teaching a milder way of life, and even fasting - traits we could reasonably associate to spiritual teachers elsewhere in the world.

A feature which we saw too often after Teotihuacan in this region is human sacrifice. Actually, all monotheistic religions hold personal sacrifice very highly, but not the taking of life. Sacrifice in monotheistic religions is more to do with controlling the ego-self and helping family, friends, the needy and society in general. Putting others before oneself and making sacrifices in such a cause has always been seen as noble. But sacrificing others to appease a deity is a gross perversion of those noble concepts. Research seems to indicate a different style of worship at Teotihuacan, whereas later Aztec temples were clearly used to appease the deities through human sacrifice and blood-letting.

It is quite possible that Teotihuacan was the scene of religious inspiration at its outset, hence so much activity was created in such little time.

Prophets of God throughout history have been the catalysts to great social change, and have often ignited once-dormant cultures such as the Arabs into great empire building, fantastic architecture and scientific advancement. Could this have been the case in Teotihuacan, and could Quetzalcoatl have been that religious catalyst? As with human traits, original messages may have been lost over time and turned into something totally different. We have seen evidence for great cultures elsewhere in the world which were destroyed when they shunned or distorted religion. Perhaps Teotihuacan also suffered a similar fate as the original messages which had inspired its construction were eroded.

Certainly, it is without doubt that dramatic change occurred around this city, and several developments in society in this region were inspired to some degree by religion as understood by the people of the time.

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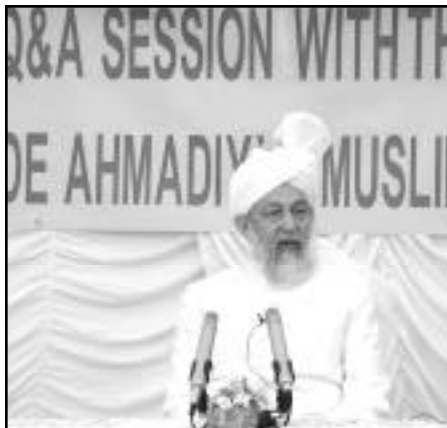
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Interpretation of Sharia - Part Two

During his visit to Nigeria in 1988, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the Fourth Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was invited by BTV, a Nigerian television company, to take part in a series of televised interviews.

During these sessions a number of questions regarding Islam and Ahmadiyyat were put to him by a BTV presenter and presented below is the continuation of answers to questions that were raised.

Prepared by Amatul Hadi Ahmad



[Following is the continuation of the response made by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad to the question on whether there was anything in the Qur'an that suggests that adulterers must be stoned. Having refuted the claim that stoning has been mentioned anywhere in the Holy Qur'an as a punishment for adultery, he further explains some issues relating to the interpretation of the Shari'a].

QUESTIONER

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:
(...../continuation) The Islamic teaching of chastity is of such a high level that it produces an atmosphere of chastity in the

whole society. With its various injunctions, it creates a sense of chastity that pervades the whole society. It engenders a culture and a set of values that is different from that found in western societies or in African society today. There you find that generally a promiscuous attitude is prevalent while in Islamic Societies with all the appropriate application of the Islamic way of life it becomes a very different type of society. In that society there would be a very small likelihood of such matters arising. Moreover, should an

accusation of adultery be made, Islam enjoins upon the law enforcing agencies to demand four witnesses to this act. Given this injunction, it is not difficult to appreciate how remote the possibility of such punishment would become. It is a threatening posture but in reality its application would be very rare indeed.

Before a verdict of guilt can be applied, Islamic law requires four witnesses to present themselves - four people who can bear witness under oath that they saw such an act with their own eyes. Consider the implication of this injunction! The likelihood of finding four witnesses to an act of adultery is quite remote. Moreover, the standard of truth in bearing testimony has been raised to such a high degree in Islam that today it would be virtually impossible to find such witnesses in an ordinary society of human beings. Islam lays down very strict rules for choosing witnesses. According to Islam, if a person is so irresponsible and shameless as

to urinate in full public view, his testimony will not be accepted. If a person has been observed to indulge in gossip that virtually amounted to a lie, at any time in his life, his testimony would be rejected. In short, four witnesses of a very high calibre are required who had witnessed such an act themselves. In view of all these injunctions, the likelihood of such a punishment being actually implemented appears very remote.

At the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) of Islam all the cases that we know about where people were meted out some punishment, were all cases where the guilty person themselves came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) and told him themselves that they had committed this crime and demanded the appropriate punishment. The general standard of piety in the society of that time had been raised to such a high level that conscience played a strongest role. In more than one tradition we find that a man or

a woman approached the Holy Prophet^(sa) and said that they had committed the crime of *zana*, that is, adultery or fornication, and that they then demanded punishment. At this the Holy Prophet^(sa) turned away his face when the person would approach him from the other side repeating his plea of guilt and yet the Holy Prophet^(sa) would ignore it. The pleas would be repeated again, a third time, and again the Holy Prophet^(sa) would ignore it. Only when a person repeated his plea of guilt the fourth time, the Holy Prophet^(sa) would be left with no alternative but to issue the order for punishment.

The fact that it was only after the fourth plea of guilt that punishment followed has a deep significance. It is because four witnesses are required and although the Holy Prophet^(sa) was the enforcer of law, he hesitated. He did not like to punish people. He was very kind hearted so he took the position before Allah that although the person is

admitting his guilt but he has admitted it once and because I have ignored it in the hope that he may not repeat what he is saying. However, if he does repeat it four times, he is left with no option but to issue the punishment. Is that barbarism? Call it what you may, with all the conditions and requirements that go with this injunction, it is not barbarism. However, the effect it has on purification of the society is immense. The sword of Damocles is hanging but it is seen that it would be very rare that this sword would be permitted to fall.

QUESTIONER

What about the cutting of limbs?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad: Again, the 'cutting of hands' is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an but the Arabic term '*qatai yud*' should not be only interpreted literally although I fully agree that it can also be translated literally as 'cutting of hands'.

However, the same Arabic term is used in the Holy Qur'an, [in the Chapter entitled 'Joseph'], with regard to the chief's wife who tried to lure Joseph^(as). She persuaded some other ladies of the court to join her in her scheming so that Joseph^(as) was trapped. In reference to these ladies, [describing their state of amazement when they saw the handsome countenance of Joseph^(as)], the Holy Qur'an uses the same term 'cutting of hands' which is exactly the same term as used in description of punishment for thieves. However, it is quite evident that the same term has a different meaning here. Despite the fact that the same idiom, the same words were used, it does not here mean that they severed their hands. This term also means 'prevention' - the term 'cutting of hands' also means 'to prevent some one from doing something'. Hence, when the term '*qatai yud*' can be translated in this way as well, that means that the punishment laid down by Islam

for theft covers a large area. In many cases the injunction that applies is that measures of prevention should be taken. However, in advanced cases the hand should also be severed. Why is this so? It is so because Islam provides every person in Islamic society with the minimum requirements of livelihood. The state is responsible for this provision hence there is no justification for theft and Allah has also given us hands to earn our livelihood. However, if instead of using our hands to contribute to the economic process, we use the hands to destroy the economic 'wheel', then the hand is no longer required. The process of the economic 'wheel' is destroyed when some people try to short-circuit it through acts of stealing which is exactly the opposite of the economic process. The hand, therefore, is no longer required. This is the significance of the injunction of the 'cutting of hands'. In advanced cases, when a hardened criminal has had to be punished in this way,

IN A SOCIETY WHERE STRICT MEASURES OF PREVENTION ARE NOT CARRIED OUT, THE SUFFERING IS NOT LESSENED. IT IS VERY RARE THAT THE HANDS OF A THIEF WOULD BE CUT, BUT MUCH MORE OFTEN THE INNOCENT PEOPLE IN A SOCIETY WOULD BE MAIMED AND PUNISHED EVERY DAY FOR NO CRIME OF THEIR OWN, AT THE HANDS OF THE THIEVES.

he would be there for all to see that a creature of God, a human being, was provided with the means of livelihood and he was guaranteed that even if he did not find a job to earn his livelihood, the Islamic state is responsible for his livelihood, yet he chooses not to use his hand for the purpose for which it was created. Hence, such a hand should be severed and he should be a lesson for others to heed the warning.

If this is considered barbaric and this punishment is rejected by a society in the name of advancement and civilisation, what is the converse? Where theft has become rampant, where all measures of imprisonment have no effect.

Where in reality thieves maim and kill people in great numbers and the whole society is working under fear of thugs and thieves. Consider what is happening in Nigeria. The thieves here have become so daring that they attack even mosques and other religious places. I have just received a report that our Centre was attacked. Thieves here attack, leaving children, women and men maimed. Despite the fact that the poor people out of fear offer them all they have, they still beat them and torture them. So this is no cruelty! However, should the hands of such hardened criminals be cut, it appears to be cruelty to the opponents of Islamic teachings.

Remember that if severe punishments were not meted out to the hardened criminals, it would be the innocent people who would suffer. They also have a legitimate and greater demand for pity. In a society where strict measures of prevention are not carried out, the suffering is not lessened. It is very rare that the hands of a thief would be cut, but much more often the innocent people in a society would be maimed and punished every day for no crime of their own, at the hands of the thieves. Consider what is happening in the US! In New York. I have been told, the incident of mugging is so common that there is hardly a family that has escaped mugging. It is not only that the muggers steal things, they leave behind a trail of torture. People are killed or left suffering horrendous injuries and some are even maimed.

In short, given the background of Islamic teachings relating to economic concepts, with the background of guarantees that no person should be permitted to go hungry or be left without shelter or clothing, I think this is the right thing to do.

QUESTIONER

You state that it is against the background of a society in which the state provides for its people, in an Islamic state, for example. What happens when there is massive unemployment?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:
Do you mean if the state is not responsible [for providing the minimum guarantees]?

QUESTIONER

Yes, where the state is not responsible?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:
In such a case the state has no right to enforce the Islamic Shari'a law in its country.

QUESTIONER

What about the case where you have a system in which the state cannot provide for its people and the people wish to work but there is mass unemployment?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:
As far as Islamic injunctions of punishment are concerned, I must point out that the injunctions regarding punishment did not come first. The benefits of Islamic laws were enacted first and the punitive injunctions were revealed much later in the stage.

In its early stages Islam revealed its teachings of beneficence and the rights of the people in the Islamic state. Once a society was created such that its people were law abiding, pious and righteous - a society in which the standards had already been raised to a very high level - only then were the laws governing punishment revealed

and enacted. Hence, I do not agree with the so-called 'Maulvis' (clerics) who seek to represent Islam. They do not work for the uplift of the society, for building the moral fabric of society, which is something that every Prophet of God did. This task was carried out to its ultimate limits by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) of Islam. Despite the fact that he was initially very cruelly treated by the people of Mecca, yet he first created a better type of people from among those he addressed and then, much later, did he enforce the punitive laws. It was not the case that he first enforced these laws and then tried to create a better society through the instrument of punishment. This is what we most certainly do not find in the life history of the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam nor, for that matter, in the life of any other Prophet. Why then is it the case that these so called 'champions of Islam', the so-called 'Maulvis' do not work hard in a similar direction.

Why do they not first reform the society? They should first work to build the moral fabric of society to a high standard and then, and only then, would they be in a legitimate position to speak about the punitive measures. On the contrary, they seem to think that Islamic Shari'a is there only for the purpose of punishment!

The fact is that Islamic Shari'a is so full of beneficence that the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam is declared to be *Rahmatulil Alameen* that is, a mercy for the whole of mankind. People like the so-called 'Maulvis' seem to forget the aspect of mercy of the Islamic Shari'a as they tend to project only the punitive measures. Only the weapons are disclosed - the system of defense is given prominence - but the system of protection, the system of sustenance and the system of morality and all the beauties of Islam are ignored because its implementation requires much effort and hard work.

In short, I do not agree with the piecemeal implementation of Islamic Shari'a prior to the 'spade work' that is necessary which is a pre-requisite for the enforcement of these laws. First, work like the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam through persuasion, through patience, through suffering. Raise the standard of society, give them their due rights - provide them with the means of livelihood, provide them with the minimum guarantees. Then, and only then, does a state have the right to speak of punishment - not before.

LIFE SKETCH - Bashir Orchard - UK

It is with great sadness that we report the passing away of a former editor of the *Review of Religions*, Bashir Orchard Sahib, in July 2002. Here we reproduce his autobiography of his early life and how he adopted Islam while serving with the Army in India during the Second World War. This article was first published in the *Muslim Herald* in April 1982.

Torquay is a delightful holiday resort on the south coast of Devon; and it was there that I first saw the fight of day on 26th April, 1920. My father was a doctor and my mother had been a nurse prior to her marriage. Class distinction existed more than it does today. My parents belonged to the upper middle class. My paternal grandfather had also been a doctor while my mother's father was an admiral. The only grandparent I knew was my maternal grandmother and she died while I was still a young boy.

I had two elder brothers but no sister. The eldest who was three years older than me met an untimely death during the Second World War when the battleship on which he served was sunk in the Mediterranean by enemy action. My other brother, who was inclined towards religion from a young age (and is now a Roman Catholic priest), was at middle

age a Protestant priest in the Church of England but subsequently had to quit his vocation.



Bashir Orchard

He took up teaching as a profession in a school. He again had the urge to become a priest and eventually went to Rome to study and train for priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. My mother also became a Roman

Catholic soon after my brother's conversion. She was a very religious lady all her life and regularly attended church. My father, however, was little interested in religion. One of my maternal aunts had been a missionary in China for forty years and had much to do in helping my brother first become a priest in the Church of England.

When I was three years old my father bought a house situated on a hill overlooking Torbay. It was on the fringe of the countryside at a point called Barton Cross. I used to love to roam the fields and woods and also to find my way to the many beaches which were not so very far away. I enjoyed gathering wild fruits and nuts. When in season I used to get up in the early hours of the morning and search the fields for mushrooms before other people appeared on the scene for the same purpose. Those days remain with me as living memories.

My brothers and I went to Winchester Lodge Preparatory School. The headmaster was a keen cricketer who played for Wiltshire. I was in both the cricket and football teams. One by one we left the school as we

grew older and moved on to Monkton Combe which is the name of a well-known public school on the outskirts of Bath. I never enjoyed school nor was I a bright pupil. I left school at sixteen without any kind of educational certificate. Once I expressed my desire to become a doctor and I thought my father would be pleased that I wanted to follow in his footsteps. He promptly rebuffed me and told me I could never become a doctor because I lacked the aptitude for diligent study.

I left school at the end of the summer term in 1936. During that last term my mother had been granted legal separation from my father and had taken up temporary residence in Bath. Later she settled in Bristol. I was at a loose end and for nothing better to do I joined the army although I was far below eighteen which was the required minimum age. My regiment was the Somerset Light Infantry and my pay was two shillings (ten pence) a day. Life was tough and I did not find congenial companionship as I had been brought up in a more cultured society. I had signed up for seven years but at the end of my second year I wrote to my

father requesting him to purchase my discharge which was the only way of terminating my service. He promptly sent me a cheque for thirty-five pounds and within a few days I was home with my mother.

It appears that I still had some attachment for army life. I soon joined a Territorial Unit of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Territorials were part-time soldiers who normally did not have to train for more than one evening a week.

War clouds were looming on the horizon and on 3rd September, 1939, Britain declared war on Germany. My unit was immediately mobilised and once again I was a full-time soldier. We were sent to France and later moved up into Belgium. The German offensive pushed us back to the beaches of Dunkirk from where the battered remnants of the British Expeditionary Force were evacuated back across the English Channel to their homeland. I remember boarding a boat crowded to capacity with dishevelled and weary troops. Almost immediately I fell asleep and when I awoke the boat was entering Dover harbour. Relief



Bashir Orchard in Army uniform

organisations were awaiting to distribute tea and refreshments after which we were dispatched by train to a destination in Wales where, as heroes and not as prisoners, we were billeted in the cells of a local prison.

In 1941, I applied for a commission in the Indian Army. I had to present myself before several interviewing boards and finally I was accepted as an officer cadet and sailed for India in 1942 with a contingent of other cadets. The ship was one in a large convoy

which took two months to reach Bombay. Our final destination was Bangalore where we underwent a six months' course of training before being posted to our regiments as second lieutenants. I joined the 17th Dogra Regiment which was stationed at Jullunder. Later I was transferred to the Indian Army Ordnance Corps. I spent considerable time on active service in Assam and Burma. Perhaps one of my most memorable experiences was the siege of Kohima in the Manipur hills close to the Assam-Burma border. I was one of a motley force congregated on a wooded hill and completely surrounded by the invading Japanese. We were subjected to bombardment and attack for two weeks until reinforcements eventually broke through and relieved us. Supplies were dropped to us by parachute. On one occasion, in particular, I was very fortunate not to lose my life. We were in trenches. I was called away from my position for a few minutes by a senior officer. During that brief period a shell landed in the trench on the spot which I had just vacated. Two sepoy who had been near to me were killed.

The forementioned event took place in 1944 in which year deeper spiritual inclinations seemed to awaken within me. I was never much influenced by Christianity. I had become quite enchanted with Hindu literature and a close friend of mine was a Brahmin. As yet I had not been attracted in any way towards Islam although I did enjoy reading about the lives of the Moghul emperors in *Glimpses of World History* by Pandit Nehru.

Right up to that time my enjoyment in life were more or less the same as most young men. At sixteen I had become a regular drinker and smoker. Gambling was in my blood. When I was eighteen I had a temporary craze for dancing and, of course, I enjoyed going to the cinema and theatre. Although smoking is not specifically forbidden in Islam and may be considered a lesser vice, it was the hardest of them all for me to overcome. Nevertheless the physical and spiritual benefits gained from discarding that obnoxious habit have been immense.

Enlightenment

My unit was camped near Imphal which was a frontier outpost

close to the Burma border. An Ahmadi havildar clerk (sergeant) who was also serving in my unit concluded for reasons best known to himself that I might be a person to whom he could introduce the message of Islam. His name was Abdul Rahman Dehlvi. There were also a number of other Britishers attached to the same unit but as far as I know he never approached any of them. Naturally he had to exercise diplomacy in view of the fact that I was a commissioned officer with whom it would not be normal to discuss or propagate freely his religion. He arranged for a copy of the *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) to be sent to me from Qadian.

My spiritual senses were exceedingly dull in those days and for this reason I found much of its contents hard to comprehend. Nevertheless parts of it inspired me and uplifted my spirits. Later on I deliberately left it on the reading table in the officers' mess but I do not think anybody paid much attention to it. That was more than thirty-five years ago during which time I have read it thirty to forty times and, like the hopeful

batsman, I may score my fifty sooner or later.

Two weeks leave were due to me and I was undecided where to go. Havildar Abdul Rahman Dehlvi urged me to go and stay with one of his friends in Qadian which was quite an unknown place to me and involved a long journey of approximately a thousand miles. A couple of days later I told him that I had decided not to go. My pronouncement brought such a look of disappointment on his face that merely out of sympathy for him I immediately reversed my decision and promised to go for a few days.

Imphal lay about eighty miles from the nearest railway link at a jungle base called Manipur. The two places were connected by a long winding road that snaked up and down and round about a succession of jungle clad hills. This was the first stage of my journey. It took me at least a week to reach Qadian which I then came to know was a small isolated town. Nobody was on the station to receive me as no one had been intimated the time of my arrival. I hired a *tanga* (horse vehicle) and asked the driver to take me to the home of Mufti



Bashir Orchard with the 2nd Khalifa at the time of his wedding

Muhammad Sadiq which was the name of the person with whom I was supposed to stay. I was jogged along a bumpy road and then through some narrow streets until the driver stopped by a door in a wall inside of which some steps led up to another door on the level of a roof courtyard. I knocked on the upper door. A chain jangled inside and the door was opened by a white bearded elderly gentleman stripped bare to the waist, no doubt on account of the hot weather. He was Mufti Sadiq. Both of us were surprised to see one another. I introduced myself and forthwith Mufti Sadiq instructed the *tanga* driver to take me to the guest house where I was accommodated in a sparsely

furnished white-washed room. Shortly afterwards Mufti Sadiq came around to meet me. This time he was dressed in flowing robes and wore a magnificent headdress. Later I came to know that he was a companion of the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) - and also the first Ahmadi missionary to the United States of America.

Next day Mufti Sadiq escorted me around Qadian drawing my attention to various places of interest. I remember asking him on that occasion what was the attitude of the Jama'at towards smoking. He replied that while it was not specifically forbidden it was discouraged.

'THE JAPANESE WERE IN RETREAT AND WE HAD REACHED A SMALL TOWN CALLED MEIKTILLA. IT WAS THERE THAT I MADE MY DECISION TO ACCEPT AHMADIYYAT. I SIGNED THE BAI'AT (INITIATION) FORM AND POSTED IT TO QADIAN. THAT WAS, NO DOUBT, THE GREATEST STEP I HAD EVER TAKEN IN MY LIFE.'

The highlight of my two day visit was an audience with Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad - the Khalifa and Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement. This was a memorable event although at that time I did not fully appreciate the significance of his spiritual status. He was seated on a chair on the verandah of his house. I do not remember the details of our conversation though I do remember expressing my view that it was sufficient to follow the Ten commandments in order to live a good life. His answer was to the effect that they were only some general principles which needed further clarification such as the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill'.

I was impressed most of all by his luminous countenance which radiated an intangible spiritual light which seemed to shine from the windows of another world. He

scintillated heavenly light and, as he spoke, a charming smile animated his face. He was an embodiment of energetic repose radiating physical, intellectual and spiritual magnetism which captivated all within his presence. I realised that I was in the company of no ordinary person.

Generally I was much impressed by everyone I met. This is what attracted me towards Islam more than anything else. My knowledge of Islam at that time was negligible but I reasoned that if these persons were fruits of the faith then it certainly had something to offer. I was in search of truth and later I was to realise that I had found it in Qadian.

A notable event took place in my life in the evening after my departure. I was waiting on the station at Amritsar which is a town about thirty miles from

Qadian. While waiting for my connection I joined some other officers for drinks in the refreshment room. I was suddenly overcome with a feeling of aversion. The atmosphere seemed repulsive compared with the holy atmosphere of Qadian. There and then I resolved to forsake drinking once and for all. One of the first things I did when I rejoined my unit on the Burma front was to throw away all the bottles of alcohol I had in my possession.

The army was now on the offensive pushing deeper and deeper into Burma. The Japanese were in retreat and we had reached a small town called Meiktila. It was there that I made my decision to accept Ahmadiyyat. I signed the bai'at (initiation) form and posted it to Qadian. That was, no doubt, the greatest step I had ever taken in my life.

Blessed fruits

More than thirty-five years have passed since I accepted Ahmadiyyat during which time I have been beneficially nourished by the sweet fruits of the faith in multifarious ways.

Drinking and gambling

I have already mentioned that I was shackled to both these vices. Even on my historical visit to Qadian, I carried a bottle of whisky and a bottle of rum in my luggage. Fortunately some higher power or my better judgment prevented me from taking drinks while I was there although at that time I did not consider drinking to be wrong in any way. I used to gamble on horses, greyhounds, dice and card games. Once when stationed at Imphal, I lost a month's pay gambling on cards with other officers. These were the first two evils from which I was rescued by Islam.

Giving in the way of Allah

Prior to my acceptance of Ahmadiyyat. I used to contribute nothing in the way of God or towards charity. Islam taught me the philosophy of giving in the way of Allah. Sacrificing what one loves for the sake of Allah wins the pleasure of Allah and earns one abundant reward. I commenced by paying one-sixteenth of my income and later increased it to one-tenth. Finally in 1967, I commenced paying one-third and have been doing so ever since. Despite the fact that I enjoy only a meagre income, life is good to

SOMETIMES IT IS A MATTER OF WONDER TO ME HOW ANY MUSLIM WHO IS ATTACHED TO ISLAM WITH A SINCERE HEART CAN INTENTIONALLY FAIL TO OFFER THE PRESCRIBED PRAYERS AS COMMANDED BY ALLAH.... AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY HADHRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH II APPEARED ON A BOARD OUTSIDE MASJID MUBARAK STATING THAT IF ANYONE DURING A PERIOD OF TEN YEARS KNOWINGLY AND DELIBERATELY FORSOOK EVEN ONE PRAYER OF THE DAY THEN HE COULD NOT COUNT HIMSELF AS A TRUE AHMADI.

me in every respect. In addition to *Zakat* I also regularly give *Tehrik-e-Jadid* and Ansar contributions plus payments towards my *Jubilee Fund* promise and various other appeals.

Islam teaches that generally it is better to give in secret but one may also give openly on some occasions. It is because I have been asked to state some of the gains I have acquired through the acceptance of Ahmadiyyat that I have revealed the forementioned facts to show the extent to which I am bound to the Jama'at. I have learned and experienced that money alone does not provide happiness and contentment in this world. Peace of mind lies in the hands of Allah and not in one's wealth or material resources. Thanks to Ahmadiyyat through which the blessings of Allah flow, I can truly affirm that today I enjoy peace of mind to a

degree that at one time I could never have dreamed possible for me to experience.

Prayer

Ahmadiyyat introduced into my life the regular observance of daily prayers which have proved a source of great blessing and comfort to me testifying to the truth of the verse in the Holy Qur'an:

It is only in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort (13:29).

I am still a novice in the art of prayer. Prayer is more than a routine habit. I have gained much on the subject from the writings and discourses of the Promised Messiah^(as). They have been a source of inspiration to me.

Sometimes it is a matter of wonder to me how any Muslim

who is attached to Islam with a sincere heart can intentionally fail to offer the prescribed prayers as commanded by Allah. Once when I was in Qadian shortly after my acceptance of Islam an announcement by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II appeared on a board outside Masjid Mubarak stating that if anyone during a period of ten years knowingly and deliberately forsook even one prayer of the day then he could not count himself as a true Ahmadi.

Dreams

Everybody dreams. It is a normal function of the body. Investigators have ascertained that even animals dream. Since time immemorial God has revealed Himself through the medium of dreams. The Holy Qur'an and earlier scriptures abound with incidents of persons to whom God communicated knowledge, messages and future events through dreams. I do not recall the details of any dream before the time I accepted Ahmadiyyat. Since then, however, I have had many dreams which I have never forgotten. Throughout the years they have remained with me as fresh and clear as at the time I received them. I will briefly relate

three of them which to me are of special spiritual significance.

I accepted Ahmadiyyat in 1945. Round about that time I had a dream in which I saw myself meeting Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II in Masjid Mubarak, Qadian. He said to me: 'In order to live a successful life you must not let sorrows affect you.'

He then raised his right hand in which he held a stick and said with great emphasis: 'And there is no doubt about it.'

In 1958, I was in Qadian for a short visit. While sleeping in the guest house I saw in a dream that somebody brought me a dish of thick cream and I was told that it had been prepared for Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II but for one reason or another it was being offered to me.

I served as a missionary in the West Indies from 1952 - 1966, I saw in a dream that Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II was making me drink from a cup which he was holding to my lips with his two hands. Looking down into the cup I saw it contained milk and a little soaked bread.



War Medals!

Whereas I am able to appreciate the significance of these dreams I will not comment on them.

Ambition

I had no goals or ambition in life before I accepted Ahmadiyyat. I had no plans for the future. During the war, I was a soldier due to compulsory service. I was more or less drifting through life like a capsized boat in the open sea; yet when I was a very young child I was once gripped by a powerful yearning which occurred one night when I was in bed. I wanted to become and do something extraordinary. I did not want to pass through life being just one of

a crowd. I wanted to be unique in one way or another. At that time I am sure I was not more than ten years of age at the most. I do not recall ever thinking or dwelling on the matter again. It was just a flash of the moment which never re-occurred but must have taken root in my subconscious mind from where later it was to emerge into reality. It would appear that this was brought about through my acceptance of Ahmadiyyat as the following events may suggest.

When the war ended in 1945, I returned to England and was immediately demobilised. I went straight to my mother in Bristol where I stayed for a couple of days. I then travelled to London in search of the London Mosque where I introduced myself to the Imam - Maulana J. D. Shams. I expressed my desire to work with the mission and also to dedicate my life completely to the service of Islam. This event has been described by Maulana Shams:

'After his release from the army, when he arrived in England he stayed for two days only at Bristol with his relatives and so on the third day he was at the mosque in

London. During his conversation with me he expressed his willingness to live at the mosque and become a Muslim missionary. I explained to him the responsibilities of a missionary and the required qualifications for missionary work. Eventually I promised him to see to his case sympathetically and would write to him on this matter. He was a little bit upset from my reluctance in accepting his offer readily. After a few days he, however, dedicated his life for the service of Islam unconditionally like other waqifeen. I sent his application to Hadhrat Amirul Momineen with my opinion that he might be a useful missionary. I asked him to come and stay with us and to begin the study of Islam. Hadhrat Ameerul Momineen graciously accepted his waqf and Mr. Orchard began to work with other missionaries.' (*Review of Religions*, June 1947)

Allah works in mysterious ways. He willed that this insignificant individual should become the first European Ahmadi Muslim missionary. This was indeed a

singular favour which Allah bestowed me. The following words of counsel were delivered to me by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II:

'At this time you are unknown, no doubt, and unheard of, but soon the time is coming when nations will feel proud of you and sing your praises. So mind, you do not take lightly what you say and what you do. Do not think that your movements are only personal, no, but they pertain to the whole British nation. The posterity will imitate your movements and follow them to the letter ... If your movements and activities will be in accordance with Islam, and noble and grand, then they will be instrumental in raising the moral tone of your nation, but if they are below the mark and not in strict accordance with Islam, your nation will be the loser thereby; try, therefore, to set a noble example for posterity otherwise God will have another man to fulfil this task. When Ahmadiyyat will have spread all over the world, and spread it must, no power on earth can impede its

destined progress, then there will be reverence for you in the hearts of the people, greater than the one which they have for the greatest of the Prime Ministers.'

(*Review of Religions*, June 1947)

I close this short review of my life with gratitude to Allah for His blessings and favours and with the declaration that all praise is due to Allah the Lord of all the worlds.

Maulana Bashir Orchard went on to serve the Jama'at with distinction, first as a missionary in the Caribbean Islands, then Scotland and finally in his native England. He wrote many articles, and served as the editor of this magazine from 1984 - 1993. Among the many features that he introduced, the *Guide Posts* feature was later compiled and published as a book, and the collections of quotations from various prophets and religious texts was published as *Gems of Inspiration*. It was those quotes which provided the inspiration for the back

covers of the current design of this magazine. He also wrote the book '*Life Supreme*'.

Orchard Sahib was fortunate to be able to perform Hajj in 1993, one of the highlights of his life, accompanied by a young khadim from Oxford. He provided a role model to European Muslims and also to those elsewhere in the world. His manner was such that he appealed to people of all ages and generations who turned to him for guidance and inspiration.

He passed away peacefully on July 8th 2002. He leaves behind his wife, three sons, three daughters and fifteen grand-children and even 1 great grandchild. May Allah grant him a lofty station in heaven, and enable us all to follow his great example, Ameen.

Judaism - a short introduction

By David Grunweg - President of the Sheffield Jewish Congregation. This is the text of a speech given at a multi-religious function.

The Jews are one of the world's most ancient peoples. Our history goes back nearly 4000 years. We are descended from our patriarchs Abraham, Issac and Jacob and their wives Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. The Jews are proud of being an ancient people and have a strong sense of their own history.

The basic tenet of Judaism is Monotheism - the belief in one God. In ancient times, this set the Jews apart from the neighbours who believed that the crops, rainfall, illness, childbirth and death were controlled by different gods.

God is the Creator of the universe and all things. He is:

Omnipotent - all powerful
Omniscient - all knowing, and
Omnipresent - everywhere at the same time.

Jews believe that God is Holy, completely Good, Merciful and

Just and He in turn expects human beings to strive to be the same. Whilst omnipotent, God holds back and allows people to express free will - the freedom of choice to choose between good and evil. The relationship between man and God is direct, with no intermediary. Man communicates by prayer and God always hears prayers.

God is the God of all humankind. Guidelines are set down for human behaviour in the Noahide Laws, which provide the basic framework for a moral and spiritual life. The Noahide Laws consist of 7 principles - they forbid idolatry, blasphemy, murder, theft, sexual malpractice and cruelty to animals and promote justice, thus encouraging people to live together in harmony. In Jewish thinking, these are the basics of civilised life.

Jews are sometimes called the chosen people. This should not

be taken to mean that God has favourites. In Jewish thinking, all human beings have the responsibility to serve God by keeping the Noahide Laws. Jews, on the other hand, have the added responsibility to keep 613 commandments or Mitzvot. This is a form of covenant between Jews and God - by keeping God's commandments, they bring holiness into the world and prepare it for the time when all human beings will know Him.

The 613 Mitzvot include the Ten Commandments and the 7 Noahide Laws. They comprise of 248 positive and 365 negative commands, and cover all kinds of religious activities and observance, rules of the Sabbath and festivals, but also the conduct of personal and industrial relations, trials, divorce proceedings and food and dietary rules. Keeping these Mitzvot is seen to be indicative of leading a disciplined life and is character-building.

Jews do not try and convert other people to their religion, because they believe that there are many paths to God.

Jews believe in the coming of the Messiah, including the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, where all nations will go to worship God. All nations will then live in peace and harmony and God's presence will be felt by everyone.

The rules referred to above are followed in a literal manner by Orthodox Jewish communities throughout the world. In modern times, other Jewish movements have developed which do not uphold all the traditional practices and there are in addition to Orthodox, Liberal, reform and Masorti congregations.

In Sheffield, there is an Orthodox Community, with around 350 members, a Reform Congregation with around 100 members and a number of unaffiliated Jews.

The 'Blind Watchmaker' Who is also Deaf and Dumb

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



Animals other than bats, owls and dolphins are also provided with a highly sophisticated mechanism to hear and see in total darkness. Apart from that, the following are some examples of mechanisms of awareness which in their narrow field far exceed that of humans and man-made machines.

A most fascinating example is that of some snakes which are entirely guided by ultraviolet heat rays providing them with an extremely sensitive awareness, albeit narrowly confined to a specific task. They are fully equipped with the most advanced ultrasonic and infrared devices. A certain species of snakes is provided with an extremely sensitive receptacle between his eyes and nostrils which transmit to it infrared stimuli through an opening like a pinhole camera. This opening - only a few millimetres in size - transmits infrared rays to the receptacle which is so sensitive it can detect changes in temperature as small as 0.003°C. To such changes the snake can respond as rapidly as. within thirty-five milliseconds, a speed which is hundreds of times faster than any similar device made by humans with modern technology.¹¹

Cockroaches are so sensitive to vibration that they can detect movements so small that they can only be measured in units appropriate to gauge molecular distances. They can detect movement a mere two thousand times the size of a hydrogen atom¹². For a mere cockroach to detect a movement so infinitesimally small is absolutely

mindboggling. The human eye can only detect the size of a hydrogen atom if it is enlarged by a factor of approximately 400,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. Any reader who would like to read this figure is reminded that a trillion is only one, with eighteen zeroes on its right side. Anyone who attempts to read this figure is reminded that this would be an exercise in futility.

Scientists have now accomplished the gigantic and most complicated task of mapping and charting the magnetic variations which naturally occur across oceans. Whales employ them for correctly navigating their movements in the sea. So far the scientists have not understood how whales can detect and employ these variations to their advantage. Perhaps Dawkins could explain to them how elementary the solution would become if the Darwinian principle of natural selection could be employed. But the scientists will have to be patient with him because his bit by bit explanation may take as long as a lifetime, yet most probably it will remain as unsatisfactory at the end as it was in the beginning.

A duck-billed platypus is so sensitive to electricity that it can detect field strengths of a five hundred millionth of a volt per centimetre - a performance that can outpace by a large margin the most sophisticated electrical devices. For it to detect a mere one thousandth of a volt per centimetre generated by the flick of a shrimp's tail is no problem at all.

Sharks and rays are known to even detect stationary prey as they can detect the electricity made by the prey's muscles as it breathes, even if it's hiding in sediments on the ocean floor.¹³

Birds of prey have two circular fovea and a strip in each eye. Its structure and positioning enables it to function as a telephoto lens, magnifying images by an amazing number. Vultures can reach heights of 2000m or more and can survey the land for many kilometres around it for prey - which is often camouflaged!¹⁴

The crustacean *Copilia* possesses a pair of the most fabulous eyes. It

forms an image using its lens, which is scanned by a second mobile lens and retina.

'The retina contains only nine light detectors, but by scanning the image up to ten times each second it is able to build up some kind of picture.'¹⁵

'The tail of the electric eel contains 10,000 tiny electric organs, arranged in 70 columns, and over half of the fish is given over to electricity production. This allows it to generate an incredible 550 volts. In fact, such voltages can even kill a person.'¹⁶

We most respectfully draw the scholarly attention of Dawkins to these realities which are just a few among thousands so far known to the scientists. We beg him not to waste his time and that of the reader by fiddling with childish computer games. Why does he not apply his theories to real life? It would have been far more sensible and convincing if he had taken up the case of all these freaks of nature as mentioned above with reference to their most complex mechanism. He does not have to search for the fossil records or the sequence of living animals which may have preceded them. We spare him that onerous task and require him only to concentrate his attention upon the eight living wonders quoted above and the amazing tasks they perform.

Let him demonstrate to the world how their complicated components and parts were assembled in such a complex sequence. Every step has to be justified with reference to the application of blind Darwinian principles. Having done that he would still have quite a task ahead. Each component would demand a similar treatment because each would be further subdivided into a variety of sub-parts and the material they are made of - each playing a collective and individual role in the making of the finished product.

In the end, the availability and the nature of the material necessary for their making has to be attended to in its own right. Who manufactured that material aimlessly? How was it manufactured without an appropriate factory? Who created that complicated factory

with extremely delicate know-how? How did such factories survive uninterrupted and undisturbed in the wide open nature of winds and sea storms? How did that material offer itself at the right moment to be pressed into service? It is a very plain and realistic exercise which Dawkins is requested to perform. He should confront the realities of biological mysteries which are so real yet far more mysterious than any biomorphic world can be. Dawkins will be well advised to resolve the riddles of life with reference to life itself as it exists. We suggest he should begin this exercise with the electric fish, which we briefly listed as the eighth wonder.

Electric fish make use of their electric fields as navigation aids. These fish have an invisible, continuous field of electricity which surrounds the entire fish. On approaching an object, changes occur in its surrounding current which alters its voltage and aids direction. With this amazing navigation system the fish can distinguish between obstacles, predator or prey. As long as it does not confront any object its voltage is in a relaxed state. No extra burden causes any waste of energy. The moment it confronts an object, somehow a signal is sent to its voltmeters to immediately increase its voltage to such a high intensity that it can kill a man, or knock out a horse, in shallow waters.

Dawkins fails to realise that it is impossible for this complex, intricate system to arise from natural selection or the bit by bit development theory that he is so fond of. Does he not stop to think where these bits originate from? How could alien minor changes survive in an organism which has not the facilities to cater for it? A study of electric fishes provides an excellent proof of the existence of a Conscious Creator. Such a Creator must possess a profound knowledge of how electricity is generated and works. We ask where would the first change occur to accommodate the idea of electric currents in water and more intriguingly, how? How do the muscles of the fish, arrayed in series, suddenly become tense, each generating electricity like a highly sophisticated electrical device joining their currents at the ends to a level of very high voltage? Incidentally, this saves every muscle the damage which may have been caused by high voltage electricity if they had been connected in parallel. According to Dawkins:

'It is very important that the fish's own body is kept absolutely rigid. The computer in the head couldn't cope with the extra distortions that would be introduced if the fish's body were bending and twisting like an ordinary fish.'¹⁷

Logic and common sense raise a key question here, that if the fish couldn't cope with the changes then why was it making the change in the first place? However he goes on to add:

'... but they have had to pay a price: they have had to give up the normal, highly efficient, fish method of swimming, throwing the whole body into serpentine waves. They have solved the problem by keeping the body stiff as a poker...'¹⁸

Who 'they' are, who have solved the problem, Dawkins has avoided to mention. Did the fish do it themselves? If not, who did it for them? As we envision the initial making of the electric fish, in accordance with the bit by bit theory, the entire system seems to begin with the portholes.

Dawkins explains:

'The fish has what amounts to a tiny voltmeter monitoring the voltage at each "porthole"... if some obstacle appears in the vicinity, say a rock or an item of food, the lines of current that happen to hit the obstacle will be changed. This will change the voltage at any porthole whose current line is affected, and the appropriate voltmeter will register the fact. So in theory a computer, by comparing the pattern of voltages registered by the voltmeters at all the portholes, could calculate the pattern of obstacles around the fish. **This is apparently what the fish brain does.**'¹⁹

Why should the fish brain appear to perform this unique feat of electronic engineering? If one is totally convinced that the fish brain has no real wilfully created organisation or complexity of design nor

has it any capability of conscious operation itself as Dawkins asserts, then to allude to it as a *masterpiece* of electronic engineering is either extreme naivety or an inadvertent attempt to mislead others. In answer to this evident problem he immediately has this to say:

'Once again, this doesn't have to mean that the fish are clever mathematicians. They have an apparatus that solves the necessary equations, just as our brains unconsciously solve equations every time we catch a ball.'¹⁹

Thus, inadvertently, he has added another problem to the one he is already confronted with. Let alone the human brain and how it manages to compute the catching of a ball, turn back to the brain of that fish which unconsciously and automatically resolves a highly complicated mathematical problem. After this admission, we naturally expected him to turn to his cumulative bit by bit theory and show us how it applies to the electric fish he has described. He should have explained how these electrical portholes evolved piecemeal. How the issue of befitting voltage required by every specific situation was resolved, how this most fascinating electrical machine with all its portholes and their precisely controlled voltage automatically evolved, faultlessly following the unconscious bidding of the electric fish, remain the questions unresolved!

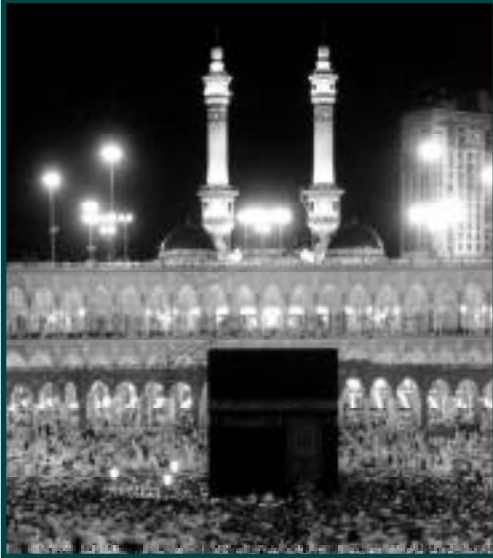
Once again, we spare Dawkins the laborious problem of tracing a long line of less competent fish which gradually evolved into this perfect machine. Evidently they have disappeared from the plan of existence. Let them be gone. What he has before him to support his theory of bit by bit construction is this fish, with all its complicated mechanisms which he has to admit excels all similar manmade devices. Dawkins should have leapt upon this opportunity to prove the point that the fish's brain could have created this fish unconsciously, directed only by the genes it carried. The genes themselves, Dawkins should not forget, are mindless unconscious things. Forget the fish for a while, let him explain how he himself could have devised and constructed such a fish with all the modern scientific know-how at his service!

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