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# Editorial

One of the fundamentals of Islam is that it requires a belief in all the prophets of God. God has sent messengers throughout the ages to various communities in different parts of the world. These messages have been in accordance with the needs and developments of those communities. The final law bearing prophet was the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(sa)</sup>. The Islamic concept of the Divine is that of a God Who has not ceased to communicate with and provide for his creation. So all religions are united by a common historical thread although their outward appearances may be different. Unfortunately, it is these outward differences that are sometimes exploited to promote hatred and fear between peoples. Islam however presents a clear message.

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> has said:

‘Of all the principles to which I have been made to adhere firmly, there is one that has specifically been revealed to me by God Himself. That principle is to desist from declaring false in essence, such religions as have been revealed by God through His prophets and which have the following characteristics. They have met with wide acceptance in certain regions of the world – having survived all challenges, they have become well established and deeply rooted. Having stood the test of time for long, they have acquired a measure of age and an air of performance.

According to this principle, such religions are essentially true and their founders were most certainly true prophets of God.’ (*Roohani Khazain*, Vol.12: Tohfa Qaisariya, p 256).

He also said:

‘This is a most attractive and peace giving principle which provides the basis for reconciliation amongst nations and promotes better moral conduct. This principle teaches us to believe in the truth of all prophets wherever they might have appeared; in India, Persia or China or any other country and for whom God has filled the hearts of millions of people with awe and deep respect and has caused their religions to be firmly rooted.’  
(*Roohani Khazain*, Vol.12: Tohfa Qaisariya, p259)

These profound words provide a beautifully simple solution to religious hatred and misunderstanding that have divided peoples over the centuries. Islam is unique in recognising the truth of all the prophets thereby encompassing all other religions. This concept of religious universality within Islam therefore provides a unifying thread and a prescription for peace that is so badly needed in the world today.

Finally the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community’s well renowned motto ‘love for all, hatred for none’ is a great recipe for unifying mankind and removing misunderstanding, discord and hatred.

**Mansoor Saqi**

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# Notes & Comments

## **Tomorrow's World?**

This short note is not about some new scientific discovery that is about to change the course of human history. Nor is it a much-deserved protest against experiments on cloning and the dangers implicit to the creation of prototypes ending up uncontrollable. Nevertheless, it is about events destined to happen in the future but then, you may well ask, who knows the future. Does the modern world not have sufficient problems for us to concern ourselves about the future? In the absence of belief in a supreme authority, crime has become widespread; marriages are breaking up; and family violence is rampant. Yet, a look at past history reveals that we have had such problems in the past. Man has always lived in the hope that the future would be better and that a time would come when someone would say enough is enough and sit down and ponder. When that will happen in the current cycle of human history is beyond our

knowledge but it is becoming reasonably clear that we are fast approaching that breaking point.

As for the future, you would no doubt agree that very few people believe nowadays in newspaper columns on your luck in the stars, or some 'guesstimate' by a palm or tea-leave reader or crystal ball gazer. Knowledge of the unknown rests only with our Creator and the Creator of this world. Sometimes a person is so deeply immersed in his love for the Creator that his striving establishes a living relationship with his Creator. The Almighty Creator envelops this pious person with His Divine grace, mercy and protection and grants him an insight into events yet to unfold. But His words are unlike those of some stargazer or palm reader or some hit and miss fortune-teller. There is a clarity and precision in those predictions beyond dispute. When the event foretold actually happens, each word of that prophecy become

manifestly clear. (For a fuller explanation, the reader is invited to the extract from *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth* featured in this edition.) It is a fitting response to Billy Graham who stated in 1960 that 'you can read the Qur'an from cover to cover and not find a word concerning the future of mankind.'

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian, came to remind mankind that it must re-establish a living relationship with its Creator and God Almighty foretold him many events yet to happen. Many of his prophecies were fulfilled during his lifetime, some after he passed away and many others relate to the future. They strengthened the belief of his followers and upheld the truth of his claims. He stated: 'Hear ye people and bear witness to it that Allah Almighty, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, has foretold me that He shall spread His own community in all parts of the world and shall grant victory over all by dint of reasons and arguments. The days are approaching, nay they are at the door, when this shall be the

only religion and this Movement in an extraordinary manner shall bring to naught everyone who has an evil design against it. He shall grant it a lasting victory that shall continue to the end of days. There shall be only one religion and only One Guide on the surface of the earth. I have only come to sow the seed, and have done it. It shall now grow and bear fruit and there shall be no stop it.

### Mansoor Ahmad Shah

In this edition, for the convenience of non-Muslim English readers, (sa) or <sup>sa</sup> after the word the Holy Prophet or the name Muhammad, are used. They stand for salallahualaihiwasallam and abbrev-iated as 'sa', meaning peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Likewise, the letters '(as)' or <sup>as</sup> after the name of all other Prophets is an abbreviation (meaning, peace be upon him derived from alaih salato-wasalam) for the respect a Muslim readers utters.

### The Review of Religions

We have restored the title of this magazine to its original name and have put the word 'the' back in its title – a reflection of the 'definite' articles it carries.

(Editor)

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# Message from Heaven

by Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad – Khalifatul Masih II

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## Introduction

*Over a hundred years ago, an amazing event took place in an obscure and tiny hamlet, Qadian, in the province of the Punjab, India. It was an event that was destined to change the course of history.*

*There appeared a religious leader who claimed to be the Promised Reformer of the latter days and the fulfilment of various prophecies in all major religious scriptures regarding the advent of a global reformer. The followers of all great religions - Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Zoroastrians and the followers of Confucius - all anxiously awaited the advent of the Promised Reformer, as predicted in their Holy Scriptures. Each believed the Promised Reformer would fulfil the prophecies contained in their respective scriptures.*

*If the entire universe is the creation of one God, which it is, and therefore He alone must be the source of all religions, how could He send different messengers concurrently, inviting mankind into divergent paths and conflicting ideologies? This was the perplexing question addressed by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Under Divine guidance he made the revolutionary disclosure that there was to appear only one such reformer representing all the Promised Ones and humankind was ultimately to be brought under the fold of one universal religion.*

*Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> declared that he was the Promised Messiah. He further maintained that Islam was the final and complete code of life for all mankind, hence his claim that the awaited reformer had to appear in Islam as a subordinate prophet to Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(sa)</sup>.*

*Born in 1835, Hadrat Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> established the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 1889. His mission, in which he acquitted himself with distinction and credit, was to revive Islam. He did not bring a new code of conduct or introduce any theological innovation. His teaching deriving entirely from the Holy Qur'an and the pronouncements of the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(sa)</sup>, represent the essence of Islam, shorn of all innovations that have through many centuries, adulterated the doctrine of Islam.*

*Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> showed that by adhering to the true teachings of Islam, peace*

*can be established among mankind and between man and his Creator. He urged his followers to foster a deep and sincere relationship with God, aiming to personify the true meaning of Islam – peace and submission to the will of God.*

*Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> died in 1908 but his guidance on the teachings of Islam has lived on through his community. His followers have been subjected to extreme persecution but despite all attempts of hostile fanatics, be they individual or governmental, whose purported objective was to extinguish the torch of Ahmadiyyat, the community has continued to prosper and now has branches in 180 countries across the world.*

*The message of the Ahmadiyya Community is that unless man learns to live at peace with himself and his fellow human beings, he cannot live at peace with God. In Islam, you shall find such peace of mind and tranquillity of heart that is the fruit of submitting to the Will of God.*

*It is for this reason that the second successor to the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup>, poured out his heart in a message to the western nations. The ‘Message from Heaven’ was first published in the Review of Religions in December 1924, but it was felt that the message should be published within its own right. In a time of political, economic and social instability, mankind is ever in need of glad tidings. It is hoped that seekers after truth need look no further, for the one who has been long awaited has already come.*

(Introduction by Mirza Fakhar Ahmad)

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With the Grace and Mercy of God. He alone is the Helper.

‘Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh

against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world neither in the world to come.’

(St Matthew 12: 31, 32)

In these words did a Holy Prophet of God<sup>(sa)</sup>, 1900 years ago, address those who refused to accept a Message from Heaven, and these words are as true and full of import today as they were when

they were spoken. Apart from the legends which fancy has woven round the expression 'Holy Ghost', the expression refers to the angel who was the bearer of the Word of God to Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. By the words which I have quoted above, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> meant no more than this, that all manner of sin would be forgiven unto men, but that blasphemy against the Word of God would not be forgiven. A man who speaks against the son of man might be forgiven, but a man who speaks against the message which the son of man had brought would be punished both in this world and in the next.

These words contain a great and profound truth, a truth which is free from every suspicion of error. It is but reasonable to assume that if there really exists a God and He sends a message for the guidance of mankind, which contains truths from which the world might derive eternal benefits and is not full of empty useless things, then those who ignore such a message or refuse to accept it must suffer the consequences of their conduct. If we give directions to a man as to how to reach a certain place and

he arrives at that place without any trouble or difficulty in defiance of our directions, there must be something wrong with our directions. If they had been correct, a man who had acted in defiance of them could not, without repairing his mistake, have arrived at his destination. Similarly if the Word of God contains guidance for mankind, a contravention of it must result in pain, not because God is actuated by spite, but because the offender has chosen to tread on a path which leads to trouble and difficulties. The Word of God is not revealed in order to try mankind, but is meant to guide mankind along the only path which leads to the goal of human existence.

In short, a Message from Heaven is not a thing which might be ignored with impunity. It is a spiritual law, the contravention of which, like that of a physical law, is attended with penalties and deprives a man of spiritual well-being. As no man may swallow a deadly poison and escape the consequences, so may the human soul not reject the Word of God and escape the consequences. He who acts in

accordance with it lays not God under an obligation but promotes the welfare of his own soul, and he who contravenes it, does no harm to God but injures his own soul.

Having indicated the vital nature of a Message from Heaven, I desire to point out that as the object of man's existence is that he should develop within himself Divine attributes and should attain to the perfection of purity, it is necessary that he should be the constant recipient of such messages from God as serve to sustain his interest and to remind him of the object of his existence. It is inconceivable that God, Who is the source of all knowledge and wisdom, should create man for a definite purpose and should then leave him to act as he pleases, and thus stultify His own work. History also confirms this conclusion. There is not a single country or a single nation which has not at one time or another entertained a belief in revelation and which has not produced men who claimed to have been the recipients of revelation. We cannot say that all claimants were impostors or were the victims of

nervous disorders, for they formed the centre of all morals and culture, and without them the world would have been but an empty waste. Concerning this the Holy Qur'an says:

*There is no nation but has had its warner.*

(Ch.35: V.25)

This is perfectly true and correct. Having endowed man with powers and faculties which can lead him to the highest pinnacle of progress, God would not leave him without guidance or instruction; and being the Lord of, and having equal love for, all mankind, He would not confine the revelation of His Word to one nation or to one age. If we believe in a Merciful Creator, we must also believe that He sends His message to the world in every age; otherwise our belief would be a mere jumble of inconsistencies.

When we arrive at the conclusion that revelation ought to be vouchsafed whenever mankind is in need of it, we have already advanced a step towards the acceptance of God's message, and have opened one of the windows



of our soul; but we must take another step forward and ask ourselves the question, are we also in need of a message from God? If the need of such a message is established, we become prepared to accept the message, for a study of the laws of nature shows us that wherever there is a want the means of satisfaction of that want have also been provided, so that if mankind is in need of a Divine message, such a message must have been sent.

Sisters and brothers, consider for a moment, what is the object of Divine messages and of revelation? Is it not that men should attain to perfect certainty of belief concerning their Creator and should, through perfect love for Him and perfect realisation of Him, be enabled to purify their souls and be equipped with faculties by means of which they may both here and hereafter, attain to union with God, which is the ultimate goal of human existence? Then, do we find these things in the world today? Do the men and women of today really believe in God, and do they cherish for Him such love as is due

to Him, and do they so mould their lives in everything as to make them conformable to His commands? Have they acquired such spiritual powers and faculties as indicate their union with God? I trust everyone of you must have read the Bible, or at least, some portions of it. Then do you find such men living today as those of whom you read in the Bible, and does God manifest His signs today on their behalf as He did of old? If this is not so, and on the contrary, the world is empty of faith, and disbelief is on the increase, and the love of God has been replaced by the love of riches, goods and worldly honours, and feelings of charity and sympathy have given place to schemes for robbing and despoiling, and instead of witnessing Divine signs men scarcely believe in the existence of God, and the whole time and energy of men is devoted to the gratification of their desires, and the commandments of religion being ignored as mere formalities, the rules of fashion relating to collars, coats, neckties, hats, frocks and gowns, and the regulations of what is described as good taste in manners and behaviour are

enforced with a rigour which indicates that these matters are the sole concerns of life, Divine commandments being designated as mere formalities and shells, not because formalities and shells are regarded as useless but because man desires to abolish the law of God and to substitute in its place rules made by himself, which is not so much a rejection of the law as a usurpation of the functions of the Law-giver; then, things being as I have described them, do you not feel the need of a fresh message from God which should remind mankind that their Lord is a Living and Mighty Lord, and that He is not asleep in a corner of Paradise like an overwrought workman.

Having demonstrated the need of a Divine message in the present age, I desire to inform you that God has not forsaken His creatures, nor has He forgotten their needs. He has sent His message for the guidance of mankind through a Chosen One, as He had previously sent His messages through Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, Krishna, Rama Chandra, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster) and

Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on all of them). The name of the prophet who has brought the message of God to mankind in the present age is Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>, and those who accept his message and follow his teachings inherit the Grace of God, in the same manner as did those who accepted and followed the previous prophets. I am a follower of this Prophet and am also his second successor, and out of the love for our fellow-beings with which this Prophet has filled our hearts, I have come to deliver his message to you, and in doing so, I shall adopt the words used by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> himself.

He says, 'Hearken ye who have ears to hear: What is it that Allah requires of you? Only this that you should become his alone and set up no equal with Him, neither on this earth nor in heaven. Our God is the One Who is alive today as much as He ever was; likewise He speaks today as He did in the past; He hears as He used to hear. To think that He only listens but does not speak in this age is a vain belief. Indeed, He both hears and speaks. All His attributes were never

suspended, nor will they ever be. He is the same Unique Being Who has no associate; He has neither son nor wife...'

(*Roohani Khazain*, Vol.20, *Al Wasiyyat*, p.309)

'Remember, I say unto you truly, that the man shall perish who has a leaven of worldliness in his faith, and verily hell is very near unto the one whose thoughts are not all for God, but some for God and some for the world. If there is one atom's weight of worldliness in your faith, all your worship is vain, for then you follow Satan and not God. Be not flattered with the hope that God will help you in such a case, for you are then worms of the earth and like worms of the earth you too will speedily perish. God will not be with you, but will be pleased to bring about your ruin. But if you truly submit yourselves to death, then will you live in God and God will be pleased with you and the house wherein you dwell shall be blessed. If your life and your death and every movement that you make, and the forbearance you exercise and the punishment you mete out are solely for the sake of God, and try not God in every

difficulty and trouble, but move forward towards Him at every step, then will you indeed be the favourite of God.'

(*ibid*)

Again he says, 'Realise that your Lord is One, and do not associate any partners with Him, either in heaven or on earth. You are not forbidden to employ such means for the achievement of your projects as God has furnished you with, but he who forsakes God and puts his trust in material things, sets up other gods beside Him in Whom should be our whole trust. Think not that the age of Divine revelation has passed and that the Holy Ghost does not now descend upon men as it did in ages past. The perfect law has been revealed to mankind in the Holy Qur'an, but the doors of revelation are ever open, for revelation is the soul of faith. The faith that is not founded on revelation is not a living but a lifeless thing. Verily I say unto you that every other door may be closed but the door of revelation can never be closed. Open then the windows of your soul, that the light of revelation may enter

therein. When you shut the windows through which the light of revelation may enter, you shut out the bright sun itself. O foolish one, arise and open the windows of thy soul, and the light will enter therein of itself. God has not shut upon you the doors of worldly blessings in this age, but has opened them wider for you than in ages past; then how can you imagine that the doors of spiritual blessings of which you are in greater need today than men were in the past, have been shut upon you? They have been thrown open more widely and more generously than of yore.'

'The Lord who has revealed His Word to me, and has shown mighty signs in my support and has sent me as the Promised Messiah in this age, is the Lord of all the universe. There is no god besides Him, either in heaven or on earth. Blessed are they that believe in Him, for they shall be made happy; and woe is unto them that reject Him, for they shall be forsaken and their days shall end in grief. I have been vouchsafed the revelation of the Lord, which is brighter than the

sun. I have seen Him and realised Him; He is the Lord of the Universe and there is no god beside Him. How wondrous is the Lord that I have seen, what a mighty Helper have I found in Him!

'Hearken unto me, O men, for hereby do I discharge the duty of delivering my message to you. Sin is a poison, avoid it; rebellion against the Lord is eternal death, beware of it! Pray to God, that you may be strengthened. Do not imagine that by uttering a few words from your mouth you realise the object of your existence; God desires to bring about a thorough transformation in your lives. Be kind and merciful to the creatures of God. Let not your tongue speak evil against them, or your hands do injury to them. Do not oppress them, and be ever kind and good to them. Speak not words of pride and vanity to anyone, even unto your subordinates or servants; and abuse not anyone though you may be abused. Walk upon the earth in meekness and humility, and comfort your fellow-beings that you may be accepted of God. There are many that wear the

mask of humility, and are soft of speech, but their hearts are those of serpents. You cannot be accepted of God until your tongue conforms to your heart. If you are placed in a high station, glory not in your greatness and do not look down upon the lowly, but be kind to them. If you are learned, glory not in your learning, and do not despise the ignorant out of vanity, but give them a word of kind advice. If you are rich, glory not in your wealth, and do not behave proudly or with arrogance towards the poor, but serve and assist them. Shun the paths that lead to destruction; fear God and lead righteous lives. Worship not any creature, but severing all earthly bonds, be wholly devoted to God. Let not your joy be of this world; serve God alone, and devote your whole life to His service. Shun all evil and impurity for the sake of the Lord, for the Lord is Holy. Let each morning bear witness that you have passed the night in the fear of God, and let each evening bear witness that you have spent the day in righteousness. You are men like unto me, and the Lord who is my God is also your God. Neglect not

your faculties that work for purity; and if you incline wholly to God, rest assured, for I have been commanded by God to convey to you the assurance, that you will be the chosen ones of God.'

This is the message that the prophet of this age has brought us, and a consideration of this message shows, firstly, that God calls us to a realisation of His perfect Unity not in the sense that we should merely say 'the Lord is One' for there are many who say this, but in the sense that every thought and every deed of ours should be governed by the sense of His Unity and that our sole and perfect trust should rest in Him. We may employ material means for the achievement of our objects, but we must believe that the result of all action rests in the Hands of God. We should love no thing or person with a love stronger than that which we bear to God, neither our homes, properties, goods, relations, desires or enjoyments, nor should our hatred of a thing overcome our love for God, so as to make us insensible to the commands of God. In short, every act of ours

should be for the sake of God, and we should have no goal and no object save Him. This is the Unity that God desires us to realise, and this is the Unity that alone can benefit the world, for it rescues us not merely from images of stone, but also from the idols of desire and hate and thus establishes perfect peace in the world.

Secondly, this message tells us that the only means for the salvation of mankind is the law revealed in the Holy Qur'an. It contains full directions relating to every matter that affects the moral or spiritual well-being of man, and the world should, therefore, turn to the Holy Qur'an for the solution of all its difficulties.

Thirdly, this message tells us that the fact that a perfect law has already been revealed does not signify the cessation of further messages from God. The Word of God is not confined only to the injunctions of the law; it is very often revealed for the purpose of calling men to God. God does not merely reveal the ordinances of the law; He says that whenever men fall away from Him He calls them

to Himself. For God to speak to His servants is a sign of love and He never shuts the gates of His love. If the object of human existence is that man should win the pleasure of God and should attain to union with Him, it is inconceivable that the door through which union can be attained should be shut. It is no answer to say that man would attain to union with God after death. If there had been only one religion and only one school of thought in the world, this answer might perhaps have served, but there are hundreds, nay thousands, of creeds in the world which claim that their followers would attain to union with God after death. If the certainty of union with God is to be attained only after death, what means are left to a man to demonstrate the truth in this, and what shall it profit a man to discover the truth after death, for there are no means of returning from the beyond, and knowledge gained there cannot help a man to improve the life he had spent in this world? It is, therefore, necessary that there should be certain means available in this life for ascertaining the pleasure of God, and that

these means can be furnished only by revelation and the manifestation of God's attributes. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> claimed that he had attained to these things as the previous prophets had attained to them, and that he had been sent by God to demonstrate to mankind that perfect faith without which man cannot escape sin, and to foster in the hearts of men that perfect love without which no true sacrifice is possible.

Fourthly, this message tells us that a prophet is only a man like other men, and should not be regarded as a supernatural being. God has endowed all men with similar faculties and has thrown open the door of advancement to all mankind. Whoever strives in the path of God may attain to the highest pinnacle of progress and the doors of Divine realisation will be opened to him. No man should, therefore, despise his latent faculties, and everyone should use these faculties to strive after spiritual advancement and try to attain to perfect union with God by putting himself in direct relationship with Him.

Fifthly, we are told that the object of religion is not to divorce us from the world, and that a renunciation of the world is not a condition precedent of union with God. The function of religion is to teach us how to establish a perfect relationship with God while living in the world. We cannot find God by giving up our properties, goods and relationships; we can find Him only by holding fast to Him in all conditions and circumstances of life, whether of joy or of sorrow, of prosperity or of poverty. We should remember Him in times of prosperity as well as of adversity, and should never despair of His Mercy, and should foster His love, and should always seek His help through prayer. A brave man runs not away from battle, for true courage is displayed by firmness on the field of battle.

Sixthly, we learn that virtue does not mean the doing of good deeds, nor does evil signify the doing of bad ones; by virtue and evil are meant the good and evil conditions of the mind, and good or bad deeds are only the signs of virtue or of evil. It is our duty not merely to suppress the signs of

evil, but to suppress evil inclinations and to foster virtuous ones, for the purity of the mind is the real purity, and the purity of the limbs only follows from it.

Seventhly, we are told that no amount of advancement in learning or in intellect, can enable us to dispense with the necessity of conforming our conduct to the laws of God. The law of God is not a penalty from which we might escape at a certain stage; like physical laws, it is based on the principle of cause and effect, and we cannot make any spiritual progress without conforming our conduct to it. A sin is not a sin because God has forbidden it; on the contrary God forbids a sin because it is a poison for the soul. The law, therefore, does not make a man sinful, but helps him to avoid sin. A man who is forewarned of danger is prepared to meet it; the warning does not render him more likely to succumb to it. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> says that sin is like a poison, that is to say, as a man is prohibited from taking poison because it is harmful, so is a man prohibited from committing sins because they are injurious. A

poison does not become fatal because the doctor prohibits its use, nor does sin become fatal because God prohibits it.

Eighthly, we are told that we should not only establish a perfect relationship with God, but should also perfect our relation with our fellow beings. We should avoid all that leads to disorder and disturbance, and the blessings that are vouchsafed to us we should employ in the service of mankind rather than towards the attainment of mastery and dominion over our fellow beings.

This is the message that the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> brought from God, and a very slight consideration would indicate the momentous nature of this message. This message is the message of hope; it is the message of peace; and it is the message of wisdom. If the world were to pay heed to this message it would discover in it the solution to all its social and spiritual problems. It is not a message from man; it is a message from God. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> does not claim to have discovered these things in his own mind; he says that he has



merely conveyed to us that which God had commanded him to convey. What message can, therefore, claim greater importance than the Message of God?

Sisters and brothers, a man who really believes in God can never find satisfaction in tales and fables. What satisfaction can we derive from reading in our respective scriptures how God used to speak to His servants? If He showed signs in ages past, but shows no signs now, how can we love Him? For does it not follow that He loved those who have gone before us, but feels no concern for our welfare? And will this thought engender love or dislike towards Him? Can anyone be encouraged to make an attempt to establish a relationship with a Being who shuts His door in our face? Nor can we admit that while man is making rapid intellectual advances, God's attributes are falling into decay; for although we cannot say that the attributes of God are developing, we cannot on the other hand admit that they are getting worn out. His perfection consists in not being subject to change, for change, whether for the better or for the worse,

implies an imperfection, and He is free from all imperfections.

Human nature itself bears witness that it stands in need of guidance from above. The fact that thousands of spiritualistic societies have been formed indicates that men are not satisfied with the love of this world. Is it conceivable, however, that while the souls of our ancestors are anxious to lead us along the path of advancement, the Being who is the Creator of all souls and Who has created us with the object that we should attain nearness to Him, is indifferent to our welfare and indicates no way of our meeting Him? If there is any being who is anxious for our welfare, if there is one who desires to meet us, it is God. No doubt a man who desires to be at one with God must fulfil certain conditions. To prepare himself for His meeting a man must develop in himself an extraordinary purity, and man must knock before the door is opened to him, but the possibility of the door being opened must be ever present. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> gives us the Divine message that this possibility is

present, 'If you so will', says God, 'and follow my guidance, you shall hear my Word as those who have gone before you heard it; and I shall manifest my powers for you as I did for them.' I shall leave you to imagine. What a clarion of hope is sounded by this message, and what a prospect it opens of man being led back in peace to His Maker. But I must add that by delivering this message, the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> has made peace between man and God, and has proved that the men of this age do not stand towards God in the position of stepsons and that He loves them more than men love their own children.

The claim put forward by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> is not a commonplace one; his very claim is a proof of his truth. For a man to say that he has come from God is easy but to say that he can lead every man to God is most difficult. The former is a claim the truth or falsehood of which depends upon arguments, and arguments can be twisted in many directions, but the latter is a claim, the proof of which depends upon the personal experience of each man, and it is

impossible for an impostor to adduce such proof. Not only did the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> make such a claim but thousands of men, who followed His teachings, have seen the signs of God and heard His Word, and have thus set their seal to the truth of His claim. Can a false man put forward the claim that by following His teachings men can attain to union with God as did the righteous men of old? Will not the claim of such a man be proved false within a few days and bring disgrace and humiliation on him?

Men and women of England, I have brought you glad tidings, aye joyful tidings, viz., the message of God that He has not forsaken you, that the gates of His mercy have been opened to you and it is now for you to enter therein. Follow His revealed Law and you can in this very life experience His mighty powers. All other religions seek to win your approval on credit, but the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> offers you a ready return. He promises you union with God, not after death, but in this very life. That which you used to read in the Bible with wonder and surprise, has today

become possible through him. It is for you to try it.

The life of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> is an ideal, and the Holy Qur'an is a perfect guide, for you. Is it not enough for you that 34 years ago<sup>1</sup> a man cried from the wilderness 'Hearken unto him who calls you to the Lord; listen to the call of the crier. The gates of God's mercy have been thrown open; He has addressed Himself to the welfare of His creatures, He desires to collect all mankind at one hand through me, and to lead them out of doubt and darkness to the waters of certainty.' The dwellers of cities laughed at him and those that lived in the country were furious, governments looked down upon him and the people mocked him, but in spite of every kind of opposition, his voice rose ever higher and still higher, till the soft notes of a flute swelled into a trumpet-call and those that slept began to awake in confusion and bewilderment. A man here and a man there advanced towards the voice, till the lonely crier was no longer alone, there were two and lo there were four, and their numbers increased, and today he

has nearly a million followers in fifty different countries of the globe.<sup>2</sup>

This was not, however, achieved without troubles and hardships. People did not travel towards him along rose strewn paths. Many who accepted him were driven out of their homes; husbands were forsaken by their wives and wives were put away by their husbands; parents were driven out by their children and children were driven out by their parents; tyrants and despots arrested those who were inclined towards him and threatened them with death in case they believed in him, but these were not daunted and in death they found a joy that no earthly thing could yield. They stood before their oppressors with smiling faces and heads erect, while merciless murderers showered stones at them. Each stone that fell on them, was to them but a flower and each brickbat that struck them they took to be a flower, and as a happy bridegroom leads his bride home in radiant joy, so did they cherish their love for the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and arrived before their Maker happy in the possession of their treasure

and in the realisation that they had made a profitable bargain!

It is not easy to travel along such paths, but so sweet was the voice of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> that those whose ears were open were left no power to resist its call. It cleansed the hearts of men of all doubt and misgiving and filled them with belief and faith. Indeed, how could doubt linger in the hearts of those who had themselves heard the sweet voice of God by following the teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>? Heaven and earth may change, but the hearts that have enjoyed this sweet ecstasy can never change.

Sisters and brothers, I speak not of things that I have heard from others. I have, by following the teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, myself heard the sweet voice of God, and have been made happy by His loving words, as the disciples of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> heard them, aye and more. I have witnessed the mighty signs of God. He has manifested His Glory for my sake, and helped me in places where no man's help could avail, and saved me from the attacks of my

enemies at a time when no man could save me. He informed me beforehand of events which no man could foreshadow and it then came to pass as He had told me. My eyes have, therefore, seen the truth of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, and my heart has realised it; and I doubt not that everyone who accepts him and opens his heart to his love, shall experience what I have experienced and more, everyone according to the measure of his love. Ye men and women that listen eagerly to the message of your children and parents and husbands and wives and friends, will ye ignore the Message of God, and claiming to be believers in God, will ye turn away from His Word? Will ye forget that which occurred in the times of the previous prophets and will ye not profit by it? Let not your fancies deceive you saying: 'Behold this man who calls himself the Messenger of God. Behold him, a dweller of the uncultured East, who had no power behind him and who was the subject of a foreign government. How was he raised to this dignity? And why did God select him?' Remember that the doings of God are marvellous

and His ways are strange. He is ever wont to select the stone that the builders reject and to make it the cornerstone and to endow it with such power that whatsoever falls on it is broken into pieces, and on whatsoever it falls, it grinds into powder. Was there ever a prophet concerning whom men did not say similar things and was there ever one who was not held lowly and yet did not succeed? Hearken, therefore, to what he says, and attend to the message which he has brought; consider the various forms of succour that God gave him, and press forward to accept him, for in this lies all blessing.

Let not your habits and customs stand in your way, for habits are discarded and customs change; then will you not give up your habits and customs for the sake of God? People say that the ordinances of Islam are stringent and hard to follow. But do they imagine that the union with God may be attained by mere words of mouth? What they should consider is, are the teachings of Islam opposed to reason? Do they promote disorder? Do they not

lead to true purity of life? If the answers to these questions are satisfactory, will they shut the gates of God's mercy on themselves and will they reject the blessing of union with Him, merely because some of the ordinances of Islam are contrary to their old habits? Can any blessing be acquired without a sacrifice? You cannot at once please God and fulfil your own desires. All religions are agreed that one can find God only after death; and this is true, in the sense that one can find God only after one has submitted all one's desires to death for the sake of God.

Be not afraid that men will laugh at you and will look upon you as mad men, for no one has ever accepted the Truth in the beginning, but men have called him mad. Were not the followers of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and those who believed in Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> regarded as mad men? And did not those very 'mad men' become the teachers of mankind? I call God to witness, in Whose Hands is my life and concerning Whom all scriptures are agreed that he who utters a falsehood in His name shall perish, that He has showed

me in vision that I stood on the coast of England and that the spiritual conquest of England was to be achieved at my hands. Therefore, if not today then tomorrow, England shall answer the call of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and shall advance towards Islam. But blessed is he who takes the first step towards it. For him who is the first to advance towards the Truth is a double reward, for not only does he believe himself but he induces others to believe also, and those who come after him cannot claim equality with him. The truth spreads slowly at first, but overcomes everything in the end. God assured the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> that as within three hundred years after Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, Christianity had gained the upper hand, so within three hundred years after his death, his movement would prevail against all other religions, but that the victory of the Ahmadiyya Movement would be greater than the victory of Christianity, for Christianity had after three centuries become the official creed of Rome alone, but Ahmadiyyat would within three centuries conquer the hearts of

the entire world. These matters relate, no doubt, to the future, but the world has already witnessed the fulfilment of thousands of prophecies of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, and the past, therefore, bears witness to the future.

Is it not marvellous that 34 years ago, at a time when the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was alone in the world, he published a prophecy in one of his books that his teachings would soon be published in England and that many people would accept them? Today you see a number of his followers proclaiming his truth throughout England, and several persons in this country have already joined his movement. Then marvel not at the doings of God, for all things are easy for Him. Ye seekers after Truth, and ye that truly yearn after God, I assure you on the basis of my experience that there is no means of attaining to union with God except through following the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>. Today all doors are closed except his door, and all lamps have gone out except his lamp; enter ye then by the door which God has opened, and seek light from the lamp which

God has lit; see His Glory with your own eyes and realise His nearness in your own hearts.

But remember, that it profits not to place one's feet in two boats. Faith cannot avail without sacrifice. A man who is not prepared to sacrifice his comforts and his enjoyments, and his time and his habits can never hope to achieve success, and he who is prepared to sacrifice all these can never perish. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> says, 'You can never win the pleasure of God until you forsake your own pleasures and enjoyments, your rank, your wealth and your very life, and are prepared to encounter every difficulty in His path which brings before your eyes the scene of death. But if you encounter and overcome all difficulties, you will be taken into the bosom of God like little children, and He will make you heirs to the blessings which were vouchsafed to the righteous men who have gone before you.'

Behold, God has, in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah, raised the righteous man from the East and has conveyed His will to you

through him. May I hope that you will accept him in all sincerity of heart and will be his first standard-bearers in the West? If so, I assure you out of the knowledge that God has vouchsafed to me that nations shall be blessed through you, and future generations shall bless you, and you shall attain to immortality in God!

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### References:

1. This message was written 34 years after Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> announced his claim.
2. The figure now stands at approximately 170 million (2001).

# Belief and Practice

Presented below is a compilation, in translation, of excerpts taken from *Malfoozat* relating to the topic of relationship between religious beliefs and actions. *Malfoozat* is the title of the ten volumes that contain the collection of discourses, speeches and addresses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi<sup>(as)</sup>.

Translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad



**The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>.**

In 1891, he claimed, on the basis of Divine revelation, that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been foretold by Muhammad, 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.

It is in the nature of man that he wishes to avoid the harm and to enjoy the benefits of whatever he believes to be the case. For example, arsenic is a poison and a person does not wish to taste it, as he knows that even a small amount of this poison can kill. Why then, having acquired a belief in God, will he not derive the conclusions that relate to that belief? If a person's belief in God were to equal even the belief that he has in arsenic [that it kills] then his selfish emotions and desires would turn cold and a death would come over them. Instead we have to accept that the [declarations of belief in God] are only utterances — belief has not yet acquired the colours of certainty. Hence, such a person deceives his own self when he states: 'I believe in God'. The first duty of a human being, therefore, is that he should correct the belief



he has in God. That is, he should prove with his deeds and actions that they are not in conflict with the commandments of God and are not against the glory of God.

The deception whereby a person states that he believes in God, despite the fact that there is no testimony of his deeds to that effect, is a kind of 'illness' and a very serious 'illness' at that. Illnesses are of two types. In one type of illness, pain is felt, such as a pain in the forehead or pain in the kidneys. The other type of illness is one in which pain is not felt and as a result, through ignorance, the patient does not attend to the illness. For instance, there is the mark of leucoderma, which apparently does not give rise to any sensation of pain, but ultimately it may produce dangerous consequences. Hence, a belief in God that is not attested through actual practice is an 'illness' of the second type. Belief, in this case, is merely customary based on whatever has been heard from fathers and forefathers about the existence of some God. Such a belief is not that of a person who has felt it within him and tasted of

it. When belief is created by such heartfelt declaration, it is sure to cleanse away all the impurities of sin and the true signs of belief will begin to manifest themselves. Until such signs are manifested, it is all the same whether one believes or not. The reason for this is that [without signs] there is not the certainty of belief and without certainty there are no fruits of belief. A person will not tread near dangers of which he is certain. For example, if there were a danger that a pillar holding up the roof of the house is broken, one would not live in it or even go near it. Similarly, if one knows that a snake lives at a certain place and moves around at night, one would never go near that place at night. A person acts like this because he has firm knowledge about those dangers. Hence, if one's belief in God, does not produce the slightest effect, not even one equivalent to the effect and certainty produced by a penny's worth of arsenic, then know that such a person does not believe in God. Reality is that the root of all evil is the careless attitude towards spiritual knowledge. [Malfoozat, Vol.4, pp.312—313]

What is the true sign of faith and what is its meaning? It is to believe, and then to have certainty about that belief. When a person believes something truly with his heart, he has a sense of certainty about it and his actions are then in accordance with that belief. For instance, if a person knows that arsenic is a poison and that one dies as a result of taking it, or that a snake is a deadly enemy and whosoever is bitten by it has to fight for his life, he would never eat arsenic nor attempt to put as much as a finger inside a hole that is occupied by a snake because he has firm 'faith' or knowledge of these matters.

Nowadays [given the spread of the plague] people believe that contact with the plague is fatal and that is why people abandon and run miles from the house that is visited by the plague. In short, actions follow in accordance with in whatever it is that one has complete faith. The question then arises as to why any sins should remain when there is belief in the existence of God and there is mindfulness of reckoning? Is the belief in God weaker than even the

belief in a snake? People claim to be believers and yet there is no difference to the level of theft, lies, adultery, alcoholism and general sinfulness and impiety — there is no lessening of hypocrisy and ostentation. There is only a verbal declaration of faith — other than that faith and religion are nothing in practice [as far as the majority of people are concerned].

We already observe that a person never wastes anything that he believes to be beneficial. We have never seen a rich man or a poor man dispose of his wealth and possessions by throwing them away. On the contrary, we have not seen anyone throw away even a single penny. What is more, a person regrets the loss of even a small item of use such as a needle should it break and he has to throw it away. However, in people's view belief in God is not even equal to a needle and its value for them does not equal even the value of a needle then, accordingly, no benefit accrues to them.

[*Malfoozat*, Vol.5, pp.329—330]

God Almighty is greater than all else; He has the most knowledge; He is the true Creator of man and of every particle that exists. It is He Who is also the Creator of man's nature and He is All-Wise. If it is the case that with His complete wisdom and complete knowledge, He suggests that something is harmful for you that indulging in it would not benefit you at all, then it is not for a wise person to go against this.

We see that when a doctor advises a patient to abstain from something, the patient acts on that advice without any argument. Why does he act in this way? He does so because he considers the doctor to be in possession of much greater knowledge than he possesses himself. Similarly, there are things that are harmful for man's body or spirit whether man himself understands that or not. There are some things that would be harmful even if God had not given a ruling about them. In medicine also there are some things that are considered to be 'sins' [that is, they prove very harmful for a human being] and lack of medical knowledge is no

excuse for the person who goes against the medical principles. [He would still suffer the harmful consequences were he to indulge in such things]. If someone chooses not to believe this, they can check this with doctors and physicians.

The point to remember is simply this that the root of sin is those actions that lead man away from purity and righteousness. The true love of God and union with God is the true pleasure and real comfort. Thus, moving away from God and being distant from Him is also sin and is the source of pain, sorrow and hardship. All that God dislikes because of His own sanctity is 'sin'. There are some matters on which people may not agree but majority is commonly agreed that lying, stealing, adultery and cruelty are such acts that all nations and religions jointly consider them to be sins. Remember, however, that the root of sin is precisely those acts that distance man from God, that are against His sanctity, against His wishes and against man's nature. It is such acts that constitute 'sin'.

Every person can sense [the aspect of] sin [or goodness in their actions]. If someone slaps an innocent person and knows that he had no right to do so, he will at some later time, when he assesses his action with a cool head, himself feel ashamed and will sense that it was a bad deed on his part. Conversely, should someone feed a hungry person, give a drink of water to one who is thirsty and clothe someone who is without clothes, such a person will have an inner sense of having been good and having performed a blessed deed. A person's heart and conscience and the light of belief remind him whether his various actions are a good deed or a sinful act.

[*Malfoozat*, Vol.10, pp.357—358]

God wishes that even if His servant has erred and displayed weakness, he should repent and thereby enter [a state of] peace. You should remember, therefore, that the day when a person repents from his sins is a very blessed day indeed and is the best of days because on such a day he finds a new life and is brought closer to God. In this respect, this day is a day of

repentance (as many among you have today vowed that on this day they repent for their sins and in the future, so far as is possible for them, they would abstain from sins).

In accordance with God's promises, I trust that every person who has repented with a true and sincere heart, shall be forgiven all his previous sins by God. It is to such people that the Hadith [tradition of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>] applies that:

'The one who repents from sin is like the one who has not committed sin.'

That is, we can say that it is as if such a person never committed any sin. However, I say this again that for the achievement of this objective, the condition is that one should move towards true purity and true piety. Moreover, repentance should not merely be a verbal repentance, but should be realised through action. It is no small matter that someone's sins should be forgiven – it is a matter of great magnificence.

[*Malfoozat*, Vol.7, pp.148—149]

Repentance is in reality a very effective means of aiding and stimulating the development of good morals and leads one to achieve moral perfection. In other words, for the person who wishes to reform his character, it is essential that he should repent sincerely with a firm resolve.

It should be remembered that there are three conditions for repentance without the fulfillment of which true repentance cannot be achieved. The first of these three conditions is to rid oneself of ill thoughts that lead to bad inclinations and evil propensities. In reality, thoughts exercise great influence — every action has a notional existence in the form of ‘thought’ that precedes the action. Hence, the first condition for repentance is that evil thoughts and notions should be discarded. For instance, if a man has an illicit relationship with a woman and wishes to repent, [in order to prepare himself mentally for this course of action], he should think of her as being unattractive and remind himself of her negative features. This is so because, as I have just stated, thoughts and

fancies exercise a powerful influence. I have read that some Sufis carried their powers of thought to such extremes that they actually ‘saw’ some people in the form of an ape or a pig. In other words, thought influences that which is perceived. The first condition of repentance, therefore, is that all ideas and thoughts that are considered to give rise to evil pleasures should be discarded altogether.

The second condition of true repentance is remorse — that there should be some expression of regret and embarrassment. Everyone’s conscience admonishes him over every evil but the conscience of an unfortunate person is left suspended by him. A person should express remorse over his sin and evil action and should reflect upon the fact that the pleasure to be derived [from bad deeds] is temporary. He should also consider that each repetition of an evil deed causes a lessening of pleasure derived from it and that in the end, in old age, when his faculties are weakened, he will necessarily have to give up all such pleasures. Why then

indulge in that which in the end has to be given up, even in this life? Most fortunate is the person who turns in repentance and becomes determined to discard all corrupt thoughts and evil fancies and having succeeded in ridding himself of these impurities he should feel remorse and regret for his past ill deeds.

The third condition [of true repentance] is a firm resolve that he will not revert to those previous vices. If he adheres to this resolve, God will bestow upon him the strength of true repentance and he will be rid altogether of his vices [and he will be enabled to] replace these with good morals and praiseworthy deeds and this is a victory over one's morals. [*Malfoozat*, Vol. I, pp. 138–139]

Remember that without good deeds, faith is just as useless as an excellent garden is useless when it is left without water. No matter how excellent a tree is and how good the fruit it gives, when the owner is careless about nourishing it with water, then we are all familiar with the consequences.

The same is true of the tree of faith in spiritual life. Faith is a tree for which deeds of goodness become like streams of water to nourish that tree. Moreover, just as a farmer after sowing and watering the seeds, has to work hard in many other ways to ensure a good harvest, so is the case in the spiritual realm. God has made it necessary and essential that for the attainment of the fruits of spiritual reward and blessings, there should be great effort and striving. [*Malfoozat*, Vol. 10, pp. 395–396]

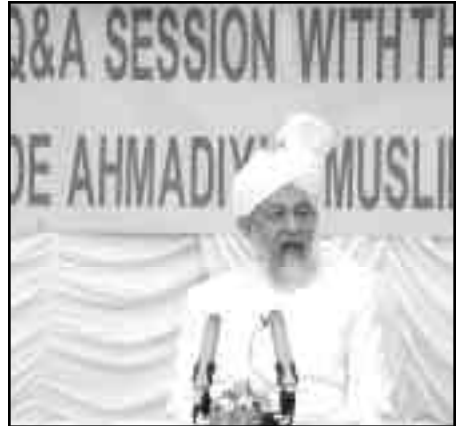
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# Islamic Concepts

During his visit to Nigeria in 1988, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, 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 raised by the BTV presenter and presented below are answers to some of the questions raised during these sessions.

*Prepared by Amatul Hadi Ahmad*



## QUESTIONER

**What are the claims of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:**

The claim of the Founder of the Movement essentially was that he had been appointed by God as the Reformer of the age. This basically was the claim but it covered many aspects. In reality, the present age, which is referred to as the 'Latter Days' in the scriptures of various religions, is the age about which many religions contain the prophecy that a world Reformer would appear to usher in the era

of a Golden Age of mankind, for the ultimate unification of mankind. Hindus, for instance, refer to him as the reappearance of Krishna; the Jews are expecting a Messiah who has yet to come. Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) prophesied that he himself would re-appear and Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) had prophesied that in the Latter Days a Reformer would appear in two guises. One would be under the title of al-Mahdi and the other under the title of the Messiah—'Messiah son of Maryam', that is, Christ son of Mary. The fundamental question that needs to be raised here is whether all the

prophesied Reformers would come simultaneously or only one prophecy would be fulfilled and hence would be true and the rest false? On the other hand, if all the prophecies are true and every Reformer appears but appears under a different name – would this not give rise to religious conflict in the name of God? Such a scenario is therefore not only untenable, it is illogical. Unless one accepts the Ahmadiyya perspective that the different names given to the Reformer who was to appear in the Latter Days are titles – only one Reformer was to appear representing all the [prophesied] Reformers. Thus it is that the unification of religion would be brought about. According to the claims of the Promised Messiah, that is, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community, this Reformer was to be born a Muslim who was to be the follower of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah, that is, the tradition of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Furthermore, the Reformer was to be the same person who was entitled both 'al-Mahdi' and 'Messiah'. The

Reformer, according to the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community, was also to represent all the Reformers about whom prophecies had been made in the past in other religions that he would appear for the reformation of mankind. In short, the Ahmadiyya interpretation of all such earlier prophecies is that instead of all the different Reformers appearing separately and calling to various paths, only one person would appear as the Reformer. The one Reformer would represent all the other expected Reformers.

## QUESTIONER

**Are you saying that the Founder of the Movement is the last of the Prophets?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** No, that is not the case. In Islam the term 'last of the Prophets' is a very technical term which applies only to the Holy Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He is the 'last' in the sense that his Book, that is his teaching, is the last teaching, his



word is the last, he is the last Master whose path is to be followed. Hence, anyone who appears as subordinate to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> cannot be a different or independent Prophet at all. As far as the authority is concerned, the last Prophet with authority is Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The position of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (peace be upon him) is exactly that of the Mahdi [which means 'one who has been guided'].

### QUESTIONER

**The Ahmadiyya Movement is called 'Ahmadiyya' apparently after the Founder of the Movement. The question that arises here is that you believe in Prophet Muhammad but the Muslims generally do not call themselves 'Muhammadans'. There appears to be a contradiction here – why do you try to personify your movement?**

### **Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:**

The first issue that needs to be resolved here is [one of definition]. How is Ahmadiyyat to be viewed – to be as a religion or as a sect? Under Islam, Muslims are divided into various sub-titles such as, for example, the Brailvis, Wahabi, Sunni, Shi'a and Maliki, Hanbali, Shafae'i, and so on. The question should be why do such titles exist under Islam? They exist not to indicate that they are different religions but exist only to indicate the different approaches to Islam. Just one word of the title indicates the general beliefs held by those who belong to that sect. This makes for a simpler process of identification and introduction when one is asked about one's beliefs. Rather than explaining at length one's beliefs and the sect to which one belongs, every time one is asked to do so, a single word is sufficient to signify the beliefs a person generally holds – whether he belongs, for instance, to the Shi'a or the Sunni sect, or whether his allegiance is to the Wahabi sect or to some other group.

## QUESTIONER

**You say that you have to make a distinction between yourselves and the rest of the Muslim sects. Why do you need to make this distinction?**

### **Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:**

The Foudner of the Ahmadiyya Movement has himself explained the significance of choosing this name Ahmadiyya. He states, and this is an accepted fact among all Muslims, that the Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), had two names associated with him, one is 'Muhammad' and the second one is 'Ahmad'. His name 'Muhammad' is mentioned in the Old Testament and his name 'Ahmad' is mentioned in the New Testament as 'Paracleet' [which has the same meaning as the word 'Ahmad'].

During the first appearance of the Prophet Muhammad, there was a full manifestation of his first attribute of 'Muhammad'. In the Latter Days it was his second attribute, the attribute of 'Ahmad' that was to be unfolded in full.

However, because the latter days are also associated with the coming of the Messiah, it is so appropriate that the name by which the Messiah, Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) referred to him, should be unfolded at the time the 'Messiah' himself was to represent Islam in the Latter Days, and that name is 'Ahmad'.

The differences between the two names, 'Muhammad' and 'Ahmad' is that the name 'Muhammad' signifies strength and glory in the same way as was manifested at the time of the appearance of Moses (peace be upon him). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is similar to Moses in the grandeur, strength and glory. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) became a Messenger and in his lifetime became victorious. However, in the situation faced by the Messiah we find a completely different kind of manifestation. Instead of the strength and glory, there was perseverance in the face of persecution combined with a peaceful effort to convert others through persuasion and love.

# Ahmadiyyat: The Turning Point of my Life

By **Kaukab Zirvi, MD**

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I was raised in a Chinese-Buddhist household and my exposure to religion was mixed with ancestor worship and cultural customs. At home we had a small shrine high on a shelf with a figurine of Buddha<sup>(as)</sup> and a framed picture of my deceased grandfather. After grocery shopping, my mother would put the choicest fruits and goodies on plates and place them on the shelf as an offering to Buddha<sup>(as)</sup> and our ancestors. She replenished the plates periodically. On special occasions such as Chinese New Year, my mother would cook an assortment of delicious dishes and put them on a table which had numerous place settings with lit incense sticks for our ancestors. These dishes were a symbolic offering to them and a sign of respect. Hoping that the spirits were enjoying the food, we would prostrate ourselves in front of this table. Also, before any journey or important undertaking (such as an exam or competition), we would be reminded to pray for

our safety and success. Clasp a fragrant incense stick, its tip a glowing ember, each of us quickly shook the stick back and forth. First we faced the shrine to seek the blessing of our ancestors and then we faced a window to honor spirits who were dispossessed or without their own family to honor them. I recall a particularly unusual way to communicate with God: on special holidays, my mother would kneel in front of the table, shake a couple of coins in her closed hands, pray fervently to God with a question, and then allow the coins to fall out of her hands onto the floor. The answer (yes, no, or maybe) was interpreted in the combination of heads or tails that resulted. Though my parents do believe in God, they did not really distinguish God from Buddha<sup>(as)</sup> or ancestors whom they worshiped. Our practices struck me as respectful but a bit mystical and mainly cultural. Without a clear-cut grasp of religion, I did not feel compelled to seek nearness to

God. I believed in one Creator but thought it was impossible to know the truth in matters such as God and the afterlife.

I was attracted to the philosophy of Existentialism, which states that the essence of human nature is the freedom to choose. I admired those individuals who were liberated from all rules of society and followed their own personal code in life. I perceived people who were religious with a mixture of curiosity, embarrassment and a vague pity. Religion seemed to me to be a crutch for those who lacked material wealth, power, and education. And I considered people who were exceptionally pious as oddities. The fervor of monks and nuns was remarkable but they were extreme cases who renounced all worldly pursuits – hardly a pragmatic approach to life, I thought. I believed that when faced with a trial, one need not look to a higher power but should find the strength within. I observed curiously those for whom religion was a once a week affair: the remembrance of God on Sunday while the rest of the time was spent dedicated to the

world. Moreover, I saw inconsistencies in the practice of Christianity and felt that it did not provide an extensive guide to life. There seemed to be no ideal system with which to worship God. I had not the courage to face these troubling questions and I rationalized that I did not possess an essential religious conviction.

I thought prayer was for most people self-serving. It was performed at critical moments preceding a difficult task or at times of misfortune. Its purpose was to wish for a divine intervention or a small miracle. Why should God heed our cries during troubled times when we neglect that relationship during good times? I dismissed the Christian view of forgiveness of sins as an easy way out. It struck a false chord, and I could not accept that a son was needed to carry out God's will. The idea of a man invested with divine powers seemed implausible and even paganistic. In addition, I could not believe that atonement could excuse man's failings. It would invalidate our choices and remove personal accountability for our actions.

In retrospect, there were moments in my life that may have been preparing me for the message of Islam. Before starting college, I had a part-time job as a salesperson traveling to people's homes. On one of my excursions I visited a neighbor who after hearing my sales pitch asked: "Well now that I've agreed to listen to what you have to say, is it all right if you listen to me for a while?" She said: "Do you believe in God?" "Yes," I replied, uneasily. She continued, "Do you think that being a good person is enough to get you into heaven?" At this point, I was at a loss. I had never thought about the afterlife, nor about the possible limitations of simply "being a good person." At the time, I did not have a firm sense of self or my place in the world. This episode confirmed my insecurity about religion and spurred me to explore the answers.

Before learning about Islam, I had many misconceptions. I saw Islam as stifling and repressive to its people and their spirit. This prejudice stemmed from ignorance as well as Western misrepresentations of Islam as a religion

practised by radical extremists. I could not fathom why one would endure the seeming hardships of deprivation, spend inordinate periods of time to remember God, and avoid activities that I considered generally harmless. I thought perhaps devout Muslims were naturally predisposed to self-denial and possessed a peculiar resistance to temptations. Although I had Muslim acquaintances, none of them adhered to religious beliefs firmly enough to follow through with action and consistent practice of Islam.

In college, I met Muslims who were Ahmadi who showed true commitment to their faith. I noticed the self-effacing personality and the deference to God before all other interests. I was impressed with their quiet resolve, honesty and lack of pretensions. And there was an unmistakable sincerity and steadfastness in how dearly they held Islam. I marvelled: why would this matter to someone in a society such as ours? What could move someone to follow a set of laws? How could you centre yourself in the midst of conflicts (domestic and global), the

erosion of families, and collapsing political and social institutions? As I learned more about Islam, I found that this was the way to peace. Observing salat for the first time, I was moved by the absolute tranquility and attention towards God. I admired the grace and fluidity of the prostrations and movements. For the first time, I felt a profound respect for this personal daily affirmation of God that was a constant – regardless of the distractions of the outside world. You did not have to become a recluse to have a bond with God. This opportunity was open to everyone at all levels and classes.

I noticed that the Holy Qur'an was treated with the utmost respect, like a rare treasure. This attitude intrigued me. What message could it possibly contain to command such reverence? I was impressed that it was the Word of God and not a compilation of stories recorded by man through the ages. I was impressed that it was a living message that was realised all the time in the daily life of Muslims.

Slowly I became disenchanted with the current state of society

around me. I saw a trend towards worship of the individual over all else. But then I realised that our relationship to God is so valuable, that sacrificing a measure of our own freedoms and personal liberty was a small price to pay for the many blessings we receive every day of our lives. Islam is not a way to deprive man but a protection of his soul. Being in the field of medicine, I have witnessed death time and time again – this has made me realise that our lives are just a passage to the hereafter and our time here is precious. Despite the progress I made in learning the basics of Islam, there were nagging doubts that kept me at arm's length from full acceptance. How could I change myself so completely? I feared looking into the mirror and not recognising myself, like a person who awakens with no memory of who he is and tries to forge a new identity. I feared that I would stunt myself and silence a part of me that begged for expression – that I would limit my potential as a woman and that I would resent the restrictions and guidelines on how to behave.

My development towards the love of Islam has been a gradual process that is difficult to explain. But like a budding plant that grows imperceptibly and then one day blooms, the truth unfurled only with the course of time and in the right climate. Only after a period of learning about Ahmadiyya Islam did I witness the truth with clear vision. When I read *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> I was moved by the light of reason. It made sense to me that the cause of Allah was the highest since from Allah we come and to him we return. Providing a comprehensive code of life, Islam invites God into every aspect of our lives and into our very soul. It teaches peace, moderation, and responsibility and promotes a state of being which prepares us to meet God – a state of purity and righteousness.

I was surprised at the simplicity of Islam which does not require special mediators, accessories or ornaments in its practice. You need only righteousness to attain nearness to God. Islam also stresses the spirit of humanity and equality – that we should be

judged by our piety rather than our appearance, race, and status. Thus, Islam offers the message to all of humankind. The importance of charity and helping the downtrodden appealed to me. I was heartened that these virtues had basis in God's will and thus charged them with an even greater purpose. All of these principles allowed me to embrace Islam with my mind as well as my heart.

I remember thinking that memorisation of the prayer would be a great challenge. After achieving that goal, I realised that Allah does not give us any task that is impossible and enables us to earn greater and greater rewards. When I prayed for the first time, I felt an overwhelming feeling of humility – that Allah was keeping watch over me and seeing straight to the core of my being. It made me yearn for His Grace and Mercy and I felt as if the prayer was being etched in my heart. In my reading of the Holy Qur'an, I was stirred by its eloquence and directness. As a perfect guide, the Holy Qur'an instructs man and addresses the meaning of his existence. Learning about the

Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> was inspiring. Here was a great Prophet who was a pious man as well as a great leader and statesman who epitomises true righteousness and sacrifice. In addition, I found Islam to be unique by acknowledging the validity of all the messengers of God through history – from Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Krishna, Jesus (peace be upon them all) and ultimately the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>.

On my first visit to the mission house, I was nervous because it was new territory. But once there, I became comfortable because the sisters welcomed me so warmly. I was impressed that ordinary people could have such extraordinary faith and still participate fully in all aspects of their lives. Over time, I saw that veiling is not restrictive but instead reflects a devotion to God and the modesty we must maintain. The recitation of the Holy Qur'an touched my heart; the words seemed to rise to the sky. An aspiring poet once asked his mentor how to learn from the great poets. He advised him to

copy their verses for writing the words would transmit the author's inspiration through the rhythm and flow of the phrases. In the same way, recitation of the Qur'an conveys the wondrousness of God.

There have been struggles along the way – most importantly, my own inner struggles and my family's strong opposition to my conversion – but I know this is the right path. I pray that inshallah [God Willing] they will come to accept it. I see that in order to reach God, success is found with steadfastness and conviction. We cannot simply insert a relationship with God into the free slots of our life when it is convenient. While we have an instinct to please our parents and mentors, we should have an even stronger instinct to please Allah to whom we owe everything. We may stumble across obstacles and experience pain and heartache but God is all-knowing and will acknowledge our sincere efforts. We must constantly return to Allah – like a traveller going home – and draw strength from Him to renew our faith. It is comforting to realise



that ‘Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity.’

In Islam, we are like vessels resonating Allah’s power through speech, intentions, and actions. I have been embraced with open arms by this community and I am grateful to my Ahmadi sisters and brothers who are shining examples of Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam. Their generosity and encouragement helped me accept Ahmadiyyat. I give thanks for all the blessings: the wonderful teaching of Islam as conveyed by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, the local and national Lajna organisations, and the Jama’at which provides so many opportunities to increase our knowledge and strengthen our faith. I realise that I have just begun this journey but hope inshallah to stay true to the essence of Ahmadiyyat.

The following is a verse from the Qur’an:

*And if Allah afflicts thee with harm, there is none who can remove it but He; and if He intends good for thee, there is none who can repel His grace.*

*He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He wills. And He is the Most Forgiving, Merciful.*

(Ch.10: V.108)

From *Our Teaching* by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>:

‘Do not fear the curses the world might heap on you for they melt in the air like smoke, they cannot turn day into night. Take care that on the basis of a thing or two, which you think you have accomplished, you do not fall into the delusion that you have done all that needed to be done; for God desires that your entire life, your whole being, should undergo a deep and thorough revolution. Indeed He demands from you that you accept a death, after which He would give you another life.’

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**About the author:**

Kaukab Zirvi, a young newly converted Ahmadi recalls her introduction to Islam. This former Christian Buddhist lives in the USA.

# Unveiling of the Unseen by the Qur'an – A Historic Perspective

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



Human knowledge is surrounded on all sides by a limitless expanse of the 'unseen'. What man knows of his past, present and future is like a tiny spot of light no bigger than the pulsating tail of a firefly hung in the midst of a vast ocean of utter darkness. Although he seems to have extended the horizon of his knowledge to the very edges of the universe with the help of astrophysics and higher mathematics, the factual evidence that has just started to reach him from the edge of the universe is through signals which were emitted around eighteen to twenty billion light years ago. What may have happened there since or what may be happening there now, is only a matter of conjecture.

Let alone the past and the future, even the knowledge of the present lies mostly beyond the scope of human awareness. What does man truly know of the events taking place beyond his house, his street, his township and the country where he resides? All the news media put together cannot convey to him even a billionth of what is going on in the world around him. But that is not all. What does man really know of the people he seems to know among his friends and closest relatives? To penetrate across the human visage and to read what actually lies behind, is sometimes a more difficult exercise than watching the surface of a muddy pond in an attempt to see what hides beneath. In both cases, one merely sees the images reflected on the surface, the difference being that ponds cannot act, they cannot pose, they cannot wilfully create unreal impressions.

Depending on the weather and the day of the year, ponds are almost monotype; humans are not. The complications of human psyche, the vagaries of human moods and conduct, varying standards of morality and personal philosophies, the aptitudes and different qualities of head and heart, the depth or the shallowness of their conduct are some of the innumerable variables which are not shared by ponds. Even what passes within humans themselves lies very often beyond the reach of their own grasp. Yet few among men learn the lesson in humility. Seldom do they realize that the ultimate source of Truth and the fountainhead of Absolute Knowledge can only be the Creator. It is He alone Who knows the secrets of His own creation. It is He alone Who is All-Seeing, All-Knowing, the Great, the Supreme.

Knowledge is the most essential prerequisite of creation, be it Divine or human, great or little. Without an in-depth knowledge of what is intended to be created, no creative objective can be achieved. Hence no one knows the intricacies and complexities of creation like the Creator Himself and this is why Omniscience is a prerogative of God. A perfect all-embracing knowledge of things is termed Omniscience with reference to God to the exclusion of all others.

If it is the same Omniscient, Omnipresent God who authored the Qur'an, then all Qur'anic revelations with reference to the past, the present and the future must invariably be affirmed by verified facts when they come to light. It is exactly this that the following exercise is all about. With the help of incontrovertible facts, we strongly hope to prove the case in point.

We have already discussed at some length the role of the Qur'anic revelation in bringing to light some of the most ancient events of creation. It begins with the beginning of the time when the universe suddenly erupted from a black hole. According to the Qur'an it only split asunder at the command of an Almighty Creator. The Qur'anic

coverage of the history of creation ends with the end of time when the universe will plunge once again into yet another black hole.

As for the origin of life, the Qur'anic account is likewise amazingly comprehensive and precise. It covers all the important stages of organic and biotic evolution of 4.5 billion years of evolution's history until the time when it culminated in the creation of man. From that point onwards the Qur'an takes up the account of human history in relation to the development of society, religion and civilisation. It also mentions the possibility of the ultimate extinction of the human species which may be replaced by a better and more highly evolved form of life.

All that we have briefly mentioned above has been elaborately discussed in the relevant chapters of this book, demonstrating how Divine revelation can effectively transfer parts of the unknown into the realm of the known. Now in this chapter we shall demonstrate how the Qur'an unveils some of the important events of history which lay buried in an obscure past. We shall also demonstrate how it reveals many future events to which no one during the age of Qur'anic revelations could have had any access. We shall specifically illustrate how the Qur'an precisely predicts great future scientific achievements of man destined to transform the entire style of human life.

We begin here with the account of an event of great historical importance with a religious significance of common interest to Jews, Christians and Muslims. It relates to the Exodus of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and what happened to the pursuing army of Pharaoh and his hosts when Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and his people had safely waded across the treacherous delta of the Nile.

There are many other examples of the Judaeo-Christian history of the same period covered by the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Holy Qur'an. But we have carefully selected only the event of

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the Exodus for the present discussion because it concisely demonstrates the Divine nature of Qur'anic revelation.

The Biblical account, though it records contemporary history, is evidently shallow and superficial by comparison. From the vantage point of a follower of the camp of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, the most that he could observe and record was the drowning of Pharaoh and his host, quashed between two mountain-like waves inundating them. What happened to Pharaoh himself before he was drowned? What passed between Pharaoh and God during his drowning moments? What was it he begged of Him, if anything at all, during his dying moments? These are things which lie absolutely beyond the reach of any human observer looking across from the dry shore. Hence, all that the Bible mentions of Pharaoh and his pursuing army is that each of them was drowned without exception.

'Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea...'

Evidently, according to this Biblical statement, all bodies were claimed by the sea, Pharaoh being no exception. The rout was total. As against this, the following is the statement of the Qur'an referring to the same event. The difference is so obvious:

وَحَمْرُنَا بَيْنَ إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا  
 وَعَدُوًّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي  
 آمَنْتُ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ \* أَلْفَنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ  
 قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ \* فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ  
 خَلَقْنَا آيَةً وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا لَغٰفِلُونَ

*And We brought the children of Israel across the sea; and Pharaoh and his hosts pursued them wrongfully and aggressively, till, when the calamity of drowning overtook him, he said, 'I believe that there is no God but He in Whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who submit to Him.'*

*What! Now! While thou wast disobedient before this and wast of those who create disorder.*

*So this day We will save thee in thy body alone that thou mayest be a Sign to those who come after thee. And surely, many of mankind are heedless of Our Signs.<sup>2</sup>*

(Ch.10: Vs.91-93)

It should be especially noted here that contrary to this Qur'anic statement, the Biblical account does not as much as hint at the possibility of the retrieval of Pharaoh's body: '.....not so much as one of them remained.'

Hence, till the time the Qur'an mentions the saving of Pharaoh's body with the purpose that the posterity may learn their lesson from it, no human source of history had ever referred to it.

When the Qur'an was revealed, the tombs of the Egyptian kings lay buried deep under layer upon layer of desert sand. Little was known of the science of mummification to the people of that age, certainly

not to the Arabs. No books or tradition, religious or otherwise, had ever hinted at the rescue of Pharaoh's body let alone mention its subsequent preservation. This account of the Qur'an is unique also in the sense that it does not merely reveal some past events which were till then unknown to the rest of the world, but it also prophesies that the future would testify to the truth of the Qur'anic statement. It was implausible enough to conceive that the body of Pharaoh having drowned in the conditions described by the Bible, could be retrieved. The phenomenon of such a body, even if retrieved, would present no small problem for the purpose of mummification.

Yet, this is what the Qur'an claims. No man could have dreamt of making such a statement contrary to the available historical evidence at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an. All that man knew was that the body of Pharaoh had been devoured by the sea, lost forever. Even the Egyptian plunderers of the tombs had no notion whatsoever as to which, if any, of the Pharaohs were buried in the Valley of the Kings. What made the Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam make this unique statement if he were the author of the Qur'an? It could serve him no purpose anyway; if anything it could be counter-productive. If challenged, the Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> could not have produced any evidence to support his contentions. The only purpose it would serve was to compromise the truth of the Qur'an. It was many centuries after the revelation of the Qur'an that the earth began to throw up its secrets. The mummified bodies of all the Pharaohs which can claim to be the Pharaohs of the time of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> have been retrieved.

Whether it was Rameses II or another Pharaoh is a question still debated, but the fact that one of the mummies recovered from the Valley of the Kings is that of the Pharaoh who confronted Moses<sup>(as)</sup> is no longer debatable. The only conclusion therefore, one is left to draw, is that against the verdict of the entire world history it is the verdict of the Qur'anic revelation alone which is proved correct: So

this day We will save thee in thy body *alone*...<sup>3</sup>

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّكَ بِتَنكِ

This is the verdict of the Qur'an which has now become the verdict of world history.

One possible meaning of this address by God to Pharaoh is that the time for saving his life was over, hence it would be only his dead body which would be saved. The other possible meaning would be that the time for the acceptance of his faith had expired, hence his soul would not be redeemed. In this case, only his body would be saved to live on like that of a zombie without a soul. To our understanding it is the latter meaning which is intended by the Qur'an. To support our inference further, we cite the Qur'anic style in which this episode is narrated. Of particular interest is the expression: We will save thee in thy body alone.<sup>3</sup>

نَجِّكَ بِتَنكِ

Now Pharaoh was evidently concerned for his survival here on earth, rather than the retrieval of his corpse. If neither his spiritual nor his physical life was to be saved, what would this promise mean? Evidently Pharaoh was not praying for the rescue of his dead body.

If his prayer was accepted even partially, as is evident from the Qur'an, then to cause him to die both physically and spiritually seems out of the question. It is tantamount to a total denial of what he begged for. His profession of faith in the God of Israel must have been made for fear of his life. Hence it was justifiably rejected as meaningless. All that is promised is that only his body would be redeemed but not his soul. But most Muslim scholars insist that his plea was totally rejected and the promise of saving the body referred only to the recovery of his corpse from the sea.



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**THE BODY OF THAT PHARAOH WAS INDEED PRESERVED AND THIS FACT WAS BROUGHT TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF POSTERITY EXACTLY AS THE QUR'AN HAD PREDICTED.**

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That too, according to them, is no small miracle under the conditions described both in the Bible and the Qur'an. Even the promise of the retrieval of his corpse was in fact a great favour to the drowning Pharaoh.

The Pharaohs, they argue, were an extremely proud dynasty. Even the mere assurance that his body would be preserved must have brought some comfort to his dying moments. The purpose of God, however, was not to satisfy his vanity alone. The real purpose was to provide posterity with a great sign of multiple significance from which they could possibly benefit.

Whatever the outcome of this controversy – whether it is established that the Pharaoh in question died from drowning, only his body being retrieved, or whether he was rescued from a state of near death while drowning, the miracle of the Qur'anic statement is in no way obscured. The body of that Pharaoh was indeed preserved and this fact was brought to the knowledge of posterity exactly as the Qur'an had predicted.

Incidentally the scholars who believe that Pharaoh was already dead when his body was retrieved, also believe that it was Merneptah, the successor of Rameses II and not Rameses himself. This implies that Moses<sup>(as)</sup> lived under the reign of two Pharaohs instead of one. He was born while Rameses II was already a king and was raised in his palace by one of his God-fearing wives, who they believe was the youngest. As she had no issue herself, her desire to adopt a son is

understandable. If this proposition is accepted then Moses<sup>(as)</sup> must have left Midian to return to Egypt after the death of Rameses II when Merneptah had already been enthroned. They quote the Bible in their support that Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was informed by God during his exile in Midian that the Pharaoh in whose reign he had committed manslaughter was dead.

This scenario seems to be logical and acceptable but only apparently. The death of a king does not absolve anyone of any crime he may have committed. There is no logic in that whatsoever. That is why God does not even remotely hint at the death of any Pharaoh to dispel Moses<sup>(as)</sup> fears. Instead he is told not to fear because God would protect him and his brother. This is far more sensible.

Again the problem is that according to the archaeological evidence of his mummy's condition, Rameses II who died at the ripe old age of ninety years had spent the last thirty years of his life as a bedridden, senile, tottering old man probably suffering from an extreme case of arteriosclerosis. This state could be a direct consequence of his neardrowning, resulting in an insufficient supply of oxygen to the brain for an extended period.

Now the exile of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> to Midian and his entire stay there lasted only eight to ten years by the end of which period Rameses II could not be more than forty to fifty years old. Hence, the Biblical statement that God was only waiting for Pharaoh's death to commission Moses<sup>(as)</sup> a prophet and command him to return to Egypt is unacceptable. Incidentally according to the Qur'an, the Pharaoh to whom Moses<sup>(as)</sup> returned did accuse him of murder but appeared to be hesitant to take action against him because of the Divine signs which Moses<sup>(as)</sup> had displayed. Evidently, his escape from punishment was certainly not due to the death of one Pharaoh and the enthronement of another.

Again the life of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Aaron's<sup>(as)</sup> after their return to Egypt is described by the Qur'an and the Bible as very eventful and their confrontation with Pharaoh seems so drawn out that it must have taken a decade or so to come to its final conclusion. All the signs narrated could not have been packed in the mere short space of a year or two. As against this the historians estimate that the entire reign of Merneptah from the day of his crowning to the day of his death is reported to have lasted only eight years or less.

Moreover, history describes Merneptah as a warrior king who repeatedly attacked the Palestinians year after year, while both the Qur'an and the Bible are absolutely silent about the Pharaoh of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> having carried out such expeditions into the land of Israelites. But this is not the place perhaps for a full in-depth discussion on the issue. Nor is it necessary in any way to prove which of the two Pharaohs, Rameses II or Memepthah was the one who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. As long as their mummies remain preserved, either of the two will always testify to the truth of the Qur'anic prophecy. Their names are of no real consequence.

### **Prophecies Relating to the Immediate or Distant Future**

Having dealt at some length with certain important events of Egyptian history during the age of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, which had remained concealed until the revelation of the Qur'an, we now turn to some prophetic Qur'anic revelations in relation to many other events. They relate to different areas of human interest comprising social, religious and political developments as well as epoch-making scientific advancements which were to change the face of the earth.

Some of these prophecies also cover significant ecological and environmental changes to be brought about by future scientific inventions and proliferation of industry. There is a long list of such prophecies contained mostly in the last few Surahs of the Holy

Qur'an but not exclusively so. The discussion is by no means exhaustive. Some of these Qur'anic prophecies have been explained and enlarged upon by many traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. We have only selected some specimen prophecies belonging to different categories. The prophecies relating to the new modes of travel and their wide impact will be discussed at the end of the chapter at some greater length because of their global importance.

To maintain chronological order we begin with the prophecies which were fulfilled within the lifetime of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. A few of them relate to his return to Mecca after his forced exile. All such verses were revealed even before his migration to Medina thus simultaneously prophesying both his departure and subsequent return. The following verse belongs to a Surah (*Al-Qasas*) which was revealed before Hijra (the Prophet's<sup>(sa)</sup> migration from Mecca to Medina).

إِنَّ الَّذِي قَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَيْهِ مَعَادٌ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ  
مَنْ حَاءَ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَمَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

*Most surely He Who had made the teaching of the Qur'an binding on thee will bring thee back to thy place of return. Say, 'My Lord knows best who brings the guidance, and who is in manifest error.'*<sup>4</sup>  
(Ch.28: V.86)

To predict his return to Mecca before his migration to Medina is in fact a twofold prophecy. In view of the constantly worsening situation which made life progressively impossible for him and his followers in Mecca, migration may seem to some readers a mere logical conclusion. But it should not be forgotten that the element of surprise and wonder in this part of the prophecy is not about the suggestion of migration. The element of wonder is in the open defiance to the will and might of the Meccans who would not permit the predicted

migration to take place. Again the ever hardening determination of the Meccans not to permit the Prophet(sa) to escape are the factors which highlight the unlikelihood of such a prophecy to have been made by the Prophet(sa) himself in his state of utter helplessness.

Another Divine promise that he would most certainly return to Mecca with manifest truth was vouched to him in the following verse:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ

*And say, 'O my Lord, make my entry a good entry and then make me come forth with a good forthcoming'<sup>5</sup>*

(Ch.17: V.81)

The third example of how his ultimate victorious return to Mecca was predicted even before the actual migration took place, is taken from the first few verses of Surah Al-Rum (Chapter 30), which by the unanimous verdict of scholars was revealed before Hijra:

غَلَبَتِ الرُّومُ ۗ فِىْ اَدْنٰى الْاَرْضِ وَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَلَيْهِمْ سَاعَاتٌ  
فِىْ بَضْعِ سِنِيْنَ ۗ اِنَّهٗمُ الْاَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَّمِنْ بَعْدِ ۗ وَاَيُّ يَوْمٍ يَفْرَحُ  
الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۗ يَنْصُرُ اللّٰهُ مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ

*The Romans have been defeated, In the land nearby, and they, after their defeat, will emerge victorious. (This will happen) within a few years. And to Allah belongs the command before and after that. And that will be the day when the believers will rejoice, With the succour from Allah. He helps whomsoever He pleases; and He is the Mighty the Merciful.<sup>6</sup>*

(Ch.30: Vs.3-6)

These verses refer to a partial territorial defeat which the Romans suffered at the hands of the Persians. The verses clearly prophesied that the Persian victory would prove only short-lived and in a few years' time the defeat of the Romans will turn into victory. *'That will be the day when the believers will (also) rejoice with the succour they would receive from Allah.'* The implication of this prophecy in relation to the fate of the believers was all too obvious. When shortly after this revelation the Muslims lost their homes and property to the idolaters of Mecca, like the Romans had done to the idol worshippers of Persia, the consensus among the companions was that soon after the Romans' victory, the Muslims would also regain their territory – Mecca. This understanding was unanimous among all the companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. The only difference was regarding the period in which the prophecy would be fulfilled. This controversy stemmed from the expression '*bid'ai Sineen*':

بِدْعِ سِنِينَ

Literally, it means a period extending from three to nine years. Some companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> in their eagerness bet with some others that they would certainly return soon after the expiry of three years. But others reminded them that their return could be delayed by as much as nine years which is the upper limit of the term '*bid'ai Sineen*':

بِدْعِ سِنِينَ

The events as they unfolded themselves, proved the latter opinion to be right. Thus, in this sense both the promises were fulfilled in letter and in spirit. First it was the Romans who regained their lost territory within the prescribed limit and then it was the turn of the Muslims to return to Mecca in glory before the end of the eighth year.

Another category of the prophecies which was manifestly fulfilled during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> relates to the repeated attacks on the Muslims in Medina by the Meccans and their confederates from among the nomad tribes.

The first of these prophecies as mentioned in the following verses clearly portrayed the events of the Battle of Badr. During this first serious encounter of the Muslims with a formidable, professionally organised army of Meccans, the invading hosts were completely routed and put to a most humiliating flight by a comparatively much smaller body of Muslim defenders.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُّنتَقِرُونَ \* سِيَهْرَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ \*  
بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذَى وَأَمْرٌ

*Do they say, 'We are a victorious host?'*

*The hosts shall soon be routed and will turn their backs in flight.*

*Aye, the Hour is their appointed time; and the Hour will be most calamitous and most bitter.<sup>7</sup>*

(Ch.54: Vs.45-47)

The devastating defeat inflicted upon the Meccan army was clearly predicted in the verses quoted above. The last of these verses highlights for them the bitterness of the Hour.

The very pick of the chieftains, the sworn enemies of Islam, who were also renowned for their hatred of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, fell one after the other and were made to bite the dust in the field of Badr.

Abu-Jahl was slain by two young Muslim lads, so also Shaibah and 'Utbah met their fated hour and were put to sword within a few hours. The night fell upon the gloomy hearts of the Meccans like Doomsday. They were put to flight in utter disarray. It is this

humiliating defeat which is referred to in the following verse of Surah Al-Anfal:

وَأَذِّنْ لِلْقَوْمِ أَنَّ إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَإِن يَدْعُوا إِلَىٰ سِوَا اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ إِلَهُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَنَحْنُ عِندَ اللَّهِ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمُونَ

*And remember the time when Allah promised you one of the two parties that it should be yours, and you wished that one without sting should be yours, but Allah desired to establish the truth by His words and to cut off the root of the disbelievers.<sup>8</sup>*

(Ch.8: V.8)

### The Battle of The Ditch

Among other encounters with the enemies of Islam which occurred precisely as they were foretold, the Battle of the Ditch.

غزوة الخندق

is of outstanding importance. It was during this battle that some other great historic victories were also predicted at a time when the very survival of the Muslims themselves was at stake.

The prediction of the Battle of the Ditch was first made in Surah Sad which was definitely revealed in Mecca and according to most scholars, during the early period of the Prophet's<sup>(sa)</sup> ministry. Following is the verse:

حَتَّىٰ مَا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ

*They are a host of the confederates which shall be routed here.<sup>9</sup>*  
(Ch.38: V.12)



It is to this prophecy that the Holy Qur'an refers:

وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ  
وَصَدَّقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا

*And when the believers saw the confederates, they said, 'This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us; and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth.' And it only added to their faith and submission.<sup>10</sup>*  
(Ch.33: V.23)

Of all the battles fought during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam, the Battle of the Ditch stands out for the maximum possible dangers and extreme trials of adversity which it brought to the Muslims in Medina. There was many a time when the odds were heavy against the survival of the Muslims. The Qur'an describes their state as follows:

إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ  
وَلَبَّغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونًا \* هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ  
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا \* وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُلَافِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا \*  
وَإِذْ قَالَتِ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا \*  
وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ  
بِعَوْرَةٍ أَوْ لَا يَتْلُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا

*When they came upon you from above you, and from below you, and when your eyes became distracted, and your hearts reached to the throats, and you thought diverse thoughts about Allah. There and then were the believers sorely tried, and they were shaken with a violent shaking.*

*And when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease said, 'Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but a delusion.' And when a party of them said, 'O people of Yathrib (Medina), you have possibly no stand against the enemy, therefore turn back.' And a section of them even asked leave of the Prophet, saying, 'Our houses are exposed and defenceless.' And they were in truth not exposed. They only sought to flee away.'*<sup>11</sup>

(Ch.33: Vs.11-14)

This battle has earned the title The Battle of the Ditch, because when the news reached Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> that almost all the Arab tribes had colluded to invade Medina for a final conclusive encounter to finish off Islam once and for all, the building of a barrier on the open side of Medina became an absolute must. The number of Muslims in Medina at that time, by comparison to the invading hosts, was so small that it was absolutely impossible for them to prevent the enemy from entering Medina in an open battle.

Hence, after consultation it was decided that the digging of a ditch was the only option. A one mile long ditch was required to be dug in extremely difficult rocky terrain.

The estimate as to the number of Muslims involved in this task differ. The minimum mentioned is seven hundred and the maximum three thousand. According to our estimate it was around one thousand eight hundred at the most, because the one thing on which the authorities are agreed is that to every group of ten persons, ten yards of the ditch were allocated. As it was not longer than one mile, the number of Muslims could not have been more than one thousand seven hundred and sixty. The task was hard and exacting. An overall state of poverty and deprivation further compounded the problems of the Muslim camp. At times they had to work for days on end on empty stomachs.

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**SELDOM CAN HISTORY PRESENT SUCH EXAMPLES OF A DEFENDING FEW, AS POWERLESS AND VULNERABLE AS THE MUSLIMS WERE WHILE THEY WERE ENGAGED IN THE DIGGING OF THE TRENCH, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, BORNE DOWN WITH HUNGER AND FATIGUE. THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN THE ADVERSITY OF THE MUSLIM CAUSE COULD SINK NO FURTHER. IT WAS THEN THAT MUHAMMAD<sup>(SA)</sup> SPOKE THE HISTORIC WORDS WHICH HISTORY COULD NOT CREATE, THEY CREATED HISTORY.**

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It was during this state of extreme adversity that the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> was once informed that despite the best efforts of the sappers, a hard rock stubbornly refused to yield. The Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> proceeded forthwith to visit the troubled spot. Having reached there he took up the pickaxe in his own hands and struck the rock three times before it yielded and broke into fragments. Each time he struck, sparks flew from the rock and he exclaimed out loud *Allah-o-Akbar!* (Allah is the Greatest). At the end the Companions inquired from him why he had shouted *Allah-o-Akbar!* with such a triumphant note. The Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> answered: 'In the sparks which flew at the first strike, I saw the Syrian palaces of the Byzantine Empire and their key was given to me. The second time I was shown the illuminated palaces of Persia at Madain and to me the key was handed. Again I was granted the key of the palaces of San'a as they appeared in the sparks when I struck the rock for the third time.' History bears witness that this is exactly what followed but the wonder lies not in their fulfilment alone. The very making of these prophecies at the time they were made is in itself a miracle.<sup>12</sup>

Seldom can history present such examples of a defending few, as powerless and vulnerable as the Muslims were while they were engaged

in the digging of the trench, day in and day out, borne down with hunger and fatigue. That was the time when the adversity of the Muslim cause could sink no further. It was then that Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> spoke the historic words which history could not create, they created history.

To predict such victories at a time such as this could either be the ravings of a madman or the proclamation of God from the lips of a great Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. He was the wisest of all the wise that ever lived, 'mad' he was certainly not. If ever a prophet was blessed to be a Divine oracle, it was he. His was the mouth and his were the lips which shaped destinies and pronounced decrees as God spoke to him and he spoke for God.

As has been pointed out earlier the purpose of this exercise is not to present an exhaustive study of all the prophecies of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. We are only attempting to present to the reader some specific prophecies with wider impact. Having discussed some of them which related to the lifetime of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and the period which immediately followed, we now turn to another category of prophecies which relate to a comparatively distant future. It is difficult to decide where to begin but perhaps it would not be inappropriate to begin with the discovery of the Americas and the extension of the known world. The following are the relevant verses:

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ۖ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ۖ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا  
وَحُفَّتْ

*And when the earth will spread out,  
And will cast out all that she contains and become empty;  
And will give ear to her Lord – and this will be  
incumbent upon her.*<sup>13</sup>  
(Ch.84: Vs.4-6)

The prophecy contained in verse 4 above was manifestly realised with the discovery of the 'New World' by the end of the fifteenth century, when on 12 October 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on an island in the Bahamas.

That was the beginning of the end for the native Americans. But a new seemingly endless beginning was made for the Americans to rise and dominate the rest of the old world. This is clearly implied in the prophecy contained in the next verse which speaks of the earth throwing up all its secrets and emptying itself.

The same issue is taken up again and further elaborated in some other chapters as well. For instance, verses 2 and 3 of Surah Al-Zilzal read:

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا \* وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا \*

*When the earth is shaken with her violent shaking,  
And the earth throws up her burdens.<sup>14</sup>  
(Ch.99: Vs.2-3)*

It is predicted that the earth will go through a mighty shaking and will throw up its heavy metals and man will begin to wonder what indeed is happening to it.

The word *athqal*: **أَثْقَالًا** refers to everything which is heavy, so the throwing up by the earth of its heavy metals will not be a forced extension of its meaning. Again it can also be translated as 'the earth will throw up its hidden treasures'. The tremendous scientific advancements which we have witnessed in this age could not become possible without the discovery of new minerals which the earth has thrown up as predicted. Count them out and the wheel of scientific

advancement will turn back a full circle. No modern invention of any significance can be conceived without the discovery of coal, petroleum, uranium, plutonium etc.

The chronological order of the two prophecies mentioned above also has a message to deliver. The prophecy of the extension of the old world is followed immediately by the discovery of new minerals and this is exactly the sequence in which the prophecies were fulfilled.

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