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Basit Ahmad
Bockarie Tommy Kallon
Fareed Ahmad
Fazal Ahmad
Fauzia Bajwa
Mansoor Saqi
Mahmood Hanif
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Sarah Waseem
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Special contributors:

Amatul-Hadi Ahmad
Farina Qureshi
Proof-readers:
Shaukia Mir
Abdul Ghany Jahangeer
Khan

Design and layout:

Tanveer Khokhar
Publisher:
Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah
Distribution:
Muhammad Hanif

All correspondence should be forwarded directly to the editor at:

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

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Editorial

Belief in the existence of God defines one of the great divides in the world today. It is an issue that divides the secular West and North from the religious East and South, that in Europe divides the increasingly atheist native Europeans from the largely devout recent immigrant communities and that in the United States is at the heart of many current socio-political controversies such as gay marriage rights and the teaching of evolution in schools. It is an enormously important question that has profound ramifications for our view of life, how we conduct ourselves and how we deal with others.

On examining the various arguments for and against the existence of God, it becomes clear that the issue of Creation lies at the heart of the matter. If you take the general principle of cause and effect to its ultimate conclusion we are left with the question: is there an Ultimate

Cause, a Cause that has no prior cause and that we recognise as the actions of the Creator of the Universe, or do we only have an original self-existing effect? Is life in the Universe as we know it a result of Divine design or the outcome of a long line of random, chance occurrences? The article 'Is there a God?' by Dr. Tariq Anwar Bajwa attempts to address some of these issues by drawing from the Holy Qur'an, the teachings of the Promised Messiah^(as) and the writings of the fourth Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru).

Mr. Jonathan Miller recently presented a documentary series on the 'History of Disbelief' on BBC television, beginning with 'Shadows of Doubt' (on Greek mythology: 30 Oct); followed by 'Noughts and Crosses' (how disbelief re-emerged in 15-16th century Christianity: 1 Nov) and 'The Final Hour' (on Thomas

Paine and Darwin's theory of evolution: 2 Nov). It is obvious that disillusionment at the rigid interpretations of natural law by Christianity has caused many to abandon their traditional religion. *'The Review of Religions'* shall be examining some of the issues raised by this series in its future editions.

Those who deny the existence of God declare that belief in God is at best unnecessary and at worst detrimental to living as a 'moral' being. On the other hand, it is clear from the behaviour of many of those who declare that God exists, that belief in an abstract concept of God alone is not sufficient to live a 'moral' life. The perception and understanding of God varies widely among 'theists' (those who believe in God) from those who regard God as a sort of absentee landlord Who, having created the Universe and set things in motion, makes little interference in day-to-day human affairs, to those who see God as being fiercely attached to their particular group of humanity

with little care for the rest of humankind. Muslims believe the Holy Qur'an to be the best path to a true understanding of God and the key to communion with Him. By delving deep into the treasures of the Holy Qur'an we become closer to God and also gain a richer understanding of ourselves and the Universe around us. In this issue of *'The Review of Religions'*, Dr Abdul Majid and Dr Shahab Ahmad (authors of 'The Holy Qur'an answers four Questions on Education') illuminate Qur'anic teachings and wisdom on the topic of education and learning.

Mahmood Hanif – UK

Introduction from *Jesus in India*

Below is the 'Introduction' from the book *Jesus in India* by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The theme of the book deals with the escape of Jesus^(as) from death on the cross, and his journey to India in search of the lost tribes of Israel. Christian as well as Muslim scriptures and old medical and historical books including ancient Buddhist records, provide evidence about this journey.

In The Name Of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful We Praise Him And Invoke His Blessings Upon His Noble Prophet

Lord! Judge between us and our people with truth; Thou art the best of judges

Introduction

I have written this book, so that, by adducing proofs from established facts, from conclusive historical evidence of proved value and from ancient documents of non-Muslims, I might remove the serious misconceptions which are current among Muslims and among most Christian sects regarding the earlier and the later life of Jesus^(as) – misconceptions, the dangerous implications of which have not only injured and destroyed the conception of

Divine Unity, but the unwholesome and poisonous influence of which has for long been noticed in the morals of the Muslims of this country. Spiritual maladies, i.e., want of good morals, evil thoughts, callousness, want of sympathy, are spreading among most Islamic sects, being the result of beliefs in unfounded stories and anecdotes of this kind. Human sympathy, pity and love of justice, humility and humble-mindedness - all good qualities – are disappearing day by day, as if they will soon bid a last farewell to this community. This callousness and this immorality make many a Muslim appear no better than the beasts of the jungle. A Jain or a Buddhist is afraid of and avoids killing even a mosquito or a flea, but, alas! there are many

among us Muslims who, while they kill an innocent man or commit wanton murder, are not afraid of the powerful God, who rates human life higher than that of all the animals. What is this callousness and cruelty and want of sympathy due to? It is due to this – that from their very childhood, stories and anecdotes and wrong views of the doctrine of Jihad are dinned into their ears and inculcated into their hearts, the result being that gradually they become morally dead and cease to feel the heinousness of their hateful actions; nay, rather, the man who murders another man unawares and thus brings ruin to the murdered man's family thinks that he has done a meritorious deed; or rather, that he has made the most of an opportunity to win favour with his community. As no lectures or sermons are delivered in our country to stop such evils - and if there are any such lectures they have an element of hypocrisy in them – the common people think approvingly of such misdeeds. Accordingly, taking pity upon my own people, I have compiled



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

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

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

several books in Urdu, Persian and Arabic, in which I have stated that the popular view of Jihad prevalent among Muslims, that is, the expectation of a bloody Imam, full of spite and

hostility for other people, is a texture of false beliefs inculcated by shortsighted Ulema; otherwise, Islam does not allow the use of the sword for the Faith; except in the case of defensive wars, or in the case of wars waged to punish a tyrant or to uphold freedom. The need of a defensive war arises when the aggression of an adversary threatens one's own life. These are the three kinds of Jihad permitted by the Shariah, and, apart from these three kinds, there is no other kind of war which is permitted by Islam for the propagation of the Faith. I have, in short, spent a large sum of money on such books, and have published them in this country and in Arabia and Syria and Khurasan, etc. But, by the grace of God, I have now discovered powerful arguments which are meant to eradicate these unfounded beliefs from the hearts of the people. I have clear proofs, circumstantial evidence of a conclusive character, and historical evidence the light of whose truth holds out the promise that soon after their publication there will be brought about

against such beliefs a wonderful change in the hearts of the Muslims. And I hope – I am sure – that after these truths have been comprehended, there will flow out of the hearts of the righteous sons of Islam the sweet and beautiful springs of lowliness, humility and mercy, and that there will come about a spiritual change which will have a wholesome and a blessed influence on the country. I am also sure that Christian investigators and all other people who hanker after the truth and thirst for it, will benefit from my books. And the fact just now stated by me, that the real object of this book is to correct the wrong beliefs which have become part and parcel of the creeds of Muslims and Christians, requires a little explanation which I set out below.

Let it be known that most Muslims and Christians believe that Jesus^(as) went alive to the heavens; both these people have believed for a long time that Jesus^(as) is still alive in the heavens, and will sometime in

the latter days come down to the earth. The difference in their views, i.e. the view of the followers of Islam and that of the Christians, is only this, that the Christians believe that Jesus^(as) died on the Cross, was resurrected, and went to the heavens in his earthly body, seated himself on the right hand of his Father, and will come to the earth in the latter days for judgment; they also say that the Creator and the Master of the world is this Jesus the Messiah and no one else; he it is who, in the latter days of the world, will descend to the earth with a glorious descent to award punishment and reward; then, all who will not believe in him or his mother as God, will be hauled up and thrown into hell, where weeping and wailing will be their lot.

But the aforesaid sects of Muslims say that Jesus^(as) was not crucified, nor did he die on the Cross; on the other hand, when the Jews arrested him in order to crucify him, an angel of God took him away to the heavens in

his earthly body, and he is still alive in the heavens - which, they say, is the second heaven where is also the prophet Yahya, i.e. John. Muslims, moreover, also say that Jesus^(as) is an eminent prophet of God, but not God, nor the son of God, and, they believe that he will in the latter days descend to the earth, near the Minaret of Damascus or near some other place, supported on the shoulders of two angels, and that he and Imam Muhammad, the Mahdi, who will be already in the world, and who will be a Fatimite, will kill all the non-Muslims, not leaving anyone alive except those who will forthwith and without any delay become Muslims. In short, the real object of the descent of Jesus^(as) to the earth, as stated by Muslim sects known as Ahl-i-Sunnat or Ahl-i-Hadith called Wahabis by the common people – is that, like the Mahadev of the Hindus, he should destroy the whole world; that he should first threaten the people to become Muslims and then, if they persist in disbelief, massacre them all with the sword; they, moreover,

say that he is alive in the heavens in his earthly body, so that, when Muslim powers become weak, he will come down and kill the non-Muslims or coerce them on pain of death to become Muslims. Regarding the Christians especially, the divines of the aforesaid sects, state that when Jesus^(as) comes down from the heavens he will break all the Crosses in the world, do many a cruel deed with the sword, and inundate the world with blood. And, just as I have stated, these people, i.e. the Ahl-i-Hadith etc. from among the Muslims, are enthusiastic about their belief that a short time before the coming down of the Messiah there will appear an Imam from the Bani Fatima whose name will be Muhammad, the Mahdi. He it is who will be Khalifa and King of the time, and as he will belong to the Koraish, his real object will be to kill all non-Muslims except those who readily recite the Kalima. Jesus^(as) will come down in order to help him in his work; and although Jesus^(as) himself will be a Mahdi – nay, a greater Mahdi – yet, because it is essential that the

Khalifa of the time should be a Koraish, Jesus^(as) will not be the Khalifa of the time; the Khalifa of the time will be that same Muhammad, the Mahdi. Muslims say that these two together will fill the earth with the blood of man, and they will shed more blood than has ever been shed before in the history of the world. No sooner will they appear than they will start this bloody campaign; they will neither preach nor plead, nor show any sign. And they also say that although Jesus^(as) will be like an adviser or a lieutenant of Imam Muhammad, the Mahdi, and although the reins of power will be in the hands of the Mahdi only, Jesus^(as) will instigate Hadhrat Imam Muhammad, the Mahdi, to massacre the whole world and will advise him to adopt extreme measures, i.e. he will make amends for the humane teaching which he had given to the world before, namely, ‘not to resist evil,’ and, being struck on one cheek, ‘to turn the other cheek also.’

This is what Muslims and

Christians believe regarding Jesus^(as), and while it is a great error to call him, as the Christians do – a humble man – God, the beliefs of some of the followers of Islam, among whom is the sect called Ahl-i-Hadith also known as Wahabis, regarding a bloody Mahdi and a bloody Messiah, are affecting their morals very badly, so much so, that on account of their bad influence their dealings with other people are not based on honesty and goodwill, nor can they be truly and completely loyal to a non-Muslim Government. All reasonable men will realise that such a belief, namely, that non-Muslims should be subjected to coercion, that they should either forthwith become Muslims or be put to death, is open to the most serious objections. Every conscientious person will readily admit that before a man adequately realises the truth of a Faith, and before he has comprehended its beauties and its wholesome teachings, it is extremely undesirable to coerce him, on pain of death, to adopt that Faith. Far from contributing

to the growth of that Faith, this would furnish the opponents with an opportunity to find fault with it. The ultimate result of a principle like this is that hearts become devoid of the quality of human sympathy and that mercy and justice, which are great human moral qualities, take leave of men, and instead, spitefulness and enmity tend to grow; there remain behind only the animal passions, wiping out all high moral qualities. But it would be noticed that such a teaching could not have proceeded from God, Who sends His punishment only after He has completed His argument.

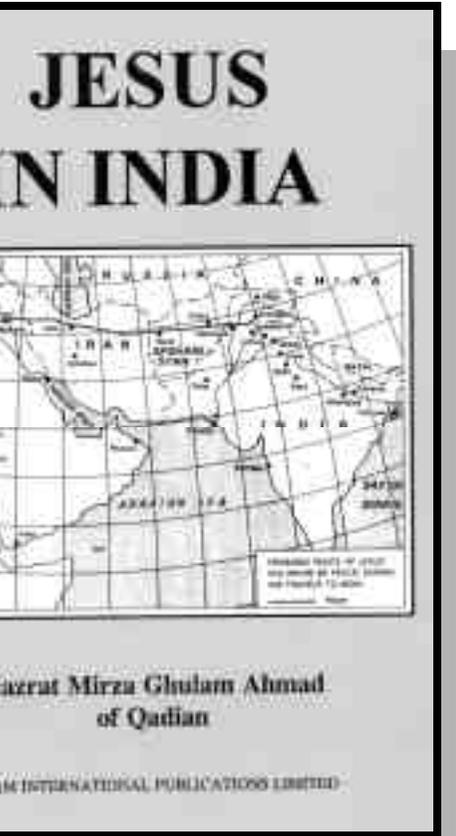
Let this therefore be pondered over: that if there is a man who does not accept the true Faith because he is yet ignorant and unaware of its truth, of its teachings and its beauties, would it be reasonable to kill such a man forthwith? Nay, this man deserves pity; he deserves to be instructed gently and politely in the truth, beauty and the spiritual benefit of that faith; not that his denial should be met by the

sword or the gun. So, the doctrine of Jihad proposed by these sects of Islam, as well as the belief that the time is near when there will arise a bloody Mahdi whose name would be Imam Muhammad, that the Messiah will come down from the heavens for his help, and that both together will kill all non-Muslim people if they deny Islam, is utterly opposed to our moral sense. Is not this the belief which puts out of action all good human qualities and morals, and encourages the qualities of life in the jungle? Those who hold such beliefs live a life of hypocrisy in relation to others, so much so that they cannot give true loyalty to state authorities of another Faith; they dishonestly profess to give allegiance to them, which is wrong. That is why some of the Ahl-i-Hadith sects mentioned by me just now are living a double life under the British Government in British India. In secret, they hold out hopes to the common people of the coming of bloody days of a bloody Mahdi and a bloody Messiah, and instruct them accordingly, but when they

go to the authorities they flatter them and assure them that they do not approve of such ideas. If, however, they are really opposed to such ideas, why do they not propagate this in writing, and why should they await the coming of that bloody Mahdi and the Messiah standing as it were at the doorsteps, ready to join them in their campaign?

Such beliefs, in short, have very much demoralised these Maulvis: they are incapable of teaching people decency and peace. On the other hand, killing others without rhyme or reason is a great religious duty with them. I would be glad if any sect of the Ahl-i-Hadith is opposed to these beliefs, but I cannot help observing with regret that among the sects of the Ahl-i-Hadith¹ there are those who in secret believe in a bloody Mahdi and in the popular notions of Jihad. They are opposed to correct notions, and they think it an act of great merit to kill when they have the opportunity to kill all the people professing other faiths, whereas the beliefs in

killing others in the name of Islam, or believing in prophecies like the prophecy of a Bloody Messiah and wishing to advance the cause of Islam by bloodshed or by threats, are absolutely against the Holy Qur'an and the reliable Hadith. Our Holy Prophet(sa) suffered great persecution at the hands of the Kafirs at Makkah and thereafter. The thirteen years which he spent at Makkah were years of great affliction and suffering of many kinds – a thought of them brings tears to one's eyes. But he did not raise the sword against his enemies, nor did he reply to their abuse, until many of his Companions and dear friends were mercilessly murdered; and until he himself was subjected to sufferings of various kinds, such as being poisoned many a time; and until many an unsuccessful plan to murder him



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had been laid. When, however, God's vengeance came, it so happened that the elders of Makkah and the chiefs of the tribes unanimously decided that this man should in any case be put to death. At that time, God,

who is the Supporter of His loved ones and of the truthful and righteous, informed him that there was now nothing left in that town except evil, that the townspeople were bent upon murdering him and that he should therefore quit it at once. Then it was that, in accordance with the divine command, he migrated to Madinah, but even then his enemies did not leave him alone; they pursued him there, and tried to destroy Islam in all possible ways. When their excesses went to an extreme, and when they had rendered themselves deserving of punishment by the murder of many an innocent person, permission to fight with them in self-defence, to fight with a view to warding off their attack, was given. And those people and their helpers had rendered themselves deserving of such treatment because of their having killed many an innocent person whom they had murdered not in any fight or battle but simply out of wanton mischief and whom they had robbed of their property. But, in spite of all

this, when Makkah was taken, our Holy Prophet^(sa) pardoned them all. It is, therefore, utterly wrong and unjust to suppose that the Holy Prophet^(sa) or his Companions ever fought for spreading the Faith, or that they ever coerced anyone to join the fold of Islam.

It is worth noting also that, as at that time all the people were prejudiced against Islam, and as the opposing people were scheming to destroy Islam, which they thought was a new religion and the followers of which were only a small community, and as everyone was anxious to see the Muslims destroyed early or disrupted so as not to leave any chance of their further growth and development, the Muslims at that time were obstructed in the smallest matters, and anyone from any tribe who accepted Islam and became a Muslim was either killed at once by his tribe or lived in perpetual danger. At a time like this, God Almighty, taking pity on Muslim converts, had imposed on the bigoted

rulers a penalty, namely, that they should become subservient to Islam, and thus open the door of freedom for Islam. This was meant to remove the obstructions in the way of those who wished to accept the Faith; it was God's compassion for the world, and it harmed no one. It is evident, however, that non-Muslim rulers of today do not interfere with Islam; they do not ban the essential Islamic practices. They do not kill new Muslims, they do not put them into prison or torture them; why then should Islam raise its sword against them? It is obvious that Islam has never advocated compulsion: if the Holy Qur'an, the books of Hadith and historical records are carefully examined and, as far as possible, studied or listened to thoughtfully, it will be realised with certainty that the charge that Islam wielded the sword to propagate the Faith with force is an utterly unfounded and shameful charge against Islam. Such a charge against Islam is made by people who have not read the Qur'an, the Hadith and the

reliable histories of Islam in a spirit of detachment, but have made free use of falsehood and have brought wrong charges against it. I know, however, that the time is near when those who are hungry and thirsty for Truth will be enlightened as to what reality there is in these charges. Can we ever describe that Faith as a faith of compulsion, when the Holy Book, the Qur'an, clearly directs that there is no compulsion in religion, that it is not permissible to use compulsion in religion, that it is not permissible to use compulsion or force in getting anyone to join Islam? Can we accuse that great Prophet of using force against others, who, day and night for thirteen years, exhorted all his Companions in Makkah not to return evil for the evil of the enemy, but to forbear and forgive? When, however, the mischief of the enemy went to extremes and when everybody started exerting himself for wiping out Islam, the Jealous God thought it fit that the people who had wielded the sword should be annihilated by the

sword. Except for this the Holy Qur'an has not approved of compulsion. If compulsion had been approved of by Islam, the Companions of our Holy Prophet^(sa), in moments of trial, would not have behaved like people of sincere and genuine faith. Yet, the loyalty and faithfulness of the Companions of our Master, the Holy Prophet^(sa), is a matter which I hardly need to mention. It is no secret that among them are examples of loyalty and steadfastness the parallel of which it is difficult to find in the annals of other nations; this band of the faithful did not waver in their loyalty and steadfastness even under the shadow of the sword. On the other hand, in the company of their Great and Holy Prophet^(sa), they gave proof of that steadfastness which no man is ever able to give unless his heart and his bosom are lit up with the light of true faith. There is, in short, no compulsion in Islam.

Wars in Islam fall under three categories: (1) defensive wars,

i.e. war by way of self-protection; (2) punitive wars, i.e. blood for blood; (3) war to secure freedom, i.e. with a view to break the power of those who kill those who accept Islam. Therefore, when there is no direction in Islam that anyone should be made to join it by compulsion or by the threat to kill, it is absolutely absurd to await the appearance of any bloody Mahdi or a bloody Messiah. It can never be that there should appear in this world, against the Qur'anic teachings, a man who would use the sword to make people Muslims. This is not at all so very difficult to realise or above one's understanding. Only foolish people have been led to this belief by their selfishness. For most of our Maulvis labour under the misconception that the wars waged by the Mahdi will bring a large amount of wealth to them, so much so, that they will be unable to hold it, and, as most of the Maulvis today are very poor, they await day and night the appearance of a Mahdi, who, they think, will provide for their selfish desires.

Therefore, these people turn against him who does not believe in the appearance of such a Mahdi; such a one is at once declared a Kafir, and outside the pale of Islam. I too, therefore, am a Kafir in the eyes of these people; and on these very grounds. For I do not believe in the appearance of a bloody Mahdi and a bloody Messiah. Nay, I hate such absurd ideas and regard them with contempt. And I have been declared a Kafir, not only because of my denial of the appearance of this supposed Mahdi and this supposed Messiah in whom they believe, but also because I have publicly announced, having been informed of it by God through revelation, that the real and true Promised Messiah who is also the real Mahdi, tidings of whose appearance are to be found in the Bible and the Qur'an and whose coming is promised also in the Hadith, is myself; who is, however, not provided with any sword or gun. I have been commanded by God to invite people with humility and gentleness to God, Who is the

true God, Eternal and Unchangeable, Who has perfect Holiness, perfect Knowledge, perfect Mercy, and perfect Justice.

I am the light of this dark age; he who follows me will be saved from falling into the pit prepared by the Devil for those who walk in darkness. I have been sent by God to lead the people of the world to the true God through peace and humility, and to reassert the reign of morals in Islam. God has provided me with heavenly signs, for the satisfaction of seekers after truth. He has done wonderful things in my support; He has disclosed to me secrets of the unseen and of the future which, according to the holy books, is the sign of a true claimant to divine office, and He has vouchsafed to me holy and pure Knowledge. Therefore, the souls which hate truth and are pleased with darkness, have turned against me. But I have decided to be sympathetic towards mankind – as far as I can. So, in this age the greatest sympathy for the

Christians is that their attention should be called to the true God, Who is free from such defects as being born and having to suffer death and undergo suffering, the God who made the earliest heavenly bodies spherical in shape and, in His law of nature, set down this point of spiritual guidance that, like a sphere, there is in Him Unity and absence of direction. That is why the things which occupy space have not been made triangular, i.e., the things which God created first such as the earth, the heaven, the sun and the moon, and all the stars, and elements - all are spherical, the spherical nature of which points towards Unity. Therefore there can be no greater sympathy with the Christians than that they should be guided towards the God Whose creations declare Him to be free from the idea of trinity.

The greatest sympathy towards Muslims is that they should be reformed morally and that an effort should be made to dispel the false hopes which they entertain in connection with the

appearance of a bloody Mahdi and Messiah, which are entirely against the Islamic teachings. I have just now stated that the ideas of some of the Ulema of the day that there will appear a bloody Mahdi who will spread Islam at the point of the sword, are all opposed to the Qur'anic teachings and are the result of greed and selfishness. For a right-minded and truth-loving Muslim to forsake such beliefs or ideas, it should be enough to study carefully the Qur'an, and to pause, consider and see that the Holy Word of God is quite against holding out a threat of murder to force anyone into the fold of Islam. This one argument, in short, is sufficient to refute these false ideas. Nevertheless, out of a feeling of sympathy, I have decided to refute the aforesaid ideas by positive and clear proofs from history, etc. Hence, I shall try to prove in this book that Jesus^(as) did not die on the Cross: he did not go up to heaven, nor should it be supposed that he will ever again come down from heaven to earth; that, rather, he died at the age of

120 years at Srinagar, in Kashmir, and that his tomb is to be found in the Khan Yar Street of that town.

I hope readers of this book will read it diligently. I expect them not to throw away out of prejudice the truth contained in it. I should like to remind them that this is not a cursory investigation; nay, the proofs contained in this book have been made available after a deep and searching inquiry. I pray to God that He may help me in this undertaking and lead me through His special revelation and inspiration to the perfect Light of truth - for all true Knowledge and clear Realisation descend from Him, and only with His permission guide human hearts to Truth. Amen! Amen!

MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD
Qadian, 25 April 1899

Footnote to Introduction

1. Some of the Ahl-i-Hadith imperpetually and unjustly state in their books that the appearance of the Mahdi is imminent: that he will

put into prison the British rulers of India and that the Christian king will be arrested and will be brought before him. Such books are still to be found in the houses of these Ahl-i-Hadith, one such being *Iqtarab-us-Saat* by a well known Ahl-i-Hadith, on page 64 of which such an account is to be found.

In this journal, for the ease of non-Muslim readers, '(sa)' or 'sa' after the words, 'Holy Prophet', or the name 'Muhammad', are used. They stand for '*Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*' meaning 'Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him'. Likewise, the letters '(as)' or 'as' after the name of all other prophets is an abbreviation meaning 'Peace be upon him' derived from '*Alaihis salatu wassalam*' for the respect a Muslim reader utters.

The abbreviation 'ra' or (ra) stands for '*Radhiallahu Ta'ala anhu* and is used for Companions of a Prophet, meaning Allah be pleased with him or her (when followed by the relevant Arabic pronoun). Finally, 'ru' or (ru) for '*Rahmahullahu Ta'ala* means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him.

Inaugural Address by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V on the Opening of Darul Barakat Mosque in Birmingham, UK on Friday 1st October, 2004

Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen

God Almighty has enabled the Ahmadiyya community today to build this new Mosque. Mosques are the Houses of Allah and are built for the worship of God. They are places for good and pure persons of God to come together in one place.

In Islam, the concept of the worship of One God is that when they pray for themselves, the world and the Hereafter bowing down before their God, they feel and should feel that their prayers would only be accepted when they are also respecting and honouring the rights of God's



people, and when they are trying to create an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation in their society.

This is because it is one of the basic commands of God that His worshippers should discharge the rights of human beings and also the rights of kith and kin and the neighbours. You should also honour the rights of the society in which you live and the rights and duties that you owe to the country in which you live.

These rights should be discharged with love, kindness and affection and by obeying the laws of the land. You should include them and remember them in your prayers. Pray for their well-being also. Only then can you be called the good and pure people of God and God Almighty will listen to and accept your prayers. If you do not pray like this, then there is no need to build mosques nor is their benefit to be gained from coming to mosques to pray.

God turns the prayers round, that is to say God does the opposite of what is sought from Him, of those who violate or usurp the rights of God's creation, or those whose neighbours are fed up of them, or the environment cannot bear to have them amongst it, or of those who break the laws and create a bad atmosphere in the society. God says to them how dare you come to My House when you have caused such misery for My people. This is all a show off. If your prayers were out of fear of Me, then you would have honoured the rights of others.

So, this is the teaching of Islam for its believers and its worshippers. When a Muslim enters a mosque with this thought and this feeling, then when he prays in the mosque and leaves the mosque, he would have the fear of God out of deep love for the Creator in his mind and would honour and respect human rights and obligations with kindness and out of love and affection. There can be no question that voices and slogans would be raised from such Houses devoted to the worship of God. When the hearts of those coming to a mosque are joined in this purpose, their hearts can never think ill of others or hate those who believe like them or those belonging to any other faith.

In this connection, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya community, the Promised Messiah, peace be upon him, states:

‘There are only two components of a religion: one is complete love of God and the other is to love mankind

so much so that one should think that their difficulty is one's own and prays for them.'

Then he says:

'Islam has divided its teachings in two parts: one is the obligation to God and the other is the obligation to God's creation. The right due to God is to consider Him worthy of obedience and the rights of the creation are to be kind to God's creation. It is an evil way to harm others merely because of opposition to their faith.'

So the teaching that our Founder gave to our community was that the worship of God and kindness to the creation cannot be separated from each other.

Islam is such a tolerant religion that it permits non-Muslims to enter its Mosques and pray in it in their own way. This is why God Almighty has called those, irrespective of their faith, who prevent others from entering

mosques as cruel and unjust persons; as God Almighty says:

And who is more unjust than he who prohibits the name of Allah being glorified in Allah's temples and seeks to ruin them? It was not proper for such men to enter therein except in fear. For them is disgrace in this world; and theirs shall be a great punishment in the next.

(Ch.2:V.115)

This is such a beautiful teaching that we can only find it in the Holy Qur'an, the Sacred Book of Islam. It says that the one who prohibits others from worshipping is a most unjust person. Every one has his own way of worship and prayers and can say one's prayers to one's Creator in whichever manner one likes.

Hence, when a delegation of Christians went to meet the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa), in Madinah, when their time for prayers approached, they were permitted by the Holy Prophet^(sa)

to observe their prayer service in the Prophet's Mosque. This open-heartedness and tolerance that Islam requires of its believers and whose practical example forever was set for us by the Holy Prophet(sa) is a sufficient response to those who allege that Islam is a strict religion.

Islam permits that when required others can pray in its mosques so that their feelings should not be hurt. It does this in the interest of creating an atmosphere of peace and harmony. So perish the thought that a Muslim should even think of destroying a house of worship of some other believers.

Everyone is of course free to believe in whatever one likes and to express it in a peaceable manner is also a part of that freedom. Freedom of conscience and faith is also one of the fundamental rights of man, to



give expression to its superiority and to worship in its way. The most unjust thing is to deprive one the right to respond to one's heart and believe in that which one has adopted as one's faith. It is also most unjust on the part of those who think they have a monopoly on faith and gather outside a place devoted to the worship of Allah and shout slogans of hatred.

So, as the Promised Messiah^(as) required that we should discharge the rights of human beings, and as the right of belief is a basic and major human right that the Ahmadiyya Muslim community claims that it confers on others, each Ahmadi should, therefore, never obliterate its history from his mind. The Ahmadiyya community has to be in the forefront always in honouring human rights and creating an atmosphere of peace. It is for this peaceful purpose that mosques are built. This aim is perhaps unique to the Ahmadiyya community. It means that in the thousands of mosques all over the world, you will not hear any slogans being shouted from any of its mosques urging anyone to go and violate the peace or prohibit the freedom of faith and conscience or usurp any rights of other human beings.

If there is any slogan it would be the service of humanity and the Greatness of God and His worship. If there is any slogan, it is of 'Love for all, hatred for none.' Every Ahmadi is fully

aware that the slogan of love for all can only be said when there is truly no rancour or hatred for anyone in one's heart.

So each Ahmadi should try that if there is any envy or hatred in any part of the heart it begins to change into affection, liking and then love. Love and hatred are inter-related to each other. It means that not only do I love everyone but that I love everyone for the sake of winning God's pleasure. As a result, hatred cannot dwell in such a person. So every Ahmadi should set an example of this wherever he lives.

May Allah enable that after the building of this mosque, love should be fostered and the rights of others honoured more than before. Amin

I also wish to thank all the guests who took part in this inauguration reception and expressed their feelings frankly and who responded to our love with love.



These thanks are not just lip service but I express this gratitude in compliance with the command of the Holy Prophet^(sa) that he who is not thankful to others is not grateful to God. So because the work undertaken by each Ahmadi is for the sake of God Almighty and indeed should be, so I thank those who came today out of affection for us from the core of my heart.

I pray that Allah makes this Darul Barakat Mosque a true Sign of peace and love. The world is apparently rapidly

advancing towards destruction because of the envy and hatred that its people have in their hearts. This is because they have forgotten their God. It is a terrible end that you cannot even imagine. My prayer is that man should turn away from these envies and hatred and should truly repent and recognising God Almighty should become His worshippers. May they be the ones to spread the sweet smell of love. May Allah cause this to be so.

Amin.

The Holy Qur'an Four Questions on Education



By Abdul Majid, M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D. and Shahab Ahmad M.A., Ph.D.

When we talk about educating, whether our thinking is based upon a spiritual or a materialistic point of view, our focal point is always the individual who has an innate urge to know himself as well as his environment and who lives in a society and who also has a way or philosophy of life. That is why the main determinants of the theory and practice of education are Psychology, Philosophy and Sociology.

The Holy Qur'an, the Book full of wisdom, which addresses the entire humanity and is a perfect guide for man in all walks of his life in all the stages of civilisation also emphasised these determinants of educational

theories and practices and deals with the basic educational problems in terms of the following four questions:

1. Why should we learn?
2. When should we learn?
3. What should we learn?
4. How should we learn?

In the discussion of these questions in the light of the Holy Qur'an and other teachings of Islam (Ahadith), we cannot ignore the postulations of the exponents of the educational theories and practices. These questions are directly related to the existence of man and the

development of his personality; therefore, the starting point of this discussion is the clarification of the purpose of the creation of Man and the Universe.

According to the Holy Qur'an everything has been created with a certain purpose as impressed by the order that pervades in the Universe. Men of understanding admit:

Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain.
(Ch.3:V.192)

The Universe and its parts were not created in vain and Man, the acme of creation, could not be created without a purpose. Nay, the purpose of his creation is higher than that of other creatures, which is:

And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.
(Ch.51:V.57)

You worship nothing beside Allah.
(Ch.12:V.41)

It means that the purpose of the creation of human beings and jinn is nothing else but to devote themselves to the worship of Allah.

1. Why Should We Learn?

The purpose of worshipping God can only be fulfilled when man knows Him and the manifestations of His attributes in the Universe and may also acquire the skill of expression. For this reason the Gracious God started teaching man from the very beginning of human civilisation, i.e. since the time of Prophet Adam^(as):

And He taught Adam all the names.
(Ch2:V.32)

The teaching continued till the advent of the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam in the form of revelation of the Holy Qur'an:

Taught man what he knew not. (Ch.96:V.6)

Its teachings continued and will continue forever. It is a fact that

for proper worship we must have knowledge of God and proper skills of expression. For these reasons God has not only bestowed knowledge on us but taught us the skill of expression as well:

He has created man. He taught him the skill of expression.

(Ch.55:Vs4-5)

He created man from dry ringing clay which is like baked pottery.

(Ch.55:V.15)

In accordance with verse Ch.55:V.15, God created man from matter in which the faculty and attribute of speech lie latent and in accordance with verses Ch.55:Vs.4-5, He Himself taught man the skill of expression, i.e. language. The Qur'anic claim that God Himself taught language to man is not hollow but supported by research. We quote only one study:

‘The onomatopoeic and interjectional theories, based upon

the fact that language developed out of the imitation of sounds produced by inanimate (the falling of water, blowing winds, etc.) and animates are outdated. The argument that because man can imitate sounds, therefore, he must have invented language on the basis of sounds is a mere fallacy. The faculty of speech coexists with the ability to imitate sounds and one does not exclude the other. In fact, the ability to imitate sounds is only a minor part of the faculty of speech. Words full of wisdom, reason and logic, words describing the whole universe, human nature - its passions and thoughts, and all that man lives and works for cannot be reasonably supposed to be the outcome of mere accidental sounds.’¹

The Gracious God did not stop here. In order to accomplish the purpose of man's creation, He taught us to supplicate:

Guide us in the right path-the

path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, those who have not incurred displeasure and those who have not gone astray.
(Ch.1:Vs.6-7)

Say, 'O my Lord, increase me in knowledge'.
(Ch.20:V.115)

It is repeated that in these prayers we supplicate for an increase in knowledge, in addition to spiritual and moral progress.

The scholars say that educated persons are much superior to the uneducated. The Holy Qur'an agrees with its import:

Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah. (Ch.35:V.29)

The verse defines knowledge itself as fear of God, i.e. to have true knowledge about Him and behave accordingly. God is the Highest; therefore, the highest, the best and the most comprehensive knowledge, is to know Him:

Say, 'Can those who know and those who do not know be equal?'
(Ch.39:V.10)

It is not a question but a form of expression to say that those who know are superior to those who do not know.

Allah will raise those who believe from among you, and those to whom knowledge is given, to degrees of rank.
(Ch.58:V.12)

Mark the high rank promised to the educated by God. This is also supported by the following Ahadith:

'A learned one is superior to a worshipper as the moon is superior to all the planets'
(Abu Daud and Tirmidhi)

'The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.'

Throughout the ages, philosophers and thinkers recognised the supremacy of knowledge and

the scholars. Socrates (470-399 BC) believed that knowledge is virtue. Knowledge guides conduct and by obtaining knowledge man lives a virtuous life. According to Plato (428/27-348/47 BC), education is the first and the fairest thing that the best of men can ever have. To Socrates and Plato attainment of knowledge was necessary both for the interest of the individual and the society, hence it was a virtue by itself. To Aristotle (384-322 BC), the attainment of 'happiness or goodness' in life is the aim of education, and, therefore, virtue lies in the attainment of goodness or happiness. Aristotle declared that educated men are as superior to the uneducated as the living are to the dead.

It is because of the importance of education that the Holy Prophet^(sa) asks Muslims to seek knowledge even if it be in China. Think of the distance between Arabia and China and the difficulties involved in journey in those days. Even then the Holy Prophet^(sa) asked Muslims

to tolerate these hardships for the sake of knowledge.

When fifteen months after Hijrah, the Battle of Badr was won, the ransom fixed by the Prophet^(sa) for a literate captive was that he should teach reading and writing to ten Muslim children of Madinah (Zurqani, Vol. 2). The appeal of the Prophet^(sa) may be summed up in these words:

Acquire knowledge. It enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong, it lightens the way to the Heaven, it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion in friendliness, it guides us to happiness, it sustains us in misery, it is an ornament among friends and armour against the enemy.

It needs to be remembered that the Holy Prophet^(sa) was an unlettered person himself and yet he placed great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge.

IT IS BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION THAT THE HOLY PROPHET^(SA) ASKS MUSLIMS TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE EVEN IF IT BE IN CHINA. THINK OF THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ARABIA AND CHINA AND THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN JOURNEY IN THOSE DAYS. EVEN THEN THE HOLY PROPHET^(SA) ASKED MUSLIMS TO TOLERATE THESE HARDSHIPS FOR THE SAKE OF KNOWLEDGE.

2. When Should We Learn?

It is an accepted fact that the impact of the environment starts from the time of conception, but informal learning starts just after birth. In other words, the environment is divided into: (a) prenatal and (b) postnatal stages of development. When the Holy Prophet^(sa) advised expecting mothers to consume wholesome foods, avoid the harmful, and also to avoid any and every situation that may upset them, he was pointing to the good or bad effects of the prenatal environment on the expected babies. This wonderful doctrine is supported by three 20th century psychologists, Alison Gopnik, Andrew N. Meltzoff and Patricia K. Kuhl, who say:

‘It looks as if they recognise their mother’s voice at birth based on the muted but still audible sounds they hear in the womb’²

At birth the baby starts a new and different life. Therefore, the Islamic Tradition is that before giving mother’s milk to the newly born child, Muslims say Adhan (call to Prayers) in its right ear and Aqamat (call to line up in prayers) in the left. This is nothing but to convey a good message to the newly born, before it is exposed to any other stimulus.

Educational thinkers have different views about the age of starting informal learning. Plato

STARTING FROM ARISTOTLE TILL THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY, A PERIOD OF ABOUT 2,500 YEARS, THE IMPORTANT CONCLUSION OF ALL RESEARCH HAS BEEN: LEARNING STARTS WITH THE START OF LIFE, I.E. RIGHT FROM THE TIME OF CONCEPTION, CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE HUMAN LIFE, AND ENDS ONLY WITH DEATH, AND IT IS IMPORTANT, NATURAL, AND PART AND PARCEL OF HUMAN LIFE.

is of the view that education and admonition commence in the first year of the child and last to the very end of life. J.J. Rousseau believes that it cannot begin too early and says that the first and the most important part of education, precisely that which all the world neglects, is that of preparing a child to receive education. But Islam recognised the importance of this period. The Holy Qur'an and Ahadith strongly advise Muslim parents to take proper care of their children immediately after birth and to continue it till they reach the age of maturity.

Here, we would like to refer to two studies, not because these have added something entirely new, but because these are based

upon direct observations and experiments. The first scholar to be quoted is the great biologist, naturalist and psychologist, Jean Piaget (1896-1980), who thought:

‘Learning was just as rooted in biology as any innate idea in the genetic code. He often used the metaphor of digestion: babies’ minds assimilated information the way babies’ bodies assimilated milk. For Piaget, learning was as natural as eating.’³

The second study is again from Alison Gopnik, Andrew N. Meltzoff and Patricia N. Kuhl who thoroughly researched infants, some as young as 42

minutes, and babies, for thirty years. Some important conclusions of this study are:

A. What we apparently see in the crib is an innocent and helpless creature. But, in fact, what we see is the greatest mind that has ever existed, the most powerful learning machine in the universe.

B. We human beings, no more than a few pounds of protein and water, have come to understand the origins of the universe, the nature of life, and even a few things about ourselves.

C. Trying to understand human nature is part of human nature.

D. For human beings, nurture is our nature. The capacity for culture is part of our biology, and the drive to learn is our most important and central instinct.⁴

Starting from Aristotle till the end of the 20th century, a period

of about 2,500 years, the important conclusion of all research has been: learning starts with the start of life, i.e. right from the time of conception, continues throughout the human life, and ends only with death, and it is important, natural, and part and parcel of human life.

The Holy Qur'an, revealed in the seventh century, says the same:

Your wives are a tilth for you; so approach your tilth when and how you like and send ahead some good for yourselves.

(Ch.2:V.224)

He it is Who fashions you in the wombs as He wills.

(Ch.3:V.7)

The likening of women to tilth (Ch.2:V.224) is very explicit that life, and therefore, learning starts at the time of conception. For this very reason the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) has advised Muslims to select their wives, who are physically healthy, well-behaved and possess good moral and

spiritual qualities, and they should treat them well. Only then will the husbands and wives be able to train their children in a proper way.

As the development of the child takes place in the womb of mother (Ch.3:V.7), the offspring is naturally affected by her physical and moral conditions. For this very reason Islam advises expectant mothers to use wholesome foods and avoid the harmful. In addition, they should avoid any and every situation, that may upset them, physically, morally or in any other way.

Educational thinkers and scholars agree on this point that learning is a continuous and never-ending process. The Qur'anic verses related to this subject are:

Guide us in the right path – the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings.

(Ch.1:Vs.6-7).

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam

Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^(as), has written in *Baraheen-e-Ahmadiyya* (Vol. IV) that in this supplication, in addition to other blessings, the supplicant, begs God for an increase in his knowledge.⁵

The other supplication is:

Say, 'O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.

(Ch.20:V.115).

In this verse, God Himself asks the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) and all Muslims to pray for an increase in their knowledge.

All good Muslims supplicate the above mentioned prayers throughout their lives. Even the Holy Prophet^(sa), the greatest scholar the world has ever produced or will produce, did the same till overtaken by death, which points to the fact that he believed that learning was a never-ending process. We should seek knowledge from cradle to grave. The following Hadith further supports this view:

BASICALLY, THE MAJOR PORTION OF THE ISLAMIC CURRICULUM IS THE HOLY QUR'AN, SUNNAH AND AHADITH, BUT ALL SUBJECTS THAT ARE USEFUL FOR HUMAN LIFE CAN BE INCLUDED IN THE ISLAMIC CURRICULUM.

‘A believer never has his fill of knowledge till he ends up in Paradise’
(*Tirmidhi*)

3. What Should We Learn?

In our discussion about the questions, ‘Why should we learn and when should we learn,’ we have reached the conclusion that the purpose of the creation of man is to devote himself to worshipping God. But for worshipping God he should learn how to comprehend the attributes of God and how to express himself. This learning process continues from the cradle to the grave. In search of the answer to the question, ‘What should we learn?’ educational thinkers and

scholars have been outlining different plans of teaching learning process or curriculum which include all the learning experiences whether in the boundaries of school or outside of school that may be conducive to the mental, emotional, social and economic adjustment of the learner. But the Qur’anic concept of curriculum, in spite of its precision, is all-inclusive. According to Islam, life is a unit which cannot be divided into cells; therefore, Islam wants to see a curriculum rich in knowledge of the wisdom of the East and the West. It takes the worldly and religious knowledge side by side. Basically, the major portion of the Islamic curriculum is the Holy Qur’an, Sunnah and Ahadith, but all subjects that are useful for human life can be included in the Islamic curriculum. God Himself started the Qur’anic curriculum in the form of His attributes or names:

And He taught Adam all the names.

(Ch.2:V.32)

Hadhrat Adam^(as) was the first vicegerent and the first Prophet of God on earth. Through him started the great economic, religious and social revolution – therefore, God Himself taught him His names. The Arabic word used in this verse is ‘Asma’a’, which has the following meanings.

- A. God’s names or attributes
- B. Qualities of different things in nature or the laws of nature
- C. Language

A. God’s names or attributes

As mentioned earlier the chief purpose of man’s creation is to worship God, which is not confined only to rituals but includes introjecting Godly qualities within ourselves. For example, God is Merciful; we should also show mercy to others; as He is Forgiving, so we must also be ready to forgive our fellow beings, etc. This interpretation of the word, ‘Asma’a’ is supported by the following Hadith:

‘The best morals in man are those which are in conformity with the great attributes of God.’

Man also must be familiar with these attributes, so that he may pray to Him, invoking attributes most suited to the prayer. For example, if one prays for forgiveness and mercy, one should invoke the attributes of forgiveness and mercy; and if the prayer be for the attainment of righteousness, God should be invoked by names which pertain to that quality, etc.

B. The Law of Nature

As man was to make use of the forces of nature, God gave Adam^(as) the capacity of knowing their qualities and properties upon which is based the whole working of the Universe, in which everything is governed by certain fixed and immutable laws. For example, fire burns and water assuages thirst. The earth is circling around its axis and revolving around the sun at the same speeds for the last billions of years. Upon this constancy

depends the alternation of days and nights and the solar years are completed. The same constancy principle is working for other planets in the Solar System, and even outside the System. The growth and decay of plants and animals, including man, are governed by some laws. Societies and nations being composed of individuals are also governed by some principles. It is, therefore, on the unchangeability of the laws of nature that all educational progress depends. Even if there is some change, the change itself is governed by some law. Had it not been so, astronomers, cosmologists, botanists, chemists, physicians, physicists, physiologists, psychologists, zoologists, etc. could not discover what they have discovered. For this scientific reason, God bestowed on Adam^(as) some knowledge about Nature.

C. Language

Communication in any society without language is impossible. Without it there could be no communication between parents and their children, and between

teachers and students. Human society would be a society of the deaf and dumb. Transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next is possible only through language. Psychologists and other educators agree that man is the only animal bestowed with language. For this very reason, man is called a 'social animal.' It is because of the blessings of language that man has continuously advanced in accumulation of knowledge spread over thousands of years of human civilisation, and animals are there where they always were. Not only this, according to some psychologists even to think is not possible without a language. For example, the American psychologist, J.B. Watson, emphatically says: thinking is a sub-vocal talk (*Contemporary Schools of Psychology*).

And the Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky says:

'Language is not only the medium by which we transfer our cultural inventions but it

is a natural, biological and unique feature of human beings'.⁶

In short, one simple word, 'Asma'a' includes almost all branches of education: religion and morality, science and secular learning, and language.

The Holy Prophet^(sa) has divided all types of learning only in two branches (a) *Ilmul-Adyan* and (b) *Ilmul-Abdan*, that is religious and secular knowledge.

When we have a look at the educational institutions anywhere in the world, they are mainly divided into religious institutions (e.g. Madrasas) and secular institutions (schools and colleges). But the Holy Qur'an, by using one simple word, 'Asma'a', has included all branches of learning, no matter what type of institution they are. It is the only pivotal point to decide or formulate the curriculum or what we should learn.

A natural question that arises here is: Does the word 'Asma'a'

include undesirable learning e.g. phobic learning, to learn the art of cheating and stealing etc? The answer is, 'no'. Implicit is this novel idea in all the Qur'anic verses related to learning. A sane person cannot supplicate God to teach him undesirable learning, and if he does so, God will never accept such supplication. Two Ahadith further clarify this point:

'Allah, His angels, and all those in the heavens and the earth even the ants in their heaps and the fish in the water call down blessings on those who instruct people in beneficent knowledge'.

(Tirmidhi)

'The knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure from which no charity is bestowed in the way of Lord.'

Secular educators also speak and advocate conducive and useful learning.

4. How Should We Learn?

In the light of the Holy Qur'an

and Ahadith we have answered the questions of 'Why should we learn?', 'When should we learn?', and 'What should we learn'. Now we need the answer to the question of 'How should we learn?' This question may be discussed in terms of the methods of teaching. As far as the methods of education are concerned, not only the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith but also the modern education discards all those methods of teaching in which the learner becomes the passive recipient of knowledge. It strongly recommends the active participation of the learner in the process of education at all stages of learning.

According to Plato, the knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the minds of the learners. He is of the opinion that there should be no compulsion in teaching; rather it should be a sort of amusement: You will then be better able to find out the natural bent. In the 'Laws', the significance of play in education has been positively emphasised.

In the modern age, we talk about frame-by-frame or programmed learning. But, it is not new; one can observe that the verses of the Holy Qur'an are arranged in a logical order. Any question that arises in the mind of the reader by reading one verse is answered in the next, and any question that arises in the next is answered in the succeeding verse. By maintaining this logical order throughout the Book, it keeps the reader fully alert and his brain works at the highest possible level. This wonderful Book has covered the two main methods of learning, (a) learning by reward and punishment (Ch.1:V.7), and (b) learning by following a model (Ch.1:V.7, Ch.33:V.22, Ch.62:V.3 and Ch.68:V.5). It teaches us to learn by the straight and the shortest method (Ch.1:V.6). It asks its readers to think and reason – the Holy Qur'an is full of verses in which the words 'think', 'why you do not think', etc. are emphasised. Blind following is condemned and it is mentioned as the way of disbelievers (Ch.2:V.171). It establishes freedom of con-

science and asks humans to decide on the basis of unbiased, free and individual thinking (Ch.34:V.47). It gives great importance to 'wisdom' which is described as 'abundant good' (Ch.2:V.270). In spite of giving importance to the individuals, it has not ignored the role of society (Ch.9:V.119) and the role played by great personages in shaping the behaviour of common people and furthering their learning (Ch.1:V.7; Ch.3:V.50; Ch.28:Vs.32-33; Ch.33:V.22; Ch.60:V.5; Ch.62:V.3 and Ch.68:V.5).

The German educator Friedrich Forbel introduced 'the Kindergarten' educational system in 1826, and, based upon this 'System', started the first school in Blankenberg, Germany. God taught this 'System' to Hadhrat Hadhrat Adam^(as), the first Prophet, six thousand years ago (Al-Baqarah, 2:32), i.e. even long before Plato.

Though not an educator or a psychologist in strict terms, on the basis of his personal

experience, Albert Einstein (1879-1955), perhaps the great scientist of this age, realised that education should not be based upon fear or force (1936).

'To me the worst thing seems to be for a school principally to work with methods of fear, force, and artificial authority. Such treatment destroys the sound sentiments, the sincerity and the self – confidence of the pupil. It produces the submissive subject'.⁷

It is obvious that if students attend school because of fear of authorities, not because of their inner genuine interest, they will accomplish very little.

When educators, philosophers, psychologists, etc. say that there should be no compulsion in learning, it should be a sort of 'amusement', they emphasise the role of 'motivation' in learning. In the last two centuries the Russian physiologist, Ian Petrovich Pavlov (1849-1936) and the American educational

psychologist, Edward Lee Thorndike (1874-1949), have emphasised the role of motivation in learning very strongly. They taught a variety of tasks to animals and humans. No matter what task they taught to their subjects, they motivated them first, and then they continued these tasks throughout the learning period. (*Contemporary Schools of Psychology*).

Albert Einstein also realised this fact:

‘But behind every achievement exists the motivation which is at the foundation of it and which in turn is strengthened and nourished by the accomplishment of the undertaking.... The most important motive for work in the school and in life is the pleasure in work, pleasure in its result.’⁸

Animals and young children can be motivated by awarding them food or simple praise, but it does not work in case of grown up children and adults. To keep

these learners fully alert and strongly motivated, they must be convinced that they have joined an institute of a very high standard; the teachers are true scholars of their subjects and use the most advanced teaching methods. They should also be convinced that the purpose for which they have joined the institute will be accomplished. If they are not satisfied on these aspects, their interest in learning automatically drops.

Now let us examine whether or not the Qur’an has thrown any light upon the role of motivation in learning. The answer is, it has definitely done so. It is because of the role of motivation in learning that God, through Moses^(as), has taught us to supplicate. ‘My Lord, open up for me my heart’ (Ch.20:V.26). Opening of the heart stands for an increase in motivation. It is for this very reason that God, the First and the Real Teacher, has been described as the All-Knowing (Ch.2:V.2), the Holy Prophet^(sa) as a teacher who teaches with wisdom (*‘He it is*

Who has raised among the Unlettered people a Messenger from among themselves who recites unto them His Signs, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error ') (Ch.62:V.3), and the Holy Qur'an as a Perfect Book, free from any doubt or defect, and a Book which guides the learner to his ultimate goal (Ch.2:V.3). These verses suggest that planners of education should plan and run educational institutes on these lines, i.e. the institutes should be free from defects and the teacher should be true scholars and efficient in learning.

Islam recognises the role of mothers in upbringing and educating their children, because they are the closest and the most affectionate persons to them. All good teachers keep their students close and teach them affectionately. The Holy Qur'an has not left this aspect. As directed by God, the Patriarch Prophet Abraham^(as) (Ch.2:V.261), Prophet Moses^(as) (Ch.20:Vs.18-

25; Ch.27:Vs.8-13; Ch.28:Vs.32-33), Prophet Jesus^(as) (Ch.3:V.50) and Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) (Ch.9:V.128 and Ch.15:V.89) taught and trained their followers affectionately and by keeping them close.

In addition to the methods of learning mentioned above, the Holy Qur'an has mentioned some more novel techniques for efficient learning e.g. students should obey the teachers, show patience and not question during the lecture (Ch.18: Vs.66-71). Doing so is against discipline, interrupts the teacher, and the students themselves are deprived of using their intelligence, thinking, reasoning, etc, necessary for efficient and effective learning.

Being complete in every respect, the Holy Qur'an has not only motivated learners or students, but parents and teachers as well. Man has been described as made of dust (Ch.3:V.60 and Ch.18:V.38), of clay (Ch.7:V.13) and of dry ringing clay (Ch.15:V.29 and Ch.55:V.15).

The reason for comparing man with dust and clay is that these can be easily molded into different shapes; similarly human beings can be educated and trained for different professions. The sooner the training starts, the greater will be success, because babies start learning soon after conception. The claim of the American psychologist, J.B. Watson that if he is given a normal infant with full control in training him, he can make him a doctor, a lawyer, and even a thief, supports the Qur'anic verses quoted above.

In short, whatever learning theory or method of teaching man can formulate or even imagine, you can find the roots of all wisdom in this Book of Wisdom, the Holy Qur'an.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr Abdul Majid started his educational career in 1963 as the Headmaster of Talimul Islam High School Qadian, when he was just 23 years old and served in India, Kashmir, and various places in the Middle East as a lecturer, headmaster, principal etc. Dr Shahab Ahmad who did his Phd from Aligarh and Dr Abdul Majid now reside in Canada.

Is There a God?

Based on an address at the Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Ireland

Dr. Tariq Anwar Bajwa - UK

I quote an interesting incident about a 25-year-old gentleman of India. This was in the year 1866 and after having achieved his Diploma of Education from the Normal School in Rawalpindi, this young man had been appointed as Head Teacher of a school in a town called Pind Dadan Khan. He was four years into this job when one day an Inspector of Schools arrived for inspection. The young man describes the incidence himself: ‘On one occasion, the Inspector of Schools arrived while I was at my meal. I invited him to join me. Instead of accepting my invitation, he retorted, “I am afraid that you have not recognised me. My name is Khuda Bukhsh and I am the Inspector of Schools.”’

““Oh! Indeed. That is well. You are a man of integrity. You do not

partake of food offered by a teacher. How good that is!”’

‘I continued my meal, and, while holding his horse, he waited for me to tell some student to go and hold his horse. When he saw that I made no move, he asked me, “Kindly tell a student to hold my horse.”’

‘I answered: “Sir you are so punctilious that you do not partake of food offered by a teacher deeming it to be a bribe. Then how can I ask a student to hold your horse. They come to school to study and not to serve as stable boys. Besides, you might ask for it to be tethered and fed: but how could the horse be fed when you yourself are not willing to accept the hospitality of a teacher?”’

‘The horse was getting impatient.

In the meantime the Inspector's staff arrived and began to look after everything. Then he signified that he would proceed with the examination of the students, whereupon I put the students in order and myself withdrew and sat apart. The Inspector held the examination and then said to me: "I have heard that you are very capable, and hold a distinguished Diploma from the Normal School. Perhaps that explains your imperious attitude."

'I replied: "Sir, I do not regard a few square inches of paper as God." Then I sent for the diploma and tore it into pieces before his eyes and demonstrated that I did not associate anything with God.'

His name was Hadhrat Hakeem Maulvi Nooruddin^(ra) and he became the first successor of the Promised Messiah^(as). Such was his firm faith in God that nothing could ever shake it.

But 'is there a God?' is a question whose response varies

considerably when asked to different people. There are people, who would say, 'No I do not believe in God.' There are others who would say, 'there may be a God, but I am not interested.' There are many others who would say, 'yes, there is a God.' In both these groups of people answering in affirmative or in negative, the degree of certainty with which they say so varies quite considerably. There are those who believe in God because they acquired that belief in Him. In a similar way there are people who were born in a society which was drifting away from God and hence were told to go away from the concept of God. Of these people there is also a group of people who say God has not created us. Perhaps we have created god through our imagination. There are also scholars and philosophers who have thought deeply and concluded that there should be a God. Of course the certainty with which they say so comes through inference and because their belief in a God is weak, they are unable

to convince somebody with surety about the existence of a God.

The Holy Qur'an, which according to Islam is the Word of God Himself, divides knowledge into three types: knowledge by way of certainty of inference, knowledge by way of certainty of sight and knowledge by way of certainty of experience.

The knowledge by certainty of inference is that a thing is known not directly, but through something else through which its existence can be inferred: an example being that of inference of the existence of fire by observing smoke from a distance. We do not see the fire, but we see the smoke and we believe in the existence of fire. Then when we can see the fire, this would give us certainty by sight. Now if we were to enter this fire, our knowledge would have the quality of certainty by experience. The variation in the certainty while answering to the question about the existence of God is thus explained.

There are people who have inferred that there has to be a God. There are others who have experienced God themselves and then there are people who have seen these holy men and seen God through them and they say it that certainly there is a God. Nobody can change their minds because of the degree of certainty they have in this belief.

The source of the first type of knowledge, that is to say knowledge by the certainty of inference, is reason and information.

God Almighty does not require human beings to accept anything beyond their intellectual capability, and only sets forth such doctrines as are comprehensible by men, so that his directives should not impose upon man that which he is unable to bear. (Ch.2:V.287)

The certainty of knowledge by inference can be obtained by various faculties given to human beings, one of them being ears. For instance, many of us have

not visited Tokyo or Sydney, but we have heard of them from those who have visited these places. We do not doubt the existence of these cities because we do not believe all these people might have told a lie.

In fact all the religions on this earth claim to be from God. Muhammad^(sa), Moses^(as), Jesus^(as), Krishna^(as), Buddha^(as), Baba Nanak and every religious leader taught people to believe and worship God. Although all the religions have slight differences in the attributes they ascribe to God, yet all the religions hold the common view that there is a God Who created this universe. In fact, the creation of man goes hand in hand with religion and it is not the work of philosophers or sociologists whether or not the concept of God exists. It is a universal concept that existed independent 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. History tells us that even those ancient religions that no longer exist in the world, also held the view of God, whether they were in ancient America, or in the jungles of Africa or Australia. So the books of history are also a source of knowledge provided they do not contradict themselves. Even the books of the prophets lose their reliability if there is contradiction in them about a certain point. However, the point at which they agree is likely to be believed and is certainly a source of knowledge by inference.

The Holy Qur'an is not confined merely to knowledge gained through continuity of hearing; it contains well-reasoned arguments that carry strong conviction. Not one of the doctrines and principles and commandments that the Holy Qur'an sets forth is imposed merely by authority. How can the word of God impose belief in Himself without giving reasonable arguments?

Let us look at the evidence God has given Himself about His existence in the Holy Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an has adopted two methods for an understanding of God. First, there is the method whereby human reason is strengthened and illumined for the purpose of setting forth reasons in support of the existence of God. Through this, one may reach the first degree of certainty about the existence of God i.e., there should be a God or there has to be a God. The second method is the spiritual method through which you achieve the second and third degree of certainty through sight and through experience.

As regards the first method, one of the foremost arguments God gives is to study nature, how He has created this universe? In the Holy Qur'an, God says:

Do you doubt in the existence of Allah, Who has created the heavens and the earth (from nothingness).
(Ch.14:V.11)

The second argument given by the Holy Qur'an is that everything that has been created has been given appropriate faculties as it says:

Our Lord is He Who has bestowed upon everything its appropriate faculties, and has then guided it to (the achievement of) its appropriate purpose.
(Ch. 20:V.51)

The third argument of the Holy Qur'an is the order that you see in this universe.

No incongruity canst thou see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again: Seest thou any flaw? Aye, look again, and yet again, thy sight will only return to thee frustrated and fatigued.
(Ch.67:Vs.4-5)

And then Allah says :

It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. All

of them float in an orbit.
(Ch.36:V.41)

The fourth argument given by the Holy Qur'an is that God says He is the ultimate cause of all causes:

And that to thy Lord do all things ultimately go.
(Ch.53: V.43)

And in another verse reminds us:

All that is on earth will perish and only the Person of thy Lord, Master of Glory and Honour, will survive.
(Ch.55:V.27-28)

The fifth logical argument presented by the Holy Qur'an is that God says that He has put in the inherent nature of a human being that he believes in God. As Allah says that when the souls of human beings are asked by Him:

Am I not your Lord? And they answer: Indeed, we do bear witness.
(Ch.7:V.173)

There are many other verses

giving the logic of the existence of God but let us stop here and look at these claims in some more detail.

There is a host of evidence available to us if we look around ourselves. If one keeps in mind and then reflects upon the shape and form of man and all the animals on land and in the sea, and the birds, one is impressed with the power of God Who has created them and then bestowed its appropriate form on every thing.

The Holy Founder of Ahmadiyyat, the Promised Messiah^(as), has well said:

‘O my Beloved! How wonderful is Thy creative power manifested everywhere:

Whichever way I look, I find every road leading to Thy Presence.

In the fountain of the sun, the tides of Thy Power are witnessed:

Every star is twinkling with
Thy Glory
The mellow intoxicating
eyes of all, who are endowed
with beauty
Remind one of Thee every
moment
To Thy direction is turned,
the pointing finger of every
curly lock.’

Just imagine what an infinite Universe has been created for the satisfaction of our physical needs. There is a sky with innumerable stars and planets, including a sun and a moon, which give us light and warmth – so essential for our well-being. Think of the vast expanse of atmosphere around us, full of air to make us breathe and space to allow us to build, rise and fly wherever we please. Take the earth itself and, look at the series of rivers, mines and mountains so wonderfully distributed over its surface. Just see the different strata suited for the production of various vegetable growths. Think of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, what a wonderful and exquisite scale of creation we

notice in this universe, how beautifully, efficiently and mysteriously it works to a common end! There is a magnificent system of organisation.

There are only two options available to us – either there is a God Who created human beings and the universe around us or there is no God and it is human beings who have created their so-called creator.

The issue of Creation can be 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 – the possibility of life began with the ‘Big Bang’ that occurred around twenty billion years ago and ever since then life has emerged out of nothing. Even the firmest believers in blind evolution have to admit that for this to happen they cannot find an answer.

Upon contemplation of the wonders of evolution created or packed in a small space of one billion years, even those 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 reached is ten raised to the power of 249 which means that one needs to place 249 zeros to the right of number one. That is how many years 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. The rest is still to be calculated. Based on this evidence, one can always question the scientists as to 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.

For those who do not believe in God, there are a few terms that

are commonly used to try to explain the creation, organisation and evolution. These terms are 'Chance', 'Evolution by natural selection or Survival of the Fittest', or 'Evolution by change bit by bit'. For a moment, just visualise the drama of life and death as staged, act-by-act, from the beginning of evolution to the present time. As the curtain lifts, does it lift from the vision of a mindless universe endlessly engaged in the casting of a dice, or does it lift from a completely different scenario? The drama remains the same, as also the actors who play their part.

The vision alters only in relation to the viewer. If the viewer sees it through the coloured glasses of deep seated, pre-conceived atheistic prejudices, then of course he would view nothing but chaos wedded to chaos, giving birth to a brood of meticulously-shaped and well-disciplined offspring. This happens generation after generation after generation. Each generation invariably recedes yet again into a world of chaos, continuously

giving birth to order and discipline, without exception and without fail. So the drama of evolution moves on from chaos to order without an orderly disciplined mind to command it.

Despite this, order always emerges out of disorder, until man the masterpiece of evolution is created – the ultimate child of compound chaos and confusion. If on the other hand the viewer is an unbiased observer of what he sees and permits his vision to be led to whichever direction the scheme of creation leads him, then of course the same drama will take on a completely different complexion. At each replication of life into more complex and more organised entities of a higher order and at each step forward on the evolutionary journey, he would perceive the guiding hand of the Supreme Creator.

Many a competent scientist has had to confess that the only solution to the problem of creation lies in the admission that there does exist a Supreme

Creator. Frank Allan, Professor of Biophysics, University of Manitoba, Canada, recipient of the Tory Gold Medal, Royal Society of Canada writes:

‘The adjustments of the earth for life are far too numerous to be accounted for by chance.’

What he evidently means is that in the long journey of evolution we find design, order and harmony, which cannot be ascribed to chance. Commenting on the complexity of proteins and the manner in which they play the essential role of building, supporting and advancing life, Allan categorically rejects the idea of attributing it to chance.

For a single protein molecule to be formed out of chance would require 10 raised to the power 98 years. To accommodate this figure in the span of evolution is impossible because it only took 4.5 billion years for all the amazing steps of creation.

To be very simple, if I claim that

all the things have been organised after an earthquake or a blast, you would have doubts about my mental health and some of my colleagues may be kind enough to refer me to a psychiatrist. Strange it is, though, that people have sympathy with those who think this universe has originated out of chance or accident, without design and without a Creator. The probability of life originating from an accident is comparable to the probability of an unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a print factory.

Sir Fred Hoyle, author of the *Black Cloud* says: ‘the spontaneous formation by “chance” of a working enzyme is like a hurricane blowing through a junkyard and spontaneously putting together a Boeing 747.’

The theory of ‘survival of the fittest’ is easily rejected by a simple example. In a famine or drought, when water can be found very deep, only the trees with very deep roots should be able to survive whereas all the

shrubby with small roots should vanish. Similarly animals with long necks like giraffes and camels, which can reach these trees to graze on, should be able to survive such a drought. However, if we look at the facts, they are very different and after years of famine, the small shrubby and small animals survive these droughts in a better way. This rejects the survival of the fittest or blind natural selection theory.

Now looking at the appropriate faculties given to the creation, we can look at a few examples, which reject either the ‘bit-by-bit’ change theory or the ‘blind evolution’ theory.

In the world of birds, if we look at the woodpecker, the force with which it hits the trees to make the insects come out is such that if it did not have a protective cushion between its beak and its brain, it could not have survived at all. It could not have developed over a long period because it has to be part of its creation right from the beginning. There are so many

similar examples, like spiders, electric fish etc. The complex system of making honey in a honeybee is still astonishment to the human being. Special senses in the animal world are a discrete example, which reject evolution by a 'bit-by-bit' change because they cannot be functional if any part of them is removed. For example consider the functioning of the eye. Even in the most rudimentary form, which was in a deep-sea fish, eyes have been found to be fully functional. They have to have been made with a purpose and design. We know that for an eye to function, it has a cornea with a defined curvature, an iris to control the light and the ciliary muscles to control curvature of the lens. Then there is the aqueous humour, the lens vitreous humour and the Retina with its 10 layers of cells. From the retina, the image has to reach the occipital cortex where it is interpreted. Then there is a complex system of lachrymal fluid to keep cleaning the eye. The protection for the eye has been provided by eyelids, orbit

and the eyebrows. Thousands of books have been written about the beauty as well as the functioning of the eye. The fact is that it only points towards its Creator and no theory of evolution can explain it.

In 1859, in his great work, *The Origin of Species* during his discussion on the intricacies of an 'eye' as an organ, Darwin confessed.

'To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree'.

Having said that he carves a path of retreat by building his 'bit-by-bit' theory, which has now become the mainstay of Prof. Dawkin's arguments in favour of

natural selection being the only creator.

However this ‘bit-by-bit’ theory is rejected by the fact that the most ancient specimens of eyes as found in the earliest species of marine life are fascinatingly purpose-built masterpieces of such visionary systems as perplex the most modern manufacturer of optical instruments.

The Holy Qur’an says:

And He it is Who has created for you ears, and eyes, and hearts, but little thanks do you give.

(Ch.23:V.79)

There are many examples which have been given in detail in the book *Rationality, Revelation, Knowledge and Truth* by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmed^(ru) the fourth successor of the Promised Messiah^(as) to which one can refer.

Then we observe that the entire universe is bound together in a

system of cause and effect. This system is at the root of all knowledge. No part of creation is outside this system. It is not possible that in this finite world this pattern of cause and effect should have no limit. We are compelled to acknowledge that it must terminate with some ultimate cause. The ultimate cause is God.

Up to now we have spoken of logic, which only makes us reach a conclusion that there should be a God. However, a human being does not get contented just with this type of certainty and wants to reach the surest degree, which is the certainty by sight and experience. All the prophets of God have provided this certainty by their own example. They were weak people who had no apparent powers with them. At the very time they claimed that God had appointed them, their contemporaries stood against them and tried their level best to destroy them. However it never happened that a representative of Allah was not able to achieve his goal. They were all successful

proving that there is a Living God Who has appointed them. The same thing happened with Noah^(as), and Abraham^(as), Moses^(as) and Jesus^(as) and the Holy Prophet of Islam, Hadhrat Muhammad^(sa). The same thing is being repeated in this age in the person of the Promised Messiah^(as), who was from a small village of India and was not known in his own area, when he claimed that God had told him that his message would reach the corners of the earth. Today his message is reaching the corners of the earth, proving that there is a God Who supports and brings victory to His appointed ones against all odds.

Not only do these representatives of Allah prove His existence by their own success but also invite everybody towards God so that people are able to achieve the certainty of the existence of God by their own experience.

The truth is that when one achieves the goal of having communication with God, one becomes a manifest sign of the Living God in one's own person.

People see God through him as if he is a walking proof of the existence of God. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I Hakim Maulvi Nooruddin was one such example whom I quoted in the very beginning.

The Holy Founder of Ahmadiyyat, the Promised Messiah^(as) says:

‘With regard to the hereafter our knowledge arrives at the degree of certainty by sight when we receive direct revelation and hear the voice of God through our ears, and behold the true and clear visions of God with our eyes. Without a doubt we are in need of direct revelation for the purpose of achieving such perfect understanding for which our hearts hunger and thirst in our beings. If God Almighty has not provided the means of such comprehension for us in advance then why has He created this hunger and thirst in our hearts? Can we be content that in this life,

which is our only measure for the hereafter, we should believe in the true and perfect and mighty and living God only on the basis of tales and stories, or should depend upon understanding or reason alone, which understanding is still defective and incomplete? Do not the hearts of true lovers of God desire that they should enjoy the delight of converse with the Beloved, and should those who have given up everything in the world for the sake of God and have devoted their hearts and lives to Him, be content with the repining in a dim light without beholding the countenance of that Sun of Truth? Is it not true that an affirmation by the Living God: I am present, bestows such a degree of understanding compared with which the self conceived books of all the philosophers amount to nothing at all? What can those philosophers who are themselves blind

teach us? In short, if God Almighty designs to bestow perfect understanding upon His seekers, then He certainly has kept open the way of converse with them.’
(The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam)

The Promised Messiah^(as) has not only told us that God communicates with human beings but also has shown us the pathway to find Him. He has mentioned eight steps to find God. In short they are:

1. To believe in the True God, for if the very first step is not right, for instance, if a person believes in a bird or an animal, or in the elements or in the issue of a human being, as god there can be no hope of progressing towards God. The True God helps His seekers to reach Him.
2. The second means is to be informed of His beauty, for the heart is naturally drawn to the beauty the observation of which generates love in

the heart. God's beauty is His Unity and His Greatness and His Majesty and His other attributes.

3. The third means of approach to God is knowledge of His Beneficence, which is an incentive to His love.
4. The Fourth means of reaching Him is supplication, as He says 'Call on Me, I shall respond to you'.
5. The fifth means to reach Him is to strive in His cause, that is to say we should seek God by spending our wealth in His cause and by employing all our faculties in furthering this cause and laying down our lives in His cause and by employing our reason in His cause.
6. The sixth means is steadfastness, not to get tired or disheartened when one encounters trials.
7. The seventh means is to keep company with the righteous,

and to observe their perfect example.

8. The eighth means of reaching Him, are visions and true dreams and revelation. As the path to reach Him is not an easy one, the mercy of God keeps comforting them and these visions and dreams keep him going.

The fact is that the purpose of human life and the highest reach of man's faculties is to meet God the Exalted.

The importance of achieving this goal in life, has been described by the Promised Messiah^(as):

' Our paradise is in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and have found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one may have to lay down one's life to procure it. O ye, who are bereft, run to this fountain and it will save you. What may I do, and how may I

instil this good news in their hearts, and by what drum shall I make the announcement that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy may I apply to their ears so that they should listen?

If you belong to Allah, rest assured that Allah will indeed belong to you.’
(Kashti –e- Nuh)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Tariq Anwar Bajwa resigned from the Pakistan army, did his FRCS, served in Tanzania for 3 years and has been in the UK since 1996 where he is a GP. He is the Chairman of the Ahmadiyya Medical Association UK, Secretary Tahrik Jadid and newsreader on MTA.

*The staff and editorial team at
The Review of Religions wishes all its readers
a very healthy, peaceful and blessed New Year*

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Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

True Islamic Teachings Compared to Al-Qaeda's Doctrine

A paper read at the networks of instability seminar in Brussels. Religious terrorists, disowned by their own faith, have mentors who provide them with the political justification in pursuit of their objective of dying as martyrs. The teachings of Islam totally condemn terrorists and suicide bombers.

M.A. Ashraf, Scotland

The Immaculate Conception

'We breathed into her Our Spirit' is misconstrued as implicating God in a paternal role: Understanding the physical and spiritual

birth of Jesus^(as).

Moosa Qureshi – UK

May 2004

Islam is a Peaceful Religion

A lecture asking those who call Islam belligerent to reflect. Do Islam's high values manifest themselves when bombs rain down from the skies?

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Divine Guidance – Part II

The advent of the Prophet of Islam^(sa) was the need of the time. The message given to him is a living Book, not a story but a philosophy.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Religious Tolerance

An excellent formula for inter-faith respect, tolerance and dialogue, based on a lecture delivered in Ghana.

Abdul Wahab Adam, Amir and Missionary-in-charge, Ghana

Economic Justice

The Islamic economic system narrows the gap between the haves and have nots. An emphasis on spending, zakat and prohibition of interest ensuring a fast circulation of wealth.

Saad Ahmad, USA

Who are the Amish?

An insight into a sect of Mennonites whose men wear broad-brimmed black hats and women ankle-length dress.

Zakaria Virk, Canada.

June 2004

Avoid Those Who Create Disorder: People should identify you as the special servants of Allah

Address to the Annual gathering of the Ahmadiyya Community in Ghana asking participants to deal with others with kindness, tolerance, compassion, justice and humility.

By saving the next generation from the ills of the society, become a guarantor for the survival of your future generation and nation.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.

The Essence of Islam – III

Devoting one's life to the cause of God Almighty so that He becomes the object of worship, the true goal and the beloved and so that one's life is devoted to the service of His creatures are the true essence of Islam.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Treatment of Prisoners of War:

The enslavement of conquered people or their being held as prisoners of war requires that they must be treated with justice and granted the rights available to all free persons. Islam set the standards for others to follow.

Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad^(as)

Peace Symposium

A Dharma Talk on Buddhism: Emphasis on Peace argues that peace and happiness depend on our minds, *by Phrakru Sarnu Lom*;

A Jewish View on Peace looking squarely at the absence of war to promote peace, *by Rabbi Danny Rich.*

My Journey into the Ahmadiyya Community

A young American recalls her acceptance of Islam.

Dara Fulton, USA

Noah's Ark – Another Viewpoint

Those who rode in Noah's Ark heeded the Warner sent to them; likewise the plague during the time of the Promised Messiah^(as) swept away 10 million disbelievers.

Latif Qureshi.

July 2004

The Essence of Islam, Part IV: Allah the Exalted

The concept of God differs among world religions. Even within the body of Islam, there

are beliefs which run counter to the majesty and glory of the Gracious God. This piece presents the true Islamic concept of God with detailed exposition of relevant Qur'anic verses and the attributes of God..

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

A Short Review of the Historical Critique of Usury

Bringing together all the arguments from various religions, traditions and institutions as to why lending on interest should be considered wrong with special emphasis on the Islamic model of banking as a viable alternative to the interest-based global economy.

Wayne A.M. Visser and Alaister McIntosh

Investment, Interest and Islam

If Islam prohibits lending at interest, how does Islam encourage investment and ensure that capital is not hoarded? Why, in fact, has Islam forbidden the use of interest?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Cyrus the Great

The legend of the great King Cyrus, famed not only for his expansion of the Persian Empire but also the magnanimity with which he treated all his subjects, is recorded in history and also mentioned in the Bible. Could he be the Dhu'l Qarnain mentioned in the Holy Qur'an?

Fazal Ahmad – UK

August 2004

Jihad – The True Islamic Concept

The much misunderstood concept of Jihad which extremists within Islam and Islam's opponents construe as believe or be smitten by the sword.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Divine Guidance – III

The Holy Prophet^(sa) reformed people who had become beasts and had prepared such truthful and faithful people that they were prepared to

sacrifice everything for the cause of his religion. On the other hand, Jesus^(as) never had the opportunity to cause such a change in his apostles.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Jihad, Human Rights and the Treatment of Minorities in Islam

A paper read at the OIC (Organisation for Islamic Cooperation) on Jihad and human rights from Islamic and western perspectives. Islamic societies respected non-Muslim minorities but since the second half of the last century, political manipulation of an ill-informed clergy and extremists by governments has led to an abuse of personal freedoms and a call for Jihad.

M.A. Ashraf

Outstanding Female Muslims of the Holy Prophet's^(sa) Era

Some inspiring accounts from the lives of some of the first female Muslims.

Quratul-Ain Mirza, Canada

A Brief Introduction to *The Daily Al-Fazl*

A brief account of the origins and history of the Rabwah (Pakistan) based religious publication, the *Alfazl*, at present the only daily published by the community.

Ahmad Mustansir, Rabwah

September 2004

The Issue of Evil and Suffering – the Islamic Perspective

Addresses the question on why innocent people suffer and whether one can benefit from such trials.

Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad Ayaz, OBE, UK

The Essence of Islam: Allah the Exalted, Part 4

Describes many of the attributes of Allah as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, and their permanent nature.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

The Philosophy of Revival of Religion

A speech in Australia describing the prophesies related to the advent of the Messiah, who would bring about the revival of Islam.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Saladin – The Legend of Salahuddin

The life and characteristics of Salahuddin (as witnessed through the dignified manner in which he confronted the Crusaders) and what we can learn from his experiences.

Fazal Ahmad, UK.

October 2004

The Essence of Islam: Allah the Exalted – Part 5

Describes in detail the four principal attributes of Allah as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, and how they are related to each other and have been described in the correct order.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Distinctive Features of Islam

Some of the unique features of Islam ranging from the unity of God, prophethood, the Holy Qur'an, rights of women and life after death that attracted the author to join Islam.

Bilal Atkinson, Hartlepool, UK

The Holy Qur'an – The Perfect Guidance for Mankind

Discussion on how the Holy Qur'an uses the emotions of Hope and Fear to guide mankind towards God.

Fauzia Bajwa - Montreal, Canada

The Task Ahead

A plea to engage in personal reformation and to ignore the fashions and distractions of the outside world.

Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan

The Concept of Jihad in Islam

A study of the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet^(sa) towards other faiths co-existing

with Muslims. Proof that concepts such as forced conversion are alien to the original notion of Jihad, and that actually Jihad is a personal battle of reformation.

Amjad Mahmood Khan, Boston, USA

November 2004

The Human Soul

The soul is created by God from the union of two seminal fluids. It is not eternal and uncreated as the Vedas claim. Nor is it created somewhere else and then injected into the body at or just before the birth of a human being.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Universality of Islam

An in-depth refutation of claims made by Western Orientalists, that Islam was originally intended only for the local Arab tribes. Exposing the weakness of arguments raised against the universality of Islam and clearly establishing that the message of Islam from the outset was for the whole world.

Nuruddin Muneer

Interview With Montgomery Watt

An interview from 1999 of the one whom the Muslim press has described as 'the Last Orientalist.' The Reverend Professor Montgomery Watt was 90 at the time. His interest in Islam was aroused by an argumentative Muslim back in 1937. His study of Islam appears to have influenced his own interpretation of Christianity. Professor Montgomery Watt is alive in Scotland and is a member of the ecumenical Iona Community.

Bashir Maan & Alistair McIntosh

Economic Values

The author reflects on verses of the Qur'an and the hadith relating to economic values. Economic values go hand in hand with social values. Recognising that all prosperity proceeds from God should lead individuals and society as a whole to realise that, even from the purely selfish point of view, the

greatest benefit is to be derived from beneficent spending and distribution of wealth and not from avariciously holding it back.

Late Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan

Epilogue

The concluding chapter of the highly acclaimed book, *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth* which has been serialised regularly in this publication

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ra)

December 2004

Introduction from *Jesus in India*

The introduction to this masterpiece is as relevant today as it was at the time of its writing over 100 years ago. The misconceptions of both Muslims and Christians concerning the life and death of Jesus^(as) and his bodily ascension has caused much confusion. However, the expectation of a bloody Messiah is a false belief of shortsighted scholars.

By Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Inaugural Address at the Opening of Barakat Mosque in Birmingham

A short speech delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the current Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Community in Islam, on the inauguration of a new mosque in Birmingham. A fresh look at 'Love for All, Hatred for None'.

The Holy Qur'an Answers Four Questions on Education

The authors discuss four basic questions on learning in the light of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

By Abdul Majid and Shahab Ahmad

Is there a God?

The author discusses the different means by which one can prove the existence of God and reject the conclusion of atheists.

By Dr. Tariq Anwar Bajwa

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