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# Editorial

## Shock and Awe

Today, it requires no intelligence to conclude that man is threatened with self-immolation. But as long ago as the 7th century when no one could have conceived the possibility of the development of what are now called weapons of mass destruction, and the equally horrific 'shock-and-awe' used in Gulf War II, the Holy Qur'an announced:

*We call to witness the passage of time  
that surely man progressively suffers  
loss.*

(Ch 103: Vs. 2-3)

Allah, the exalted, cites the present age as a witness that man is gradually advancing to total loss and thus indicates that today's man is preparing means of his own destruction as a result of which humanity would arrive at a terrifying end. (Our excerpt in this issue is on genetic engineering.)

An important principle safeguarding man against loss is that the concept of absolute justice must be universally accepted, adopted and put into effect, and our Notes & Comments touch on this subject. In accord with this basic divine principle Allah, the exalted, sent a Warner in this age and also assured him that he would make his truth manifest through powerful assaults. This divine Warner admonished humanity in the light of

the knowledge vouchsafed to him by Allah and he set forth in advance that which was approaching. (There are two articles on the Plague.) Some examples of these warnings are set out below:

*A mighty sign is due to appear in a  
short while which will shake cities and  
villages and meadows;*

*In a flash, the earth will be turned  
upside down and streams of blood shall  
flow.*

*Such destruction will overtake cities  
and towns, of which there has never  
been seen the like ever before.*

*In a single movement dwellings shall  
become mounds of rubble the loss of life  
will be incalculable.*

*My friends the days of earthquakes are  
again approaching, days not merely of  
an earthquake but of the passing away of  
multitudes.*

*He will demonstrate a brilliance of His  
Sign five times.*

*This is God's word that you will only  
appreciate only when it is fulfilled.*

(part of a poem in Haqeequatul  
Wahi, April 1905)

*I shall show thee the earthquake of the  
last day.*

*Allah will show you the earthquake of  
the last day.*

*On that day it will be asked Whose is the  
kingdom today.*

*Is it not the kingdom of Allah the One,  
the Most Supreme?*

*I shall manifest this sign to you five  
times.*

*If I so will the world would end that day.  
(Haqeequatul Wahi)*

*God has conveyed to me intimations of approaching earthquakes. Be sure then that as in accord with these prophecies there have been severe earthquakes in America and Europe, they will occur in different parts of Asia also. Some of them will be a sample of the Judgment Day. There will be such loss of life that blood will run in streams. Even birds and animals will not be spared, such destruction will overtake the earth as will not have occurred ever before the creation of man. Most habitations will be turned upside down as if they had never been dwelt in. In addition there will be other afflictions both on the earth and in the heaven in terrifying shapes, so much so, that they will appear most extraordinary in the estimation of every sensible person. No mention of them will be discovered in the books of philosophy and astronomy. Mankind will be severely disturbed and would wonder what was about to happen. Many will be delivered and many will be destroyed.*

*The days are near, indeed they are at the door, when the world will witness a Judgement Day, not only will the earthquakes happen but other frightening afflictions will also be manifested, some of them from heaven and some of them from earth. All this will come about because man has given up the worship of the true God and men's hearts and designs and fancies have all concentrated on the world. Had I not appeared these afflictions may have been delayed somewhat, but by my coming, God's secret wrathful designs*

*have become manifest after a long period as God has said: We never punish a people until after We have sent a Messenger (Ch17: V16).*

*Those who repent will be secure and those who fear God before an affliction overtakes them will be shown mercy. Do you imagine that you will be secure against these earthquakes or that you can safeguard yourselves through your own designs? Certainly not. Think not that America and other regions have experienced severe earthquakes and that your country is secure. I apprehend that you may perhaps suffer greater torments.*

*Thou art not secure, O Europe nor thou, O Asia. O dwellers of the islands, no self-made deity of yours will be able to help you. I behold cities falling and habitations in ruins. That One and Unique Being remained silent for a time. Untoward deeds were done within His sight, and He forbore. But now He will display His countenance in a terrifying form. Let him who has ears hear that the time is not far. I have tried to gather all under God's security, but Divine decrees are bound to be executed. You will witness the time of Noah and your eyes will behold that which happened in the land of Lot. But God is slow in being roused. Repent that you may be shown mercy. He who abandons God is an insect and not a human and he who does not fear Him is dead not alive.*

*(Haqeeqatul Wahi pp.256-257)*

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# Notes & Comments

## True or False?

In far gone antiquity Aeschylus (525-456 B.C) stated that, "Truth is the first casualty of war." Perhaps he should have added that the second casualty is justice, because without truth there can be no justice. This is what was evident in the recent war on Iraq in which the boundaries between truth and falsehood were being deliberately manipulated to allow the end to justify the means without any regard to the broader application of justice and in retrospect manipulated somewhat primitively by the underdog.

Such injustice has also been mentioned in the Qur'an. It states:

*O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not the enmity of a people incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do.*

(The Holy Qur'an Ch5: V9)

This verse applies to humanity at large: it is not just for the edification of Muslims only. It advocates that human relations on the personal level as well as the international level should be governed by the demands of justice. Bearing witness in equity is an essential part of the system of justice. This is what was completely lacking in the events surrounding the recent war on Iraq. Justice was being ignored and replaced by other motives.

On this subject the Qur'an goes further and explains quite clearly the consequences of both just and unjust actions. For those who believe and do good deeds adhering to the advice of this verse God promises in verse 5:10 forgiveness and a great reward. But for those who reject the advice given, verse 5:11 states:

*And as for those who disbelieve and reject Our signs [or directions], they are the people of Hell. (ashaabul jaheem).*

(Ch5: V11)

The words *ashaabul jaheem* could be translated as 'the friends or companions of hell.' So, those who act against the dictates of justice are inviting us, it would seem, to a hell that is like a friend to them. Hell as an abode of Satan seems to symbolise a place of disorder, anarchy and chaos and as a place of fire, and modern day war would be a good symbol for it.

This teaching of acting with justice seems to be embedded in human nature and this was the instinct that prompted people to rise up in protest against what they perceived to be an unjust war (indeed true religion is one based on the nature created by God—*deen e fitrat.*). Even though the majority disliked Saddam Hussein's regime, they clearly took a stand along the maxim of the Qur'an, 'let not the enmity of a people incite you to act otherwise than with justice.'

However, to counteract this a huge public relations exercise was carried out using the mass-media machines to convince the public of the need for this war. The propaganda to hide or cloud the facts was intense and it seemed to focus on depriving

people of the truth – for without truth there can be no justice.

One naturally expects the free to be totally independent. However, the loss of independence and honest reporting of the US media has been de-cried by many who have worked in that industry. David McGowan accords with many in his introduction to *Derailing Democracy* when he states that:

'Following the same course that virtually every other major industry has in the last two decades, a relentless series of mergers and corporate take-overs has consolidated control of the media into the hands of a few corporate behemoths.

The result has been that an increasingly authoritarian agenda has been sold to the American people by a massive, multi-tentacled media machine that has become, for all intents and purposes, a propaganda organ of the state.'

Being starved of the truth, it is impossible to arrive at just

conclusions. This was highlighted in Gore Vidal's observation in *The Decline and Fall of the American Empire* and it still holds good:

'The corporate grip on opinion in the United States is one of the wonders of the Western world. No First World country has ever managed to eliminate so entirely from its media all objectivity — much less dissent.

Of course, it is possible for any citizen with time to spare, and a canny eye, to work out what is actually going on, but for the many there is not time, and the network news is the only news even though it may not be news at all but only a series of flashing fictions...'

With wrong information, wrong and unjust actions are allowed to take place and what is unfortunate is that one injustice inflames the fire of another and this vicious wheel seems to roll on endlessly before us, heaping suffering upon suffering. This is evident – when the principles of justice are cast aside then anarchy

rules. The constant terrorism (state-sponsored or otherwise) is sadly an everyday occurrence and continues to promote distrust on all sides, for they all seem to have their *ashaabul jaheem* (friends of Hell). This does not mean that merely because there is injustice the aggrieved parties should resort to suicide bombers or sponsor terrorism. We need to get away from this concept that the end justifies the means and that might is right.

So, is there any chance of bringing justice back to this world? It is an uphill task, but certainly the media have a key role in promoting truth and maintaining justice. Without honest and unbiased reporting (*bearing witness in equity*) no true assessments can be made by the people, as what is true and what is false becomes virtually indistinguishable.

**Basit Ahmad- UK**

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# Genetic Engineering, The Plague, The Aids Virus

*This is an extract taken from the book **Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth**, written by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup>.*

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## GENETIC ENGINEERING

In the field of Genetic Engineering it has today become possible to change certain features of life. But in the age when the following verse was revealed, no one could imagine such a thing in his wildest fancy. Below is the relevant verse and its translation:

وَقَالَ لَا اتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا \* وَلَا ضِلَّةً لَهُمْ  
وَلَا أَمْرًا لَهُمْ وَلَا أَمْرًا لَهُمْ فَلْيَكُنْ أَذَانُ الْأَنْعَامِ

*... And he (Satan) said, 'I will assuredly take a fixed portion from Thy servants;  
'And assuredly I will lead them astray and assuredly I will excite in them vain desires, and assuredly I will incite them and they will cut the ears of cattle ...' <sup>1</sup>*

The idea of mutilation of animals by chopping off their tails or slitting their ears is not what is meant here by the Qur'an. It simply refers to the common practice among the Arabs in pre-Islamic times to make incisions in the ears of animals marked for sacrifice to various gods. However, what follows in the same verse is of a far more dramatic and revolutionary nature. The verse ends by attributing to Satan another malevolent intention, to incite mankind to bring about changes in the pattern of God's creation. The verse continues:

وَلَا مَرْثَهُمْ فَلْيَغْسِرْنَ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِّنْ دُونِ  
اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُّبِينًا

*... 'and assuredly I will incite them and they will effect a change in the creation of Allah.' And he who takes Satan as a friend besides Allah has certainly suffered a manifest loss.'*<sup>2</sup>

The possibility of changing the nature of God's creation was not an idea that people of earlier times could have entertained. Clearly the verse is speaking of possibilities that had not yet dawned on the horizon of earlier eras. To inflict superficial injuries or to make small changes, through incisions for example, is quite a simple process and lies within the reach of man of all ages. However, the possibility of man bringing about substantial changes in God's creation has always been beyond the reach of human imagination, prior to the most recent times. The addition of genetic engineering as a new branch of scientific study is only a decade or two old. Yet this branch of science is moving rapidly to the stage against which a clear warning had been delivered by the Qur'an fourteen hundred years ago. Man has already started interfering with the plan of creation and to some measure has succeeded in altering the forms of life at the level of bacteria, insects etc. A few steps further and it may spell disaster. Some scientists have already started sounding the alarm. But unfortunately, to reverse the wheel of experimentation in this field already seems to be beyond their power.

Scholars are divided in two camps regarding the very ethics of genetic engineering. Some are throwing up their hands in alarm, whilst others argue that we should develop this field to its fullest extent so that we may discover the secrets of creation. They



believe that technological developments in this field will brighten the future of man.

In America the debates are ferociously raging between the two camps which approve or disapprove of genetic engineering. Some legal suits and litigations against the unrestricted experiments of genetic engineering are pending in the courts of the United States. It is argued that already the experiments have defied the scientific expectations of what should have resulted from the transfer of genes from one species to another. In some cases the deviation from the expected course is surprisingly greater than even the sceptics could suspect. Until now, however, things have not gone completely out of hand. The experiments carried out on certain strains of bacteria and crops are proving beneficial for enhancing agricultural produce and protecting it from certain diseases. But it is far too early indeed to exult in these small transient gains.

What ultimate effects the new synthetic strains or altered species will have on the ecology in the future, cannot be assessed until the behaviour of the altered strains is closely and minutely monitored for a few successive generations. The danger of the disaster which they may spell is, however, real and substantial. If not strictly monitored, injudicious experimentation with genetic engineering could let loose some unpredictable form of life which may defy human control. The certainty with which the Qur'an has warned against the punishment of meddling with the creation of God bodes ill for the future of life on earth. Allah knows best if man will ever cease to play God. Can any measure, short of extinction, teach him the lesson in humility?

It is wrong however to infer that this verse condemns all possible usage of genetic engineering. Any branch of science which is pressed into the service of His creation and employed to protect, rather than change it, is certainly not discouraged. If for instance

genetic engineering is employed to correct faults in genetic codes caused by accidents, this can in no way be dubbed as interference with the Divine scheme of things. Again, if damage to genetic codes by disease or imprudent medication is attempted to be corrected through genetic engineering, this is certainly not what is condemned in the above verse.

All said and done, it cannot be overemphasized that scientists should not be given a free hand to trifle with the grand scheme of Divine Creation. They must thank their lucky stars if grave accidents have not already happened. They will have none to thank but themselves if they do. We do hope that the world governments will keep a strict watch over the trends and scope of experimentation in the field of genetic engineering. What hangs in the balance is the honour and dignity of the human species within the animal kingdom. We do hope and pray that mankind will be spared the torment of haplessly watching the day when it will be mastered by the synthetic slaves of its own creation.

### **The Plague**

The world we know today is so different from that of a mere hundred years ago. The age of air travel had not yet dawned. The fledgling flight of the Wright brothers was to remain, for many more years, a dream to be realised. Massive ships towering high like mountains were not yet built and the era of submarines was not as yet afloat. Nevertheless, there was a stir in the air, like that at the early break of dawn. A dazzling new day of revolutionary scientific inventions was breaking.

The air in the realm of religion was also vibrant with an expectancy of a different nature. There was talk in every religion of the near advent of a Divine Reformer of global dimensions. Who would come and where, was the most hotly debated question. The air was tense with claims and counterclaims. But

nowhere was the tension of interreligious debate so intense as in the subcontinent of India.

Christians and Muslims were awaiting the arrival of the Messiah among them. The Hindus were no less enthusiastic about the manifestation of their Lord Krishna. The Buddhists did not lag behind either, in hoping for the the advent of Buddha.

In that atmosphere of multi-religious conflict, a voice was heard loud and clear, from a person of humble origin by the name of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as of Qadian<sup>(as)</sup>. He electrified the atmosphere with his outstanding advocacy of the supremacy of Islam over all other faiths. He threw challenges on behalf of Islam in every direction with such powerful arguments based in scriptural and logical evidence as compelled the champions of other religions to take serious note of him. 'A new warrior has risen for the defence of Islam,' was the clamour everywhere.

The Muslims of the subcontinent were astir with joy and hope. Till the entry into the arena of this new champion of the Muslim cause, Islam was the least ably defended of all the combatant religions. Meteoric was his rise to fame among the Indian Muslims when the first few volumes of his monumental work *Brahin-e-Ahmadiyyah* were published. Glowing tributes were paid to him by eminent Muslim scholars of that time. Leading articles were published in his praise by the Muslim press. But it was not to last long.

The situation changed dramatically when he pronounced, one day, that God had revealed to him that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> son of Mary, was dead. He died many long years after his deliverance from the cross like any other human prophet. In his name and in his spirit and style it was he, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> who had been raised as the Messiah of the latter days, to fulfil the prophecies of the second advent of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. A fuller discussion on this will follow in

Part VII. For the present it should suffice that his fame had reached heavenly heights before he made this claim. But the first thing that claim cost him was that fame which turned overnight into notoriety. His name was still known from end to end in the vast subcontinent of India among the people of Islam, but no longer with honour and dignity and with hopes and aspirations. The hunter of the enemies of Islam became the most hunted person by the very Muslims whose battles he had fought. All his friends turned into foes, all his well-wishers wished him dead rather than accept the death of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> and his spiritual rebirth among the Muslims. He was maligned and vilified and abused and opposed with such frenzy as the subcontinent of India had not witnessed before. It was at this moment of total betrayal by the world of Islam, and undisguised hostility by the rest of the religions, that he was reassured by God that He would not abandon him. Many prophetic warnings were vouched to him concerning the Divine chastisement for those who led campaigns of bitter antagonism against him. Many Divine warnings were bestowed to him regarding heavenly punishments of a much wider application, so that the people at large might draw their lesson from them, but they heeded not. He was falsified. But his prophetic warnings of Divine chastisement could not be falsified.

One such warning related to the impending epidemic of the plague which was to play exceptional havoc in the Punjab, the province of India to which he belonged. The most emphatic warning delivered by him to the world was bestowed upon him in the words of the following Divine revelation:

دنیا میں ایک نذیر آیا پر دنیائے اس کو قبول نہ کیا لیکن خدا سے قبول کرے گا اور بڑے  
زور آور مصلوں سے اس کی سچائی ظاہر کروے گا۔<sup>۱</sup>

‘A Warner came unto the world, but the world accepted

him not; yet God shall manifest His favour and demonstrate his truth with powerful assaults.’<sup>3</sup>

Plague, as we have already mentioned, was just one of the many punitive signs which he prophesied. But it was so great a sign of extraordinary import that we have specifically selected it as a category by itself. It was not just a sign of the truth of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, it was a sign of the truth of the Qur’an and the Bearer of the Qur’an. Again it manifestly proved the claim that revelation is a most reliable means of transferring knowledge from the realm of the unknown to that of the known. The visitation of the plague which was revealed to the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was in fact a Qur’anic prophecy reasserted during his time, because his was the age when it was destined to be realised.

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَابَّةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ  
أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا لَا يُوقِنُونَ\*

*And when the sentence is passed against them, We shall bring forth for them an insect (Da’bbah) out of the earth, which shall wound them (Tukallemo) because people did not believe in Our Signs.<sup>4</sup>*  
(Ch.27; V.83)

The word *da’bbah* as used by the Qur’an has already been defined with reference to another verse discussed earlier. It applies to all animals, from the tiniest to the most massive ones, which move along earth surfaces with a locomotive mechanism.<sup>5</sup>

It is highly important to understand the significance of this prophecy, which has a very potent message for the people of this age. Many a past Muslim scholar and commentator of the Qur’an has related this prophecy to the age when the Mahdi and the

Messiah would appear. Although they could not fathom the entire import of the message, they still came surprisingly close. ‘Allamah Isma’il Haqqi Al-Buruswi (d. AH 1137) commenting on the above verse in *Ruhul Bayan* wrote that the Mahdi would come and then the Dajjal (anti-Christ) would appear followed by the Messiah. During this time *da’bbah* will emerge and after that the sun will rise from the West.

The Shi’a scholar, Mullah Fath-Ullah Kashani (d. AH 988), in his commentary *Minhaj-us Sadiqin*, has made the following comments:

‘According to some of our friends this verse (i.e. relating to the emergence of *da’bbah*) points to the advent of the Divine authority who is the Mahdi of the Muslim people (*Ummah*).’

This is as far as these commentators could go from their study of Hadith in conjunction with the above Qur’anic verse. They did not offer any explanation as to the nature of *al da’bbah*. It was left to Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> in his capacity as the reformer of the latter days to further elaborate and explain the true implication of this prophecy in the light of the Divine revelations and visions bestowed upon him.

In February 1898, Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> received revelations about an impending plague, and he immediately published this important warning through newspapers and pamphlets to the world at large. He explained that the plague of which he had foretold was the same calamity implied in the verse relating to the appearance of *al da’bbah*.

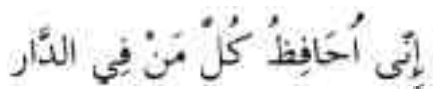
الدَّابَّةُ

He further observed that the word:



*tukallemo* mentioned in the verse has two basic meanings. One is to wound and the other is to speak. The context in which this verse is set clearly relates to an animal of a sort, which would bite the people for having rejected the signs of 'the Lord. The alternative meaning requires the *da'bbah* to speak to the people. This he does by implication indicating that this punitive measure is a result of their denial. Thus he speaks as he wounds by discriminating between good and bad.

After this initial warning, many others followed, further elaborating the nature of the impending plague and the manner in which it would strike. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was told in no uncertain terms that this plague would devastate large areas in the Punjab, and village after village would be emptied of life. Death would knock at every door and strike the townships from end to end leaving a trail of horror behind as it went. Qadian, the township where he himself dwelled, would be no exception, he declared, but the plague there would be employed to further enhance the sign of his truth. It would strike all around his house but would not be permitted to step within its four walls.



'I will save all who dwell in the House.'<sup>6</sup>

For those who sought and cared for his shelter, he made it clear that this promise of security would not be confined only to such as occupy his house physically but would also cover those who dwell in his spiritual home – the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Thus he delivered manifest warnings to all who rejected him and

gave glad tidings of miraculous protection to all who believed.

When he mentioned that the Ahmadis would be miraculously saved from this affliction, he made it clear at the same time that in exceptional cases, the Ahmadis who were Ahmadis in name only may also suffer. But by and large, they would be saved in such outstanding proportion as would leave no doubt in the mind of the observer that this protection was in no way accidental.

The tale of the plague in the Punjab is an amazing tale indeed. It testifies to the truth of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> in letter and spirit. How could a man claim protection even from the common cold as a sign of his truth? To speak of the plague to show distinct partiality to his followers was too tall a claim to be made by an ordinary mortal if God Himself had not vouchsafed it to him. It was an exceptionally tall claim indeed that all who would sincerely submit to his authority as the Divinely appointed Imam of the age would be spared the agony of the plague.

When finally the hour struck, it struck to toll the bell over the funeral of his sworn enemies. Many among them had publicly vowed that it would be Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> himself who would die of the plague. But it was they themselves who were stricken by the plague along with their families, one after the other, until none were left to mourn their death. It did spare, as was promised, his followers, by an outstandingly large margin. A margin which could not be explained away by any factor of chance or accident. No earthly logic could account for the distinct partiality with which the plague treated the Ahmadis in, hundreds of villages of mixed population. This miracle, repeated itself everywhere with such brilliance as even the blind could see. And the blind did see and rushed towards the safe haven of Ahmadiyyat in such numbers as had never happened before. And lo, they were saved. But alas for those who possessed the faculty



THE TALE OF THE PLAGUE IN THE PUNJAB IS AN AMAZING TALE INDEED. IT TESTIFIES TO THE TRUTH OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH<sup>(as)</sup> IN LETTER AND SPIRIT. HOW COULD A MAN CLAIM PROTECTION EVEN FROM THE COMMON COLD AS A SIGN OF HIS TRUTH? TO SPEAK OF THE PLAGUE TO SHOW DISTINCT PARTIALITY TO HIS FOLLOWERS WAS TOO TALL A CLAIM TO BE MADE BY AN ORDINARY MORTAL IF GOD HIMSELF HAD NOT VOUCHSAFED IT TO HIM.

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of sight that they were indeed blinded by its dazzling brilliance. There were villages where no one was left to carry the coffins of the victims of the plague to the nearby graveyards, except the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>. They carried the corpses of the disbelievers on their shoulders to the burial ground without the least fear of contracting the plague.

Returning to Qadian from an overview of the Punjab, let us see what was happening there. Everything went according to the prophecy, but for an incident or two which appeared odd and discordant. It so happened that a prominent follower of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, Maulawi Mohammad Ali by name, suffered from a very intense fever with all the symptoms resembling the plague. Even the glands under his armpits had swelled threateningly, causing severe pain and distress. The best available medical aid was provided, but without avail. His agony did not abate. He just could not reconcile himself to the fact that he, a companion of the Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, should meet such an end, contrary to the Divine promise. The agony of the plague in itself was unbearable, add to this the torture of conscience which might have tormented him, lest in the sight of God he was counted out of His true servants.

Thus he tossed in his bed and cried and wailed that someone should hasten to the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> to inform him of his miserable plight and urge him to visit him and bless him. This is what the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> did forthwith. It did not perturb him in the least that the patient was medically declared to be suffering from plague. He went to his bedside and put his hand on the forehead of Maulawi Sahib, speaking words of solace and comfort, reassuring him that as certainly as he was the true Messiah, Maulawi Sahib would not die of plague. It did not take Maulawi Sahib long to watch these prophetic words fulfilled. As the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> stood talking to him, his hand still resting on his forehead, his temperature subsided rapidly, leaving no sign of the fever or the plague behind. He sat up and touched himself here and there, bewildered at the rapidity with which the fever had vanished. So also were bewildered those who sat around awaiting his death but were destined instead to watch the miracle of his survival. He lived many long years after that before he died in Lahore in 1951, at the ripe old age of 77.

How could the plague differentiate between people who believed in the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and those who did not will always remain a mystery, but not for those who believe in the limitless attributes of the Omnipotent God.

A genuine question arises here as to what solid evidence can be presented for the satisfaction of neutral enquiry in support of whatever has been recorded in this chapter as facts. The problem is that the only direct evidence which can be produced is internal. The witnesses are all Ahmadis or those who converted to Ahmadiyyat after watching this miracle. There is no external evidence except that which is indirect and implied, yet it is powerful because it stems from hostile witnesses. The major problem is that no independent enquiry was constituted at that time by any neutral authority. There were only two parties,

Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis. Of all the facts and figures in relation to the behavioural pattern of the plague, the only record available is from the archives of whatever was published in contemporary newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, posters and books. The only scrutiny regarding the reliability of this material which can be made is circumstantial.

The most important factor worthy of note here is that a strong vibrant interest had been created in the nature, claims and activities of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in the period under review. An exceptionally hostile, strong non-Ahmadi press was giving sharp, pungent, negative coverage to whatever was happening in the newly emergent world of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. Whatever was said or done by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian and whatever happened to him was keenly observed and eagerly recorded by his opponents. A full and rather overexcited coverage was given to anything and everything which could be turned against him. This hostile coverage was not confined merely to the non-Ahmadi Muslim press, but the Christian and the Hindu press did not miss the least opportunity either to censure him and bring him to disrepute at the slightest excuse. Had the coverage of the Ahmadiyya press on the issue of the plague been ever so slightly wrong, it would be impossible for the bitterly critical non-Ahmadiyya press to ignore it.

All through the period of seven years, or thereabouts, that the plague remained active in the Punjab, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> the Promised Messiah would never let the public interest in the outcome of the plague in relation to the Ahmadis wane or die. Many of his well-known adversaries were locked with him in spiritual duels and every now and then claims and counterclaims were published regarding which of the two would die smitten down by the plague, as a sign of God's wrath. Many of his adversaries began to die one after the other and the remaining

waited in suspense and fear. But the plague touched him not. It touched neither him nor his wife, none of his sons or daughters were afflicted by the plague either. Not even a mouse was ever found having died of plague within the four walls of his house.

He published these facts repeatedly adding fuel to the fire, invoking the hatred of his enemies and causing them to pray against him more than ever before to bring the curse of the plague upon him. But all in vain. Nothing happened to him and to those who lived within the boundaries of his physical and spiritual abode of peace and security. Can anyone produce a single line ever published in any newspaper or magazine or book of his time which falsified his claims by listing the names of any victims of the plague who belonged to his family or dwelled in his house?

The same goes for the overall publications of the Ahmadiyya press in those days which became conspicuous by their silence on such mishaps. No death is recorded by them in the family of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> nor among those who lived around him. It is worthy of note that the Ahmadiyya press routinely covered all incidents even remotely related to the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>.

As far as the members of the Community outside Qadian were concerned, they were spared by the plague in an outstandingly large proportion. The death rate among the non-Ahmadis who died of the plague stood far higher by comparison to the very rare cases of Ahmadi deaths in the same villages.

Had this claim of the Ahmadiyya press been wrong, the antagonist press must have played it up and capitalised on it. That it did not happen should be reasonably treated as strong indirect external evidence, by default.

Another irrefutable proof in favour of the Ahmadiyya claim is the

fact of exceptionally accelerated growth of Ahmadiyyat during the years of the plague. The figures which were regularly published in the Ahmadiyya organ *Al-Hakam*, presented an enormous rise in the rate of conversion to Ahmadiyyat during this critical period. No denial of these figures was ever made by the non-Ahmadiyya press. They were figures of real people occupying real villages and towns. Why did not any section of the antagonist press give *Al-Hakam* the lie and publish counter evidence? Such are the times when silence speaks louder than words.

The fact that Ahmadiyyat spread far more rapidly during 1898-1906, the years of the plague in the Punjab, is indelible. According to the periodically published data in *Al-Hakam*, by the year 1902, the number of Ahmadis had risen from some tens of thousand to a hundred thousand. By the year 1904 the Ahmadi population had swelled to two hundred thousand. By 1906, the year when the plague finally beat a retreat, the number of Ahmadis had risen to four hundred thousand plus.

In view of the above, it should be borne in mind that had the prophecy of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> been proved wrong, Ahmadiyyat must have been wiped out from the face of the earth. After the plague had taken its full toll, whatever number of Ahmadis were spared must have been stricken by the 'exposure of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's falsehood'. But that was not so. As the number of hostile opponents of Ahmadiyyat was counted down by the plague, the number of Ahmadis grew and swelled. Ahmadiyyat marched forward in leaps and bounds.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

... In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect.<sup>7</sup>  
(Ch.30: V.22)

Concerning the verse of the Qur'an upon which this entire prophecy is based, let us draw the reader's attention to the fact that this verse in itself is a miracle. To capture its miraculous beauty, the reader must be assisted to fully admire its fascinating subtleties. In the following passage, we have attempted to achieve this purpose. The following points need to be emphasised:

At the time of the Qur'anic revelation, the reasons for the spread of the bubonic plague were not known. No knowledge existed about the manner in which rats might have played a part in infecting others. It was certainly not their bites which did so. It was also not known that there existed a tiny wingless insect – the flea, which was the carrier of this fatal disease. Nor was it known that it was the bite of this flea which injected the plague virus into the bloodstream of its victims. If the Qur'an had been authored by a human, he could never have predicted the spread of the plague by the bite of an animal classified as the *da'bbah*.

Now we know that the animal which spreads the plague is an insect. Now we also know that an overwhelmingly large proportion of insects is winged, and those which are wingless are infinitesimally fewer by comparison, such as the lice, the silverfish and the non reproductive termites. And finally, it is now that we have come to know that the flea, despite being an insect, is also a *da'bbah* by virtue of its being wingless. It is this exceptional quality of the flea which rightfully entitles it to be called *dabbah*, or the relevant Qur'anic verse could be censured as definitely wrong.

We humbly invite the attention of naturalists to this unique example and beg them to search their minds and hearts. Can they really dismiss this exception as a mere accident?

## THE AIDS VIRUS

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> also prophesied about another type of plague to appear later in some other parts of the world. In 1907, after the end of the plague in India, he received a revelation informing him of a type of plague to also appear in the future:

یورپ اور دوسرے عیسائی ملکوں میں ایک قسم کی طاعون پھیلے گی جو بہت ہی سخت ہوگی

‘A type of plague will spread in Europe and other Christian countries, which will be very severe.’<sup>8</sup>

What is meant by the term ‘a type of plague’ and why should it particularly strike Europe and other Christian countries? A clue to this is found in a hadith\* of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam in an observation he made almost thirteen hundred years before the time of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>. According to this tradition reported by Ibn-e-Majah’ *Kitab-ul-Fitan*, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> states:

لَمْ تَظْهَرِ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي قَوْمٍ قَطُّ حَتَّى يُعْلِنُوا بِهَا إِلَّا فِتْنًا فِيهِمْ  
الطَّاعُونَ وَالْأَوْجَاعُ الَّتِي لَمْ تَكُنْ مَضَتْ فِي أَسْلَافِهِمُ الَّذِينَ  
مَضَوْا

It never happens that permissiveness (*fahsha*) overwhelms a people to the extent that they display their acts of sex shamelessly and they are not uniquely punished by God. Among them, invariably, pestilence is made to spread and such other diseases, the like of which have never been witnessed by their forefathers.<sup>9</sup>

The word *Fahsha* means ‘permissiveness with the connotation of audacity and shamelessness, resulting in open display of sex. It should be noted that mere permissiveness does not warrant so severe a chastisement from Allah; but when it exceeds all bounds

and is acknowledged as a commonly accepted social behaviour, then that society is affected with some completely new sex-related disease as a sign of God's displeasure.

The accusing finger of this hadith seems to be pointing at the sinfulness of the present age rather than that of any other. Such shamelessness as has been described in the hadith is displayed these days on television, in newspapers and in magazines, day in and day out, to the extent that it has never been witnessed before in human history. Consequently, absolute justice requires that the punishment must match the crime. Sensual indulgence with flagrant shameless display is central to the chastisement prescribed. The prophecy of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> specifically picks out Europe and other Christian countries. The earlier prophecy of the Holy Founder<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam does not mention people of any country or religion, but confines itself to the nature of the crime, warranting a corresponding punishment.

Both prophecies read together make up the whole story. Among Christian countries the United States of America answers the description perfectly. But according to the latest census, sub-Saharan Africa leads the world in this particular type of permissiveness, with the Caribbean lagging only a few lengths behind.<sup>10</sup> In the census we have referred to, it is the Christian African countries which lead in the AIDS figures far beyond the rest of the African countries.

The only issue which remains to be resolved is the identity of 'that sort of plague' as has been mentioned in prophecies. It seems quite justified to claim that it is AIDS which is that punishment. Eminent physicians refer to it as a type of pestilence. Like the plague, it too causes inflammation of some glands with a high burning fever. It is as ruthless a killer as the bubonic plague has ever been. Yet it has its own unique features which the bubonic plague lacked. AIDS is



definitely sex-related while the bubonic plague is not. It is precisely designed to punish sexual transgressions.

The reader is reminded here that religious prophecies should not be treated over-literally. European and other Christian countries are mentioned only to help us to locate and identify the territories where this new type of plague will be most rampant. It does not mean that it will remain confined only to Europe and other Christian countries.

The prophecy of the Holy Founders<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam clearly indicates the possibility of a much wider application because it binds this disease not to countries, but to a specific moral crime. Wherever that causative crime will spread, the punitive disease will follow. But it will only become epidemic in such countries as are excessively permissive. It matters not what the names of such countries are, nor does it matter much whether their population is predominantly Christian, or Hindu, or Muslim. The countries and religions are not causative. What is causative is permissiveness, hence wherever the cause is at work, the effect will certainly follow.

The reason why European and other Christian countries are specifically mentioned while others are not, is perhaps because permissiveness as a progressive social behaviour at the national level is not witnessed elsewhere in the world. One will not hear of homosexuality being legalised except in Western countries. You will not hear of homosexuality in any religious institutions except in Christianity.

But it should be remembered however, that these countries though Christian in name, are farthest from Christian values. Nor can the Muslim countries, for that matter, be rightly described as custodians of Islam.

Hence, if permissiveness and the unrestrained display of shameless conduct are found among Hindu or Muslim countries there is no reason why the same consequent disaster should not befall them.

The AIDS epidemic has already reached all the continents of the world and there will be hardly anyone not familiar with the horrors of this disease. However, it would be naive to assume that the full dimensions of the horror have been properly realised. Nor is it right to assume that AIDS has already played its role and will soon be on its way out. Ill-advised indeed are those who entertain the hope that soon scientific research will find an effective antidote or prophylactic against the AIDS virus. We entertain no such optimism. On the contrary, we are afraid that the main thrust of the disease is yet to come. The observation that lends support to this view relates to a general similarity between the first advent of the Messiah in the form of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and his second advent in the person of Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian.

This is not the proper place to enter into an in-depth study of similitude between the old and the new Christ. However, as far as the sign of the plague is concerned, we must point out that the plague also appeared as a sign to punish the antagonists of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup>. At the rejection of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, the first epidemic of plague was recorded in AD 65.

By coincidence or design, this plague epidemic covered mainly the areas where the message of Christ<sup>(as)</sup> had reached and been denied. The plague struck again about one hundred years later in AD 167, but this time it devastated a much larger and wider part of the world, extending over two continents from Asia Minor to Rome and beyond to Gaul and Egypt. In all these countries the message of Christ<sup>(as)</sup> had already been delivered and was rejected by the majority of the people.

If, as suggested, the similarity between the two periods repeats itself, it would not be unlikely for the new type of plague to reach its climax by the end of this century extending into the beginning of the next one. This calculation is our estimation based on the fact that during the time of the Promised Messiah<sup>(sa)</sup> this is how the first plague struck, with exceptionally greater intensity during the period 1898-1904. God knows best how far He wills to repeat these similarities in every detail, yet we should be warned and prepared.

We pray that God may save mankind from this catastrophe of global dimensions by enabling people to reform. By mending his ways and true repentance, it is not at all unlikely for man to win pardon from Allah and escape the consequences of his sin. But what is unlikely, alas, is for man to repent and mend his ways. It is of no significance whether one is religious or irreligious, whether one believes in God or denies His existence. As far as human moral conduct is concerned it seems to be universal in its sinfulness. Those who claim to be religious are unfortunately no less immoral than the irreligious. The so-called believers in God are no longer clearly distinguishable from those who do not believe. It will be no exaggeration, therefore, to declare the entire age to be at loss. This is how the Holy Qur'an pronounces its judgement on the people of the latter days:

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَقَبِىْ خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

*We call that age to witness,*

*That man is most certainly at loss.*

*Save for those who believe and do good deeds and admonish  
righteousness by righteous means,*

*and admonish patience with patience.<sup>11</sup>*

*(Ch.103: Vs.2-4)*

The fortunate few who would exercise patience and act righteously are by comparison far too small to turn the tide. An odd blade of grass, or a twitter or two of a finch, cannot turn the desolation of autumn into the splendour of spring.

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## Reformation – Part IV

Presented below, in translation, is the fourth part of the address delivered on 26 December 1903 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Urdu text of the speech is taken from *Malfoozat*, Volume 6, and PP 249-255.

*Malfoozat* is the title of the ten volumes that contain the collection of discourses, speeches and addresses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi.

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.

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

One of the signs of *Nafse-Mutmainnah*, the spirit at rest, is that it finds comfort and peace in the company of those who are themselves at peace. On the other hand, the person whose soul is [at the lower stage] of *ammarah*, will display signs of *Nafse-Ammarah*, of the soul that incites to evil. Moreover, the person who keeps company of those who possess *Nafse-Mutmainna* will also begin to feel a sense of

contentment within him, a sense of peace and tranquility.

The first reward that is granted to the one who attains the stage of *Nafse-Mutmainna* is that he finds comfort in God, as is stated [in the Holy Qur'an]:



*And thou, O soul at peace!  
Return to thy Lord well  
pleased with Him  
and He well pleased with thee.  
(Ch.89: V:28-29)*

That is, God, addressing the soul that finds peace and comfort in God, states: 'Come to your Lord—He is pleased with you and you are pleased with Him'. There is a very deep point of spiritual wisdom in the statement: 'God is pleased with you and you are pleased with Him'. The fact is that until a person reaches this stage, and

THE TRUTH IS THAT REAL FAITH DEVELOPS ONLY WHEN A PERSON IS AT A STAGE THAT GOD'S WILL IS THEIR WILL AND THERE IS NO RESENTMENT OR TIGHTNESS IN THEIR HEARTS. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY ARE READY TO ACCEPT WITH COMPLETE SATISFACTION WHATEVER GOD MAY DECREE.

remains in the state of *Lawwama*, the 'self-accusing spirit', he is in a kind of 'battle' with God—that is to say, at times he is disobedient [to God] at behest of the self. However, upon attaining the state of *Mutmainnah*, this war comes to an end and there is a truce with God. At that point, when no resentment remains and the war ends, a person becomes contented and pleased with God and God becomes pleased with him.

This point should be well remembered that every person [is inclined to] fight with God. There are occasions when it so

happens that a person prays to God and has great expectations for his desired objective but his prayers go unanswered or something happens that is against his expectations, he then begins to 'fight' with God. He shows ill feeling towards God and displays signs of discontentment with God. However, the pious and the true servants of God are never at war with God because they are at the stage where they are at one with God's will.

The truth is that real faith develops only when a person is at a stage that God's will is their will and there is no resentment or tightness in their hearts. On the contrary, they are ready to accept with complete satisfaction whatever God may decree. In the verse:

ارْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ  
رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۝

*Return to thy Lord well  
pleased with Him and He well  
pleased with thee.*  
(Ch.89: V. 29)

The words point to exactly this. This is the highest state of pleasure and acceptance. At this [spiritual] station there is no fear of being tried or of faltering. At all other stages there remains the danger of [faltering in] trial but when one is totally satisfied with God's will and there does not remain any cause for resentment or complaint, then there awakens the true and real personal love [for God]. Until such a personal love for God is awakened within, a person's faith is in a state of great danger. However, when personal love for God develops within, a person attains safety from the attacks of Satan. One should try to attain this personal love [of God] through prayer—until this develops, one remains under the rule of *Nafse-Ammarah* and is imprisoned within its clutches. The people who are under the rule of *Nafse-Ammara* appear to be uttering the [Punjabi] saying:

ایہ جہان مٹھا اگلا کن دھٹا

*This world is sweet – who has  
seen the next?*

Such people are in a state of grave danger and so are those who are at the stage of *Nafse-Lawwama* as they are friends of God one minute and the next they are with Satan. They are not of one colour because their battle against the self has begun but it is one in which at times they are victorious and at other times the self wins. They are, nevertheless, praiseworthy because they perform good deeds and there is fear of God in their hearts. However, those possessing *Nafse-Mutmainnah*, the spirit at rest, are totally victorious as they are out of all danger and fear, attaining a place of safety and peace. Such people are in that house of peace beyond the reach of Satan. The one who is at the state of *Lawwama*, however, is at the threshold of the house of peace. Sometimes the enemy succeeds in launching an 'offensive' against him and at other times he suffers attack by lesser 'weapons'. Thus it is that to the one possessing *Nafse-Mutmainnah*, the spirit at rest, is said [by God]:

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ۖ  
وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ۚ

*So enter thou among My  
chosen servants,  
And enter thou My Garden.*  
(Ch.89: V.30-31)

This voice comes at a time when a human being takes his *Taqwa*, that is righteousness, to its ultimate limit. *Taqwa*, or righteousness, has two stages. The first stage is safeguarding of oneself against sins and occupying oneself with the performance of good deeds, and the second state is to attain the station of those who are beneficent in their goodness. God will not be pleased unless this second station is achieved and this station cannot be achieved without the Grace of God.

When a person abstains from bad deeds and his heart yearns to do good and he supplicates before God to this end, then it is that God assists him through His Grace and holds the hand



of such a person and takes him to the house of safety and peace—it is then that he hears the voice that says:

فَاَدْخُلْنِيْ عِبَادِيْ ۝  
وَاَدْخُلْنِيْ جَنَّتِيْ ۝

*So enter thou among My  
chosen servants, And enter  
thou My Garden.*  
(Ch.89: V.30-31)

That is to say, 'your battle has come to an end and you are now reconciled and at peace with me—come and enter the fold of my faithful servants, the fold of those who are granted a share of the spiritual inheritance and who exemplify the verse:

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ  
عَلَيْهِمْ ۝

*The path of those on whom  
Thou hast bestowed Thy  
blessings .*  
(Ch.1: V.7)

'come, enter my Paradise'. This verse (Ch. 89 V. 29) is not, as is

commonly understood, applicable only after death – it is a voice that is heard also in this life.

For those who undertake the journey in search of God, there are different stages. The ultimate stage, the pinnacle of their spiritual journey, the point where their efforts end is the stage of *Nafse-Mutmainnah*, that is, the spirit at rest. At this stage the Almighty God removes all the difficulties and bestows upon them [the blessing of] entry into the fold of *Saliheen*, the pious, as stated [in the Holy Qur'an]:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ  
عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي  
الصَّالِحِينَ ۝

*And those who believe and do  
good deeds – them We shall  
surely admit into the company  
of the righteous.*  
(Ch.29: V.10)

That is, those who believe and

perform good deeds, they shall most certainly enter the fold of the *Saliheen*, the truly pious and righteous.

With regard to this point some people raise the objection that those who do good deeds are *Saliheen* so what is meant by allowing them entry into the fold of the *Saliheen*? The reality is that herein lies a very deep and subtle point which is that God describes capacities as being of two kinds.

One kind of capacity is that of a person who, after a great deal of effort, carries the burden of goodness—he performs good deeds but he finds it to be arduous and a burden upon his soul and inwardly there continues a struggle between him and his soul. When he opposes the wishes of his inner self, it causes him considerable pain and suffering. However, when he acts piously and does good and believes in God, as is the desired objective of this verse, then all difficulties and suffering disappear. The difficulties that he was trying to

overcome in his striving for righteous deeds are lifted and there develops within him a natural capacity for doing good. [Goodness comes to form an integral part of his physical and mental capacities in such a way that good deeds emanate from him of their own accord]<sup>1</sup>. At this point the difficulty and pain he suffered previously in trying to do good deeds, cease to be difficulties or suffering. Instead, he begins to perform good deeds with a sense of deep enjoyment and pleasure. Between the two [kinds of *Taqwa* or righteousness] this is the difference – in the first kind, good deeds are performed but these are performed as an arduous task and in the other kind of *Taqwa*, good deeds are performed with a sense of intense pleasure and enjoyment to such an extent that goodness becomes a source of ‘nourishment’ without which he cannot live. The previous element of formality and a sense of suffering in the performance of good deeds, is now transformed into enjoyment, interest and pleasure. This is the

station of the *Saliheen*, the truly righteous and pious, about which it is stated:

لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي  
الضَّالِّينَ ۝

*them We shall surely admit into the company of the righteous.*

(Ch.29: V.10)

Upon attainment of this stage, there remains no rebellion or resentment within a believer. Such a believer becomes secure against any inclination of the self towards disobedience and, having conquered his emotions and attained contentment, he enters the house of peace and security. In the verse that follows, [God states]:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ  
أَمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ  
فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةً  
لِّلنَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ

*And of men there are some who say, 'We believe in Allah,' but*

*when they are made to suffer in the cause of Allah, they regard the persecution of men to be like the punishment of Allah.*

(Ch.29: V.11)

That is, there are many who make verbal promises of faith and make exaggerated statements about the extent and intent of their beliefs, but when they are put to trial, the reality of their faith is exposed. At the time of trial and hardship their faith in God does not remain the same and they begin to complain—it is this that is referred to as the ‘punishment of God’. Deprived indeed are those who do not attain the status of the *Saliheen*, the truly righteous and pious. It is so because this is that state when a human being sees for himself the fruits of the different stages of faith and he can witness and feel the effect of this upon his own self and, consequently, a new life is granted to him. However, this new life, first demands a death, and such reward and blessing is linked to trials and tribulations.

Remember this well that great

blessing always comes with great trial and tribulation and such trial is a necessary condition for a true believer, as is stated:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسَ  
أَنْ يَتَذَكَّرُوا أَنْ  
يَقُولُوا أَمَنَّا وَهُمْ  
لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ۝

*Do men think that they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe,' and that they will not be tested?*

(Ch.29: V.3)

That is, do people have the notion that their verbal declaration of faith by itself should be sufficient and, consequently, they will not be tried? On the contrary, for the test of his faith, the believer has to enter a most dangerous 'fire' [of tribulations] from which he is saved by his faith and comes out of it safe and sound—the 'fire' having been transformed into a 'bed of flowers'. After becoming a believer, one

should never consider oneself to be free from trials. Indeed, in the face of trials, there is need for ever greater steadfastness. In reality a true believer is he who at the time of tribulation finds his faith to be even sweeter and more enjoyable. His faith in God's powers and in God's ability to manifest wonderful signs becomes even stronger and he turns to God with ever greater attention than before and, through supplication, seeks victory [over his trials] and success in being accepted by God. It is a regrettable fact that a human being should desire a high station and a high status and yet should seek to escape the difficulties that are essential for their attainment.

The point that trial and tribulation is a condition of faith needs to be stressed and should be remembered well. Without it faith is not complete and no great bounty can be achieved without trial. In the world it is a common rule that for the acquisition of material things of luxury and enjoy-

ment, one has to exert a great effort and undergo all manner of difficulties exerting great effort. It is only after a long struggle that a person may find success and even then it is dependent upon the Grace of God [as to whether he actually succeeds in acquiring that which he seeks]. How then can it be possible that the greatest and unparalleled treasure of all, that is Allah the Almighty, can be attained without any trial?

In short, he who desires that he should attain God, should be prepared for every trial. It is the case that when God establishes a new system, as is being done at present time, the people who enter it at its beginning are made to suffer all manner of hardships. They have to listen to verbal abuse and threats from all sides. One group hurls one type of abuse and another group tries to hurt them with some other kind of abusive language combined with threats of expulsion from their own place of abode. If they are employees, they are

threatened with loss of their employment and, if it is feasible for them, they do not hesitate to take their lives.

At such times, those who show weakness in the face of trial should remember that the belief they claim to hold has no worth whatsoever in the eyes of God. This is so because at the time of trial such a person does not fear God, but fears other human beings and he does not respect the greatness and omnipotence of God Almighty. He does not, in fact, have any belief at all because he gives precedence to threats over his faith and is ready to abandon his belief. Consequently, he is deprived from entry into the fold of the *Saliheen*, the truly righteous. This is the summary and meaning of the verse:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ  
أَمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ  
فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةً  
لِّلنَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ

*And of men there are some who say, 'We believe in Allah,' but when they are made to suffer in the cause of Allah, they regard the persecution of men to be like the punishment of Allah.*  
(Ch.29:V.11)

Our Community should remember that unless they abandon weakness [in the face of trials] and unless they are prepared for all adversity in the path of God with steadfastness and courage, the Community cannot enter the fold of *Saliheen*. You have, at this time, forged a link with the movement established by God, it is necessary therefore that you should be made to suffer and face tribulation. You will have to listen to abuse—you will face threats of excommunication from the circle of your kinship. In short, you will be made to suffer all that the opponents can possibly muster. However, if you do not make such suffering and its perpetrators into your gods but have truly believed in God Almighty, then you should be prepared to bear all suffering

and hardship. You should try to face successfully every challenge posed by trial and tribulation and to achieve this you should seek the help of God Almighty.

If you were to do all this, I can state with complete certainty that you shall then, having entered the fold of *Saliheen*, attain the most great and glorious treasure that is God Almighty and, having surmounted all the difficulties, you shall enter *Darul-Aman*, the house of Peace.

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To be continued.

1. In the newspaper, Al Badr, this point was noted down as indicated by the words in brackets.

# Promised Messiah's<sup>(as)</sup> Ideological Contribution to World Peace and Harmony

By Khalid Saifullah Khan

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India (1835-1908), the Promised Messiah and Imam Al-Mahdi<sup>(as)</sup> presented Islam in its pure and pristine form, as brought by Hadhrat Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>. Under Divine inspiration he removed the shrouds of misconceptions and misinterpretations, that had been wrapped around the teachings of Islam, by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Ahmadiyyat is, therefore, nothing but true Islam, which means peace. As the name Islam, given to the religion by God Himself implies it must bring peace to all spheres of human thought and activity and therefore any interpretation that contradicts this basic concept must be wrong. I present a glimpse of Ahmadiyyat's ideological contribution to world peace and harmony, by quoting from the books of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and his

successors. In particular, I have extensively quoted from *Islam's Response To Contemporary Issues*—a scholarly work of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup>, which explains how by following the Ahmadiyya interpretation of Islam, the issues threatening the peace and harmony of the world can be resolved.

## **Let no religion claim monopoly of Truth.**

One area of contention between different religions is that some religions claim monopoly of Truth and Revelation, to the exclusion of all others—not believing that God revealed His guidance to any people outside their own. Such a notion creates nothing but bigotry and extremism. Commenting on verses from the Holy Qur'an (Ch.40:v.79 and Ch.35: Vs.24-25), Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> says:

'In view of above, it is manifestly clear that Islam does not monopolise truth, to the elimination of all other religions, but categorically declares that in all ages and in all parts of the world, God has been looking after the spiritual and religious needs of mankind, by raising Messengers who delivered the divine message to the people for whom they were raised and commissioned.'

*(Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues, p.15)*

Ahmadiyyat's message to the world is: Revere the founders of all religions, who claimed to be from God and received acceptance from their peoples, as imposters can never prosper according to Qur'an and Bible. To promote understanding between different religions Ahmadis hold such conferences in which the spiritual and moral teachings of founders of various religions are presented by their followers.

### **Let no religion claim monopoly over salvation.**

Another cause of religious fanaticism is the belief that no

body who is outside the fold of their particular religion will ever receive salvation, forgiveness and mercy of God, and would remain in Hell for ever. On the contrary Qur'an says:

*Surely, those who believed in Muhammad and the Jews and Sabians, and the Christians – whoso believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds, on them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve.*

*(Ch.5:V.70)*

Commenting on this verse, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> says:

'Sabi is a term used by the Arabs to apply to the followers of all non-Arabic and non-Semetic religions which have their own revealed Books. As such, followers of all religions based on divine revelation have been granted the assurance that provided they do not genuinely fail to recognise the light of a new religion and stick honestly and truly to the values of their ancestral religion, they



have nothing to fear from God and will not be denied salvation.' (ibid p 25).

Again, he says: "There is a great misunderstanding today born out of recent political rivalries between Jews and Muslims that according to Islam, all Jews are hell-bound. This is totally false in light of what I have recited before you from Holy Qur'an, and in the light of the following verse: 'Of the people of Moses there is a party who guides with truth and does justice therewith.' (Al-A'raf Ch.7:V.160) (ibid p.27).

How much tolerance towards the followers of other religions would be generated if all religious communities adopt such broad-minded views about the followers of other beliefs! Moreover, according to Islam Hell is like a hospital by passing through which a person's spiritual health is restored and a day would come when God's mercy would quench the Fire of Hell. Therefore, while Heaven is eternal, Hell is not so.

### **Sympathy for the whole human being regardless of colour or religious belief.**

As the Messiah of Latter Days, the mission of the holy Founder of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was to unite and serve the mankind. *A Message Of Peace* was his last book, which he completed on 25th of May 1908—just a day before his demise. In this book he wrote:

'God commences the Holy Qur'an with the following verse of Surah *Al-Fatihah*: *Al-hamdo lillah-i-Rabbil-A'lameen*, i.e. All perfect and pure praise is due to Allah alone, Lord of all the worlds. The word '*A'lameen*' means 'worlds'. It comprises all different peoples, all different ages and all the different countries. Again, the commencement of Holy Qur'an with this verse was designed to counter the views of such people as attempted to monopolise God's unlimited providence for their own nation, to the exclusion of all others, as though having created them God discarded them of being

no consequence, or else perhaps they were shelved to oblivion by Him, or (God forbid) they were not created by Him.'

(*A Message of Peace* by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, p.9) He further said:

'My countrymen! A religion, which does not inculcate universal compassion is no religion at all. Similarly a human being without the faculty of compassion is no human at all. Our God has never discriminated between one people and another. This is illustrated by the fact that all the potentials, which were granted to Aryans, were also granted to races inhabiting Arabia, Persia, Syria, China, Japan, Europe and America. The Earth, created by God provides a common floor for all people alike and His sun and moon and many stars are a source of radiance to all alike; they also have many other benefits. Likewise, all peoples benefit from the elements created by Him such as water, fire, earth and other similar products such

as grain, fruit and healing agents etc. These attributes of God teach us the lesson that we too should behave magnanimously and kindly towards our fellow human beings and should not be petty of heart and illiberal.' (ibid p7-8)

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> announced:

'I proclaim to all Muslims, Christians, and Hindus and Aryas, that I have no enemy in the world. I love mankind with the love that a compassionate mother has for her children, even more so. I am only the enemy of false doctrines which kill truth. Human sympathy is my duty. My principle is to discard falsehood. I reject paganism, wrongdoing, misconduct, injustice and immorality.'

(Arbaeen pt.1, p 344)

Advising his followers in very strong terms he said:

'The principle to which we adhere is that we have

kindness of heart for the whole of mankind. If anyone sees the house of a Hindu neighbour on fire and does not come forward to extinguish the fire, most truly I declare that he does not belong to me. If anyone of my followers, having seen someone attempting to murder a Christian does not endeavour to save him, I most truly declare that he does not belong to me.' (Sirajum-Munir p 28)

In pursuance of the advice of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is actively engaged in many activities of service to humanity, regardless of colour, creed or race, particularly in the area of health and education. Our charity, 'Humanity First' has served many victims of war and internal strife in various countries. Treating fellow human being with motherly compassion is the solution to most socio-economic problems of the world. True compassion for fellow human beings requires belief in One God Who created us all and is the true

Master of us all. Ahmadi Muslims believe in a Living God Who listens to our prayers and even now speaks to him whom He loves — as He always did.

### **Freedom of religion.**

There can be no peace in the world without according equal freedom of religion to every body. Many of the current interpretations of Jihad are contrary to the concept of freedom of religion. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> reformed them. Denouncing any compulsion in the matter of religion he declared:

'The second principle on which I have been established is the clarification of doctrine of Jihad, which has been misinterpreted by some ignorant Muslims. I have been made to understand by God Almighty that those practices that are currently regarded as Jihad are entirely opposed to the teachings of Holy Qur'an.  
(*Tohfa Qaisariyya*)

He further said:

'None of the true Muslims

who ever lived maintained that force should be employed in the spread of Islam. On the other hand, Islam has always flourished on the strength of its inherent qualities of excellence. Those who having the distinction of being called Muslims, yet believe that Islam should be spread with force, do not seem to have any awareness of the inherent beauties of Islam.'

(*Tiryaqul-Qulub* footnote, p 167)

Explaining his point he said:

'If compulsion in any way had been employed in winning converts and the Companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> had been the fruit of compulsion, it would have been impossible for them to have demonstrated at the time of trials, such steadfastness and sincerity as only true believers can display.'

(Masih Hindustan Mein pp.11-12)

As there can be no compulsion

in matter of faith there can be no punishment of simple apostasy. .

### **Loyalty of Muslim residents of non-Muslim states.**

Doubt is often cast on the loyalty of Muslim citizens living in non-Muslim countries. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> issued the following guidance on this issue:

'...The truth is that according to Holy Qur'an, it is forbidden to go to war against a government which does not interfere in any way with Islam or its practice, nor uses force against us in order to promote its own religion.'  
(*Kishti Nuh*, p.68)

To his opponents who charged him with preaching loyalty to the non-Muslim government of British India, he said:

'I do not flatter the (British) Government as some ignorants imagine, because I consider it just and a duty on account of my faith to express gratitude to the Government.'

(*Tableegh Risalat*, Vol 10, p.123)

Ahmadi Muslims regard it a religious duty to render obedience to their respective countries of residence, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, and remain loyal to them, and they enjoy the freedom to express, propagate and practise their faith peacefully.

**Islam rejects every form of terrorism.**

Rejecting every form of terrorism for any cause whatsoever, Hadhrat Khalifatul-Masih IV declared:

‘As far as Islam is concerned, it categorically rejects and condemns every form of terrorism. It does not provide any cover or justification for any act of violence, be it committed by an individual, a group or a government... I most strongly condemn all acts and forms of terrorism, because it is my deeply rooted belief that not only Islam but also no true religion, whatever its name, can sanction violence and bloodshed of innocent men, women and children in the name of God.’

*(Murder in the Name of Allah by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad)*

Surely, our world would be a much safer place to live, if all religious communities whether Muslims or non-Muslims, honestly and sincerely condemn violence and terrorism in its every form and manifestation, for any cause whatsoever, however noble that cause might be.

**There is no worldly punishment for blasphemy.**

In some countries, religious minorities are persecuted by the majority on the pretext of blasphemy. In Pakistan, for instance, the offence of blasphemy carries mandatory death penalty. Stating the Quranic teaching on this Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> says:

‘Having studied the Holy Qur’an extensively and repeatedly with deep concentration, I have failed to find a single verse which declares blasphemy to be a crime punishable by man.

Although the Holy Qur'an very strongly discourages indecent talk, or the hurting of the sensitivity of others, with or without rhyme or reason, Islam does not advocate the punishment of blasphemy in this world, nor vests such authority in anyone.'

*(Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, p.39).*

### **Inter-religious cooperation in service to humanity and eradication of social evils..**

Commenting on verses of Holy Qur'an (Ch.5:V.3; Ch.60:Vs.8-9; Ch.3:V.65), Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> says:

'Muslims are also taught to invite the People of the Book and to cooperate with them in spreading the message of Unity of God—a belief shared with them. The import of the verse below (3:65) is to emphasise the point of commonality and chalk a mutual programme for the benefit of mankind, rather than to highlight the

areas of differences resulting in discard.'  
(ibid p 45)

Reminding the families and the social and religious leaders their responsibility to help the states in arresting the growing moral decadence of society internationally, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> says:

'...But what I have been trying to emphasise is merely the fact that according to Islam, the State machinery alone is inadequate to suppress, discourage, or minimise crime.

Once criminal tendencies are permitted to grow and flourish in homes and societies in general, the best a government can do is to wipe out the symptoms from time to time. The root cause of evil is far too deep for the long arm of the law to reach. It is the primary job of families, religious leaders and leaders of public opinion in every society to eradicate evil.'(ibid p99)

Here has been stated a golden principle for promoting inter-faith cooperation in serving humanity and calling people to the observance of universal moral values and discipline, which is the basic responsibility of every religion. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community always extends its cooperation whole-heartedly, to any religious group engaged in social and humanitarian service, and reformation of society. Ahmadiyya community is constantly engaged in efforts aimed to achieve spiritual and moral upbringing of its members, by the main organisation of the Jama'at, as well as by its auxiliary organisations comprising men, women and children, called Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya, Ansarullah and Lajna Imaillah.. All of them are constantly engaged in imparting religious knowledge to their respective members, in order to make them morally disciplined and law-abiding citizens. All these efforts contribute to the peace and harmony of society, as all the crimes, before assuming tangible shape, take birth in hearts and minds.

### **Ahmadiyya concept of an Islamic government.**

Another threat to the world peace are movements growing in many Muslim countries, aiming to enforce Shariah, and 'Hudood' (punishment of crimes such as murder, theft, adultery, apostasy) as they understand it. They follow the politicised extremist Islam of medieval ages, rather than the more understanding and benign Islam of the Holy Prophet's<sup>(sa)</sup> time. They interpret Jihad in a way that suits their political ambitions. They wish to enforce Shariah on the non-Muslim subjects of Muslim countries too, spread Islam by force and punish those who recant Islam after once having accepted it. They advocate death penalty for apostasy, blasphemy, adultery and whatever they regard as 'Fitnah' (disorder) etc. The Mullas (clergy) claim that they being the doctors of Islam, should be given the right to interpret Shariah and judge the validity of democratic decisions such as country's Constitution and law. This is, no doubt, an explosive situation, as among the Muslim clergy itself, there

are fundamental differences on the understanding of the Shariah. Shariah, for instance, applied in Saudi Arabia is different from the one of Iran.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> has discussed the situation in detail in his above-referred book. He has done a very interesting analysis of problems threatening political peace of the world and has stated the salient features of an Islamic state, which cannot be reproduced here due to constraints of space and time. Mention of just a few points below may be of interest:

Though the Qur'an speaks of a democratic system, it does not prescribe any particular form of government, to the exclusion of others. Any form of government is fine, as long as it delivers absolute justice to all the citizens without discrimination, discharges the responsibilities of maintaining internal and external security, provides food, clothing, shelter and basic needs to its citizens and grants freedom of expression and religion, without imposing any particular religious law on those

who do not believe in it. Neither a secular government should divorce itself from universally recognised moral values, nor people belonging to a particular religion have the right to enforce its religious laws upon people of other faiths.

In an Islamic government the absolute sovereignty belongs to God and so the law should be based on Qur'an, the conduct of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> (Sunnah), and Traditions (Hadith) and no law would be valid if it is against them. In matters of government, its decisions should be made through mutual consultation (Shura). Authority to decide matters is a trust, and it must be reposed where it truly belongs. Those entrusted with authority must discharge the trust with absolute justice and with all honesty, integrity and spirit of selflessness. Both the choosers and the chosen should do justice and no loyalty to a political party is allowed to interfere in the choice. The responsibilities of religion and state do indeed overlap but only in a spirit of cooperation with each other. Neither should have the intent



to monopolise. There being no compulsion in matter of faith, religion does not need to be the predominant legislative authority in the political affairs of a state. As Islam lays down 'Absolute Justice' as the basic principle of running a government, any government which is run on this principle, is in effect, an Islamic government. If Islamic Shariah is imposed on non-Muslims in Muslim countries, then by the same token of absolute justice, the same right must be conceded to non-Muslim states to impose their law on their Muslim citizens, for example, that of Manusmerti in India and Talmud in Israel. In Madinah, when the Holy Prophet himself was the head of the state, Islamic law was not imposed on Jews, Christians and pagans living over there. According to the famous 'Meesa'q-e-Madinah' (the Covenant of Madina), the non-Muslims were given a choice; they could get their matters decided either according to Qur'an, or their own religious Scripture or the prevailing custom. No Muslim state should go against the practice of the Holy

Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. And this is the path to peace. Enforcing majority's Sharia over the minorities against their will can only give rise to blood baths.

### **Ahmadiyyat's new world order.**

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> laid the foundation of a new world order by introducing a scheme, called 'Wasiyyat' (Will). According to it, the testator promises, on his own free will, to lead a life of righteousness dedicated to the service of God and mankind and paying one-tenth of his income and property. About the utilisation of funds so generated, he said:

'Funds so collected shall be entrusted to an Anjuman consisting of honest people of learning, who by mutual consultation will spend these funds on the propagation of Islam, on spreading knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and other religious scriptures, and on preachers appointed to administer to the spiritual needs of the Movement and mankind in general....In these funds

there shall also be a share for the orphans, the needy, and the new converts who may not have adequate means of livelihood, while they are members of the Movement.' (*The Will*, p 42-43)

Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup>, Khalifa-tul-Masih II, delivered a speech, at the Annual Gathering in Qadian, on December 28, 1942, on the subject of 'The New World Order of Islam'. Explaining the importance of 'Al-Wasiyyat' in establishing a new world order of peace and free of want and distress, he said:

'To sum up, the system of 'Al-Wasiyyat' comprises within itself the whole social and economic system of Islam. They are mistaken who think that the fund established by 'Al-Wasiyyat' can be used only for the verbal propagation of Islam. This is not correct. 'Al-Wasiyyat' contemplates both verbal propagation and practical establishment. It no doubt includes missionary effort, but it equally includes

the complete establishment of the system under which the need of every human being should be looked after in a dignified manner. When the system attains maturity, it will provide not only for missionary work, but will also help to abolish want and distress by making adequate provision for the needs of all individuals. An orphan will no longer beg, nor will a widow have to ask for charity, nor a needy person to suffer anxiety. The system will be a mother to children, a father to youth and will afford security to women. Under this system, not by means of compulsion or coercion, but out of real affection and goodwill, a brother will be eager to help his brother. Nor will such sacrifice be in vain. Every giver will be recompensed many times over by God. The rich will not suffer loss nor will the poor suffer privation. Nation will not fight nation, nor class will contend against class.

I assure you that the New Order will not be inau-

gured by Mr. Churchill or Mr. Roosevelt. Declarations like the Atlantic Charter will accomplish nothing. They are full of defects and shortcomings. New Orders are always established in the world by Prophets raised for the purpose by God. They have no bitterness against the rich, and no bias for the poor. They are neither of the East nor of the West. They are the Messengers of God and proclaim the teachings, which furnish the foundations of true peace. Today also peace will be established only through the teachings of the Promised Messiah, (on whom be peace), the foundations of which were laid in Al-Wasiyyat in 1905.' ('The New World Order' – 'Nizaam-e-Nau', Published English translation by Tabshir Rabwah, P 114-116)

Fortunate, indeed are those who listen carefully and follow the ideology and teachings of the Holy Qur'an as expounded by the Promised Messiah of this age. Blessed, indeed are those who practise the true inter-

pretation of Islam's teachings and ideology, because it is the only way to achieve world peace and harmony. All the programs of our community aim to achieve this object, with the sole purpose of earning pleasure of the Creator by serving His creation. In one of his poems the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> says:

Come towards me with complete sincerity, as herein lies all peace and security. There are ferocious beasts all around you and I am alone the fort that can provide security and peace.

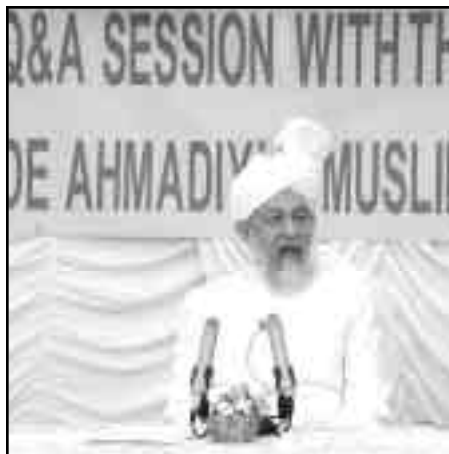
#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Khalid Saifullah Khan is a Retired Chief Engineer WAPDA Pakistan and was a former Administrative Service Officer for the government of Australia. He has also served in a number of senior posts within the Ahmadiyya Community and has for the last 30 years, contributed a number of articles to various Ahmadiyya Community organisations including the *Review of Religions*. Khalid Saifullah Khan has also studied the translation of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic at Qadian.

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## Belief in the Supreme Being

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup>, the Fourth Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, offered to people of all nationalities, faiths and beliefs the opportunity of raising questions and issues that were of interest to them. Presented below is a compilation of answers to questions that were raised in sessions held in London on 8 August 1997, 29 January 1995, 23 April 1997 respectively.



### QUESTIONER

**I have recently read a book in which it was mentioned that Allah has ninety-nine names. What is the exact number of the names of Allah?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** Allah has so many names that we cannot know them all but given the five senses that we possess, He manifests Himself in a way that we are able to understand. Allah is not limited—our understanding is limited. Hence, if the names are ninety-nine or one hundred and one it is irrelevant. The fact is that God has manifested Himself to man who has limited

faculties. It should be the faculties of man that determine how God can make Himself manifest to a person. God cannot manifest Himself to mankind beyond their capacity to understand. For instance, if you begin to show your face to a blind person and say to him, 'look, how beautiful I am – look at my nose, look at my face and my eyes'—what can the blind person do? Nothing! You have all those attributes of your figure, the shape, the colour, the birth marks, the strength or weakness of your body—there are hundreds of possibilities that are related just to sight but you cannot display yourself to a person who does not possess

sight. Similarly, Allah does not display Himself meaninglessly—he does not manifest those of His attributes that are not perceivable by beings that possess only the limited faculties of five senses. However, after death, the senses will be sharpened and we may be gifted with some new senses and Allah may then appear to possess new attributes—new manifestations will in fact be showered upon us in a manner that we cannot even dream of now.

## QUESTIONER

**In the same book it is stated that certain names of Allah can be recited repeatedly to ward off certain evils and remove problems. Should we believe in this?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** Repetition of any name cannot, by itself, ward off evil but the repetition of certain names can give you the strength to concentrate on the meaning of those names. Each attribute of Allah is apparently single but when you concentrate on it and repeat it, new meanings may

appear before your vision, just as when you move the kaleidoscope and by giving it a different twist new figures appear before your eyes. Similarly, repetition of the name or attributes of Allah is in fact designed to create that effect on your minds as, for instance, the attribute of Rahman (the Beneficent) being repeated in the sense that Rahman covers the whole of the universe. The word ‘Rahman’ is apparently a single attribute but it covers the whole history of mankind, the whole history of creation, the whole history of God’s relationship with man and so on. You cannot exhaust even just this attribute alone if you were to go on repeating it throughout your life. Hence the purpose of repetition of Allah’s names is to gain a deeper understanding of their meanings. Although the vastness of the meanings they already contain goes far beyond our imagination, we should still reflect upon the meanings of those attributes and enlarge them before our vision by repeating them and, with the Grace of Allah, the more we know of Rahman, the more

contact with Rahman we can attain. In short, when we repeat an attribute of Allah when we face a specific problem or difficulty, this has to be the true purpose and this is the only useful purpose. Otherwise, the repetition of God's attributes like a parrot does not serve any cause.

## QUESTIONER

**Being brought up as a Christian, one is taught to put one's trust in Jesus. How can one transfer this trust to Islam?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:**

The fact is that if you trust a Prophet of God, you trust all the Prophets of God. Here I refer to the preaching efforts of the Jehovah's Witness who always emphasise the claim of Jesus that Jesus Christ is *the* way, he is the Alpha, he is the Omega as if to the exclusion of all others. That is not how we understand the nature of religions. In fact, in every religion you will find similar claims with reference to the time and with reference to the people who are being addressed by that religion. That,

in fact, is the only way. However, it does not mean the only way universally. What it means is that at a specific time and place, unless the people follow the appointed Prophet, they cannot be redeemed and the same is the claim found in every religion. Here [in the session today] we have a religious scholar who has researched in depth the teachings of Buddhism and Hinduism as well as other religions and he would bear witness to this fundamental claim to be found in every religion. However, the Holy Qura'n resolves this by stating that all [Prophets] who were sent for the deliverance of mankind from sin, came from the same God and, as such, they must all be accepted without exception because they call to the same path. The path mentioned in relation to Jesus seems to be a separate path but the Holy Qura'n resolves the problem for us by emphasising the fact that the path remains the same, it is the callers to that path who differ. However, in the society around a Prophet that he was addressing, he was the only caller to that path. There were, of

course, others – in India, in China, in Africa. Even among the Aborigines in Australia and also among the American Indians, as they are now called. In short, this is what we understand from the word, ‘the path’, ‘the only way’ and other similar expressions.

## QUESTIONER

**Is religion not just an excuse created by man to explain his own existence?**

**Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:** If we remove this so-called deceptive reason, will man cease to exist? Certainly not! Whether religion is right or wrong, man still exists. This so-called reason has no relationship with the realities of life. Religion was created very soon after man was created because prior to the creation of man we do not find the evidence of any religion in the subhuman forms of life. The creation of human beings goes hand in hand with religion and it is not the work of philosophers or sociologists that the concept of God exists. It is a universal concept that existed indepen-

dently of any knowledge of what people believed in other parts of the world. It was this universal presence of belief in the whole world that convinced many an atheist, at least to a degree, that this is a very strong and potent reason why we must respect the possibility of the existence of God. Those who have not been fully convinced, still believe that if any one argument can reasonably convince us to ponder over the question seriously, this is the argument: Why should the idea of God be found all over the world in all ages? Turn to the continent of Australia where the Aborigines are known to have the longest, continuous civilisation since times immemorial. The knowledge or evidence we have of their beginnings leads some scholars to date the origin of their civilisation to some forty-thousand years – others place it at some sixty-thousand years, and there are some who push it even further beyond. The evidence from their civilisation of the belief in God is so baffling, so amazing that the so-called sociologists who thought that God is the creation of human

imagination, as the question suggests, have no answer to the evidence presented by Australia. The Australian Aborigines are divided into six-hundred independent tribes - some say more, others say a little less, but generally speaking the overall consensus is that they are divided into six-hundred independent tribes. Each of the independent tribes has its own language that is not known to its neighbours. Historically, they did not relate to each other except for occasional encounters at the borders of their territories where they only met briefly with one another. The question here arises as to why the idea of one Supreme Creator should exist in all these independent tribes? Some Christian scholars who were strong believers in Christianity and were also sociologists suggested that this was so because of the arrival of Christianity - when it reached Australia, so did the idea of God. However, other Christian scholars have exposed this idea to be totally wrong and without foundation. They state that there is positive evidence that long before Christianity reached the

shores of Australia and long before western civilisation reached there, the belief in a Supreme Creator existed.

There is such a host of evidence available on this issue that no sane person can reject or deny it. This should be enough reason for the gentleman who asked this question to revise his opinion about the existence of God and the role that religion has played in it. Hence, there are only two options available to us—either there is a God who created human beings as well as religion or there is no God and it is human being who have created their so-called creator. The whole issue of creation can be re-examined from this perspective, beginning with the origins of life, ending our journey with the consummation of life into human beings. Each step that was advanced in the direction of the evolvement of human beings was an organised step. Life is not eternal and this has been proved beyond a shadow of doubt.

The possibility of life began with the 'big bang'. It began with the



'big bang' that occurred around twenty-billion years ago and ever since then life has emerged out of nothing. This issue has been discussed in detail by me in one of my books which is about to be published<sup>1</sup>, where I have proved with scientific evidence that even the most firm believers in blind evolution have to admit repeatedly that for this they cannot find any answer. Upon contemplation of the wonders of evolution created or packed in a small space of one billion years, even those who are atheists begin to calculate through mathematics of large numbers the time it should have required for evolution to take place and to reach its consummation, by blind chance. The figure they have worked out is not only mind-boggling, it is also impossible for an ordinary person to conceive. The figure they have reached is ten raised to the power of 249 which means that one needs to place 249 zeros to the right of the number one. Whatever figure that is, that is what would be needed, not for the completion of the whole evolution, but just for the creation of the first brick of life,

the proteins that are needed for building DNA's and iron. The rest is still to be calculated. In short, if you do not believe in philosophies, you can turn to the scientists. Find out how man could have been created, how could the very first organism of life have been created without the existence of a preceding conscious Being, an all-knowledgeable Being Who was eternal!

Issues like these and many others that compel a fair-minded scientist to believe in God have been discussed in my book<sup>1</sup> that I have just referred to and when it is published, I hope it will be made available to you.

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1. *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth* by Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Published by Islam International Publications Ltd (1998).

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# The Indian Plague

By Dr. Latif A. Qureshi B.Sc., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.P.

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## Introduction:

The organism causing plague was discovered by Yersin and Kitasato simultaneously in 1894. A preventive vaccine was prepared by Hoffkine in 1896. Plague was prevalent in different part of the world in those days but a catastrophic plague epidemic struck British India at the turn of the twentieth century. It particularly caused havoc in the province of Punjab. From 1898 to 1918, 10.25 million people were officially recorded to have died of plague in India. The province of the Punjab bore the brunt of the epidemic with 28.7% of total deaths in India (published by the Indian Council of Medical Research). Physical illnesses are caused by physical agents and are governed by physical laws. This is the modern concept about any ailments that may afflict the human race. These are the times of evidence-based medicine, which in turn is based on scientifically controlled trials.

All that we call knowledge must be gauged through this measure to be acceptable.

However at the turn of the last century, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>, the Promised Messiah published another view based entirely on the teachings of Qur'an, the divine scripture of the Muslim faith. He said that:

‘Our God is Almighty, Powerful and Most Merciful and can save human beings from all afflictions by means other than the physical means.’

Physical states of man affect his moral and spiritual states. Good moral and spiritual qualities have lasting benefits for human race.

## Plague as a sign of God:

In many of his publications he claimed that God communicates with him and reveals to him events that are to follow. His first publication was *Braheen-e-*

*Ahmadiyya* and its first volume was published in 1880. Many further publications followed until he passed away in 1908. In many of his publications he claimed that Plague appeared as a sign of God to prove that he was a truthful prophet. Most of his books are in Urdu and I quote the English translation of some of the passages from his book *Kishti Nuh* or 'Ark of Noah'.

'There is no doubt that in the material world at this time the best method the government could find to help the people is inoculation. This cannot be denied that this method has been found to be effective and it is therefore the duty of the subjects to follow their plans and relieve the government of the worry about their welfare.

But we very respectfully submit to our gracious government that if we did not have a Divine prohibition we would be the first of their subjects to volunteer for inoculation. And the divine prohibition is that God desired to show a Divine Sign of mercy

for the people of this age.

So He addressed me and said "Thou and those who dwell in thy home and who completely follow thee with obedience, truth, righte-ousness and devotion will all be saved from plague. And it will be a sign of God to distinguish between nations in these final days. But he who does not submit completely, do not worry about him because he is not of you."

This is the Divine command because of which there is no need of inoculation for us and those living within the wall of our house."

He writes further in the same book:

'Some fools will be taken aback to hear this and some will laugh at me and call me mad. And some will be amazed that if indeed there is such a God who can shower His blessings without any physical means. So the answer is that indeed without doubt there is such an Almighty God.'

'Here keep this in mind that it is not a sin to have treatment for diseases like the plague. In fact a saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> is known that God has created treatment for every ailment. But I consider it to be a great sin to confound this great sign of God by having inoculations. A sign which He wants to clearly manifest for us on earth. I will not disgrace His true sign and true promise by having the inoculations. If I do this I will be answerable for this sin that I did not believe in the promise of God which He has done with me. And if I get the inoculation I should be grateful to the physician who invented the vaccine rather than be grateful to God who promised to save me and those within these walls.'

'I truthfully proclaim that if the events do not happen as prophesied and widely publicised twenty or twenty two years earlier, then I am not sent by God. This will be a sign that I am appointed by Allah that those dedicated people living within the

boundaries of my house will be saved from death from this disease. Moreover my community will comparatively be immune to attacks of plague. The immunity that they will exhibit will not be apparent in any other group of people. Qadian will not be afflicted by totally destructive type of calamitous epidemic of plague. However, there will be few and occasional cases.'

'Our government will no doubt value this prophecy when they will realise the amazing occurrence that this community remained safe and sound compared to those who are inoculated.'

### **Plague in the Punjab:**

During the early part of the twentieth century the province of Punjab in British India was severely stricken by the Plague epidemic. The severity of the epidemic can be visualised by the following quotation from British Medical Journal published in 1905.

'We have received three lengthy reports drawn up by Major E.

Wilkinson IMS in which elaborate details are given regarding the prevalence of plague from October 1st 1901 to September 30th 1903 and measures, including inoculations adopted for its suppression. The invasion of the province has been extensive and severe. By the end of September 1903 the number of deaths reported amounted to 377,576 and there is reason to believe that the large total does not represent the full measure of the calamity. Few districts have escaped visitation, and the mortality in some cases was very serious. The disease reaches a climax in March and April, declines during the hot season and regains force during the hot weather. Human intercourse and infected clothes are held to be the main agencies of extension, and rats are thought to cause infection of adjacent houses or villages. It is considered doubtful whether grain and articles of food or merchandise are carriers of infection. Evacuation has been found to be the most efficient preventive and disinfection and desiccation have been resorted to as

secondary aids. Compulsory measures have been abandoned in consequence of the attitude of the people and the great magnitude of the crisis.

Inoculation was practised extensively during the years 1900 and 1901 and the results were so favourable that it was resolved early in 1902 to resort to this measure on a large scale, especially as the people did not object to it or were actually inclined or eager to adopt it. Accordingly arrangements were made to conduct operations throughout the province, and a large staff of medical officers and men was engaged for the purpose. Difficulties arose which somewhat delayed the commencement of work, and the supply of vaccine by the Plague Research Laboratory at Bombay was inadequate and unsatisfactory. Still a good start was made, and matters looked promising until on the 30th October, 19 persons were inoculated at Mulkowal, in the Gurat district, with the contents of one bottle of the fluid, and all of them contracted tetanus and died. This disaster led to a

discontinuance of systematic work; nevertheless a large number of inoculations were performed during the season, and figures are given to show that both the incidence of plague, and the case mortality were considerably lower among the inoculated than among the uninoculated.' BMJ 1905: I, 51.

### **The followers of Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>:**

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> lived in Qadian in the districts of Gurdaspur in the Province of Punjab in India and although his followers were present throughout the length and breadth of the country and abroad, majority of them lived in the same Province of Punjab. He, his wife and children and all his followers living in Qadian and elsewhere in the country did not have any inoculation against plague. In the later days of the Plague epidemic hundreds of thousands joined, as his followers. Yet despite all this there were no fatalities from plague among his family and very few among his followers. This fact has been recorded clearly in the history and is a

point to ponder for all those who care to think about it.

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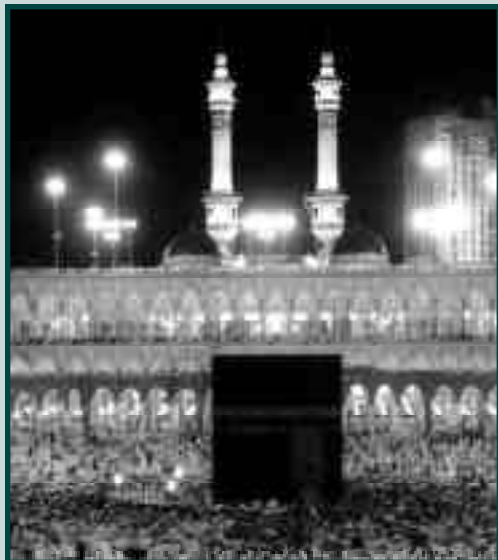
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