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EDITORIAL

By Mansoor Saqi

One purpose of all religions is to bring about peace, both individual and collective. Despite this, there remains a misconception that religion is often associated with conflict, for example, that religious differences cause strife. Often this is due to a lack of understanding of the true nature of religious teachings.

Islam is a universal religion in that it recognises all the previous prophets of God. The message of Islam contains a prescription for the establishment of peace. It emphasises to the believer the importance of one's duty to God as well as one's duty to man. One of the key duties of man to his fellow human beings is the showing of compassion and kindness. In addition, mutual respect for other faiths is an important factor in developing an atmosphere of peace and understanding and fostering the conditions for inter-religious dialogue.

In this issue of *The Review of*

Religions is an address delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V from London, on the occasion of the Annual Conference of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Qadian, India. In this address, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V draws attention to the importance of peace, tolerance and sympathy for mankind. The address discusses the importance of respect for the followers of other faiths. It is explained how the writings of the Promised Messiah^(as) illustrate the vital importance of sympathy for mankind:

'Show compassion to the people and do not harm them with your speech, or hand, or with any trickery. Continue to endeavour for the welfare of all creatures ...'

Regarding the importance of service to humanity:

'...whatever kinds of needs God's creatures have, you should attempt to fulfil them,

irrespective of which people or which religion they belong to ...'

humanitarian aid to all peoples in need of help. Such compassion is a hallmark of humanity.

and furthermore:

'Sympathy for mankind is such a quality that if a man were to leave it and continuously distance himself from it then gradually he would turn into a beast. Man's humanity demands it and he remains a human being only as long as he treats his brother with politeness, civility and kindness'

The world has recoiled in horror and dismay from the scale of the tragedy inflicted by the tsunami in Asia. People all over the world have responded to the disaster that has unfolded on their television screens and the suffering of the victims has generated international grief and an international willingness to help – there has been a huge response by individuals to the appeal for financial aid. This disaster reminds us of the need for compassion and sympathy for all humans and of the giving of

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.

GOD'S

Beauty and Beneficence (part 7)

This series sets out, in the words of the Promised Messiah^(as), Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a summary of his exposition of four outstanding topics: ISLAM; ALLAH, THE EXALTED; THE HOLY PROPHET^(sa) and THE HOLY QUR'AN. The original compilation, in Urdu, from which these extracts have been translated into English, was collated with great care and diligence by Syed Daud Ahmad Sahib, Allah have mercy on him and reward him graciously for his great labour of love. Amin. The English rendering is by the late Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, may Allah be pleased with him, and is quoted from *The Essence of Islam*, Volume 1. All references throughout, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, are from the Holy Qur'an.

God's law of nature and the book of nature, which have been in existence since the creation of man, teach us that to establish a strong relationship with God it is necessary to have experienced His Beneficence and His Beauty. As pointed out before, by beneficence is meant instances of the moral qualities of God Almighty which a man might have personally experienced in his own being. For instance, God may have become his Guardian when he was helpless and weak

and an orphan. Or God may have fulfilled his need at a time of want; or God may have helped him at a time of great sorrow; or God may have guided him without the intervention of a preceptor or guide in his search after God.

By His beauty are also meant His attributes which appear in the guise of beneficence, for instance, His perfect Power or His Tenderness or His Kindness or His Rububiyat or His Compassion, or

His general Rububiyyat and those common bounties which are available in large numbers for the comfort of man. There is also His knowledge which a person obtains through Prophets and thereby saves himself from death and ruin. Also His attribute that He hears the supplications of the restless and fatigued ones. Also His excellence that He inclines towards those who incline towards Him, even more so. All this is comprised in God's Beauty. The very same attributes when they are experienced by a person become His Beneficence with reference to him, though they are only His Beauty with reference to others.

When a person experiences in the shape of Beneficence those Divine attributes which constitute His Beauty, his faith is strengthened beyond measure and he is drawn towards God as iron is drawn towards a magnet. His love for God increases manifold and his trust in God becomes very strong. Having experienced that all his good is in God, his hopes in God are strengthened. He continues to incline towards God naturally, without pretence and



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

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.

affectation, and finds himself dependent upon God's help every moment and believes firmly through the contemplation of Divine attributes that he will be successful, because he has experienced in his own person

many instances of God's grace, favour and generosity. Therefore, his supplications proceed from the fountain of power and certainty and his resolve becomes extremely firm and unshakable.

In the end, having observed Divine favours and bounties, the light of certainty enters with great force into him and his ego is altogether consumed. On account of the frequent contemplation of the greatness and power of God, his heart becomes the House of God. As the human soul never leaves his body while a person is alive, in the same way, the certainty that enters into him from God, the Mighty and Glorious, never leaves him. The Holy Spirit surges inside him all the time and he speaks under the instruction of this very Spirit. Verities and insights flow out of him and the tent of the Lord of Honour and Majesty is ever set in his heart. The delight of certainty, sincerity and love flows through him like water whereby every limb of his is nourished. His eyes exhibit the brightness of nourishment and his forehead reveals its light. His countenance appears as if it had been washed by the rain

of Divine love and his tongue partakes fully of this freshness. All his limbs exhibit a brightness, as after a spring shower an attractive freshness is revealed in the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits of trees.

The body of a person on whom this spirit has not descended and who has not been refreshed by it is like a corpse. This freshness and joyousness cannot be described in words and can never be acquired by the dead heart which has not been refreshed by the fountain of the light of certainty. On the contrary, it stinks. But the one who has been bestowed this light, and inside whom this fountain has burst forth, exhibits as one of his signs that all the time and in everything, in every word and in every action, he receives power from God. This is his delight and his comfort and he cannot live without it.

[*Review of Religions*, Urdu, Vol.1, pp.186-187]

Perfect praise is offered for two kinds of excellences, fullness of beauty and fullness of beneficence. If anyone possesses both

these excellences, one's heart becomes enamoured of him. The principal function of the Holy Qur'an is to display both these excellences of God, so that people may be drawn towards that Being Who has no equal or like, and should worship Him with the eagerness of their souls. For this purpose, in the very first chapter, it sets out the excellences of the God to Whom it invites people. That is why this chapter opens with *Alhamdu lillah*, which means that all praise belongs to the Being Whose name is Allah. In the idiom of the Qur'an, Allah is the name of the Being Whose excellences have reached the perfection of beauty and beneficence, and Who suffers from no deficiency. The Holy Qur'an invests the name of Allah with all attributes and thus indicates that Allah comprehends all perfect attributes. As He comprises every excellence, His beauty is obvious. By virtue of this beauty, He is named Light in the Holy Qur'an as is said:

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.
(Ch.24: V.36)

This means that all light is but a reflection of His light.

Almighty Allah's Attributes of Beneficence

Divine qualities of beneficence are many, of which four are basic. In their natural order, the first one is that which is described in Surah Fatihah (first chapter of the Holy Qur'an) as *Rabb-ul-'Alamin*. This means that the *Rububiyyat* of God Almighty, that is to say, the creation and carrying to perfection of the universe, is in operation all the time. The world of heaven and earth, the world of bodies and souls, the world of animals, vegetables and minerals, and all other worlds, are being nurtured by His *Rububiyyat*. The worlds through which a human being passes before his taking shape as a sperm till his death, or his arrival in his second life, are all nourished from the fountain of *Rububiyyat*.

Thus Divine *Rububiyyat*, because it comprehends all souls, bodies, animals, vegetables, and minerals etc. is named the most general grace, inasmuch as everything that exists is its recipient and

comes into being through it. Although Divine *Rububiyyat* is the originator of everything that exists, and nourishes and sustains it, yet its greatest beneficiary is man because he derives benefit from the whole of creation. Therefore, man has been reminded that his God is *Rabb-ul-'Alamin* so that he should be encouraged to believe that the power of God Almighty is vast and that for man's benefit He can bring into being all types of resources.

The second excellence of God Almighty, which is His beneficence in the next degree and which is called general grace, is *Rahmaniyyat*, by virtue of which God is named *Rahman* in Surah Fatihah. In the idiom of the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty is called *Rahman* because He bestowed upon every living thing, which includes man, its appropriate shape and qualities. That is to say, man was bestowed all faculties and powers and was given a shape and limbs which were needed by the type of life which had been designed for him and to which they were suited. Whatever was

needed for his maintenance was provided. Birds, animals and man were all bestowed powers that were suited to them. Thousands of years before their coming into being, God Almighty by virtue of His attribute of *Rahmaniyyat*, created the heavenly and earthly bodies so that all living things might be safeguarded. No one's action has anything to do with the *Rahmaniyyat* of God Almighty. It is pure mercy which came into operation before the coming into being of living things. Man is the principal beneficiary of the *Rahmaniyyat* of God Almighty, inasmuch as everything is sacrificed for his success. Therefore, he is reminded that God is *Rahman*.

The third excellence of God Almighty, which is His beneficence in the third degree, is *Rahimiyyat*, by virtue of which God has been named *Rahim* in Surah Fatihah. In the idiom of the Holy Qur'an, God is called *Rahim* when accepting the prayers, supplications and righteous actions of people, He safeguards them against calamities, misfortunes and waste of effort. This

beneficence is described as special grace and is confined to human beings. Other things have not been bestowed the faculty of prayer and supplication and righteous action, but man has been bestowed this faculty. Man is an articulate animal and can be the recipient of Divine grace through the exercise of his faculty of speech. Other things have not been bestowed this faculty. It is obvious, therefore, that supplication is a quality of humanness, which is inherent in man's nature.

Man derives grace from the Divine attribute of *Rahimiyyat* as he derives from the attributes of *Rububiyyat* and *Rahmaniyyat*; the only difference is that *Rububiyyat* and *Rahmaniyyat* do not demand supplication as they are not confined to man and bestow their grace upon all living things, and indeed *Rububiyyat* comprises within itself beneficence towards animals, vegetables, minerals and heavenly and earthly bodies. Nothing is outside the operation of its grace. As a contrast, *Rahimiyyat* is a special robe of honour for man. If man does not derive benefit from this attribute,

he reduces himself to the condition of animals, nay, even of minerals.

The operation of *Rahimiyyat* having been confined to man, and supplication being needed for bringing it into operation, it shows that there is a type of Divine grace which is conditioned upon supplication and cannot be achieved without supplication. This is the way of Allah and is a definite law the contravention of which is not permissible. That is why all Prophets [peace be on them] supplicated for their followers. The Torah reveals that on many occasions the children of Israel offended God Almighty and were about to be chastised, but the chastisement was averted by the prayers, supplications and prostrations of Moses^(as) though time after time God announced that He would destroy Israel.

All this shows that prayer is not in vain, nor is it a type of worship which does not procure any grace. This is the thinking of those who do not estimate God Almighty as He should be estimated, and who do not reflect deeply on God's

words nor do they observe the law of nature. The truth is that grace does certainly descend in response to supplication and bestows salvation upon us. It is the grace of *Rahimiyyat* through which man makes progress. Through this grace, man arrives at the stage of Wilayat, and believes in God Almighty as if he was beholding Him. Intercession also depends upon the attribute of *Rahimiyyat*. It is *Rahimiyyat* of God Almighty that demands that good people should intercede for bad people.

The fourth beneficence of God Almighty, which might be named most special grace, is *Malikiyyat* of the Day of Judgement, by virtue of which He has been named *Maliki-Yaum-id-Din* in Surah Fatihah. The difference between this attribute and *Rahimiyyat* is that through prayer and worship *Rahimiyyat* operates to establish a person's worthiness and through *Malikiyyat* the reward is awarded. Through the operation of *Rahimiyyat*, a person deserves success in an affair like a student's passing an examination, but to be awarded the

rank or other object for which the examination was undertaken and passed is by virtue of the attribute of *Malikiyyat*. These two attributes indicate that the beneficence of *Rahimiyyat* is achieved through God's mercy and the favour of *Malikiyyat* is achieved through the grace of Almighty God. *Malikiyyat* would manifest itself on a vast and perfect scale in the hereafter, but in accordance with the measure of this world, all these four attributes manifest themselves in this world as well.

[*Ayyam-us-Sulah*, *Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 14, pp. 247-251]

A speech delivered in 1982 by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^(ru) in Zurich where he admonishes that by carrying out a change in ourselves we can save ourselves from destruction.

A Message *of* HOPE

(Part 2)



In accord with this basic divine principle Allah, the Exalted, sent a Warner in this age also and assured him that He would make his truth manifest through powerful assaults. Out of a deeply moved and disturbed heart this Divine Warner (Hadhraat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah^(as)) admonished humanity in the light of the knowledge vouchsafed to him by Allah, the All-Knowing and All-Aware, and in prose and verse set forth in advance that which was approaching.

I shall now proceed to present to you a few instances of his

warnings in his own words. In the course of a lengthy poem published in April 1905 he warned:

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

A sudden manifestation of divine wrath will overtake humanity, which will not afford respite to a naked one so that he may be able to cover himself.

In a moment the earth will be turned upside down and streams of blood shall flow in channels.

All those who travel will find themselves in great distress at that hour and in their confusion will not be able to find their way.

All men, high and low, will be terrified with fear, and even the mighty Czar will experience great misery.

That divine sign will be a sample of heavenly wrath; heaven will deliver its attacks with its drawn sword.

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

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

He says further:

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

He will demonstrate the brilliance of His Sign five times.

This is God's word which you

will appreciate only when it is fulfilled.

(Haqeeqatul Wahi)

This great Warner was addressed by Allah, the Glorious, in the following terms:

I shall show thee the earthquake of the last day.

Allah will show you the earthquake of the last day.

On that day it will be asked

Whose is the kingdom today?

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

I shall manifest this sign to you five times.

If I so willed the world would end that day.

(Haqeeqatul Wahi, p.93)

As the Warner of the age has himself explained, the expression 'earthquakes' which occurs in these prophecies could mean such severe afflictions the like of which may not have been witnessed ever before.

I now proceed to set forth the words in which this great Warner admonished the peoples of the world:

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

happen. Many will be delivered and many will be destroyed.

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

We never punish a people until after We have sent a Messenger.

(Ch.17:V.16)

‘Those who repent will be secure and those who fear

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

‘Thou art not secure, O Europe, nor thou, O Asia. O dwellers of the islands, no self-made deity of yours will be able to help you. I behold cities falling and habitations in ruins. That One and Unique Being remained silent for a time. Untoward deeds were done within His sight, and He forbore. But now He will display His countenance in a terrifying shape. Let him who has ears hear that the time is not far. I have tried to gather all under God’s security, but the divine

decrees are bound to be executed. You will witness the time of Noah and your eyes will behold that which happened in the land of Lot. But God is slow in being roused. Repent that you may be shown mercy. He who abandons God is an insect and not human, and he who does not fear Him is dead and not alive.’

(Haqeeqatul Wahi, pp.256-7)

These prophecies considered together make it clear that the Warner of the age has alerted humanity against five widespread calamities. The world has already witnessed two of them in the shape of the two World Wars. I need not dwell upon them as you are better acquainted with the ruin that they wrought than I am. The prophecies had indicated that the affliction that had been presaged in them would have no equal in human history. It would appear suddenly and overwhelm mankind. Many would lose their mental balance under its impact. Travellers would be specially confronted with difficulties. There would be enormous loss of

human lives. The earth would assume a new aspect and human thinking and outlook would be revolutionised. We find that all of this has been fulfilled in the most surprising manner.

For instance, this great Warner predicted the miserable end of the Czar at a time when the latter was at the height of his power and authority, when he was literally one who ruled over all and was not ruled over by any. At such a time the Divine Messenger informed the world that the time was approaching when the great Czar would suffer a painful and exemplary end. Within a few months of the publication of this prophecy a political party emerged which, after a brief period of twelve or thirteen years, overturned the Russian Imperial house and the Czarist regime and laid the foundation of a new political, social and economic system.

When this great Warner foretold in 1905 heavenly attacks and destructive fire descending from the sky there was yet no indication of any such possibility or of the availability of the means

‘But it should be remembered that up to 1908 no conception whatsoever could have been entertained of atomic weapons and not the farthest flight of a fiction-writer’s imagination could have conceived the possibility of nuclear armaments and of the ruin and destruction which could thereby be wrought. Yet this Warner of the latter days depicted such a holocaust’

therefor. It was the time when the Wright Brothers were still occupied with elementary experiments aimed at the production of a flying machine. Three years after the publication of this prophecy, when this great Warner had already departed this life in May 1908, the Wright Brothers carried out their second experimental flight in September 1908, and it was not till several

years later that in human history aircrafts were first employed for bombardment from the skies.

It may, however, be said that these predictions related to the pre-atomic era and that it was not difficult for a person of fertile imagination to conceive of them.

But it should be remembered that up to 1908 no conception whatsoever could have been entertained of atomic weapons and not the farthest flight of a fiction-writer's imagination could have conceived the possibility of nuclear armaments and of the ruin and destruction which could thereby be wrought. Yet this Warner of the latter days depicted such a holocaust in the following words:

‘I behold cities falling and habitations in ruin.’

‘Such destruction will overtake the earth as would not have been witnessed at any time since the creation of man. Most places would be overturned, as if they had never been dwelt in.’

In due course his prediction was completely fulfilled. Thirty-nine years after the publication of these prophecies the dreadful ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the blood of their pitiable inhabitants became the first witnesses of their truth.

The great Warner who set forth these astonishing predictions, the divinely Commissioned One of the latter days, was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^(as) who appeared in accord with the prophecies set out in the ancient scriptures and were given expression to by the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). He was known by the Divinely bestowed titles of Messiah and Mahdi.

He was born in 1835 at Qadian, a little known town of India. In 1889, he claimed that he was the Promised One whose advent had been foretold in ancient scriptures and had been prophesied by the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). In support of the truth of his claim he set forth every type of argument and heavenly sign and his own prophecies, many of which were fulfilled during his lifetime. With

his powerful reasoning, supported by heavenly signs, he established that the God of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah^(sa), the Lord of the universe is the Master of Greatness, Glory and Power.

For establishing communion between God and His creatures and for establishing the truth and righteousness of Muhammad^(sa), he initiated under Divine direction, a Movement which is known as the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

It may be asked how it can be determined whether Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian was truly the Warner whose advent had been foretold by the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). The Holy Qur'an furnishes abundant proof of this. For instance, it says:

On the day when the trumpet will be blown, We shall gather the sinful ones together, blue-eyed. They will commiserate with each other in low tones: Your period of domination lasted but ten centuries.
(Ch.20:Vs.103-104)

Blue-eyed is the sign that identifies the people to whom this warning of the Holy Qur'an is directed. The specification of the period of their domination as ten centuries makes it plain and identifies with a certainty those western people who dominate the world today.

In the prophecy of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), mentioned earlier, the regions occupied by these blue-eyed peoples have been specified. He said:

'Thou art not secure, O Europe, nor art thou safeguarded, O Asia. O dwellers of the islands, no self-made deity of yours will be able to come to your help.'

The warning conveyed in the verses of Chapter 20 of the Holy Qur'an set out above read along with the admonitions of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), makes it clear that the subjects of these prophecies are peoples who:

- (a) are blue-eyed,
- (b) have dominated the world for centuries,

- (c) are connected with America, Europe, Asia and the islands, and
- (d) abandoning their Creator and Master, they worship a self-made deity of their own.

These particulars leave no doubt in the identification of those peoples.

Another factor which emerges from this study is that both these prophecies have proceeded from the same source. This furnishes the answer to the question raised above. The specification in the wording of two distinct prophecies made at an interval of fourteen centuries of the same peoples and of the same regions inhabited by them proves that the two prophecies are interconnected. This is sure testimony that Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), a devoted servant of the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa), was raised as the Divinely commissioned spiritual Guide of the latter days.

Further, the Holy Qur'an proceeds:

They ask thee concerning the mountains. Tell them: My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust, leaving them as a barren level plain, in which there is no depression or elevation.
(Ch.20:Vs.106-108)

In exact accord with this description set out in the Holy Qur'an is the description which Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) has delineated of the ruin that would overtake the world in the latter days which we have set out above.

This is the ruin which may overwhelm the world in consequence of associating a partner with God, disobedience of His Commandments and turning away from the guidance furnished by Him. Yet, it should be remembered that these prophecies are warnings and such prophecies may be averted through sincere repentance and earnest supplications for forgiveness. If man was to abandon all forms of association of others with God, establish true communion with Him, discard all vice and

wrongdoing, become diligent in performing all his obligations to God and to his fellow beings, and was to cultivate true sympathy for the whole of mankind, this threatened torment could be averted. This aspect of Divine grace is indicated both in Chapter 20 of the Holy Qur'an and in the prophecies of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as).

In Ch.20:V.108, there is a clear indication that the dominant peoples of this age would be afflicted with arrogance on account of their power and greatness and their wealth and the multiplicity of their resources, in consequence of which they would suffer from a perversion which would lead them away from the straight path and alienate them from their Creator and Lord. As a result, Allah Almighty would deprive them of their greatness and domination and thus stamp out their pride and arrogance. Their individuals would then incline towards humility, meekness and selflessness, whereby they would win the grace and mercy of Allah and would thus find deliverance.

In other words, these peoples would not be physically destroyed but would suffer the ruin of their greatness and power and would cease to be great powers. The same indication is disclosed in the prophecies of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), the Spiritual Leader of the latter days. For instance, he has said:

‘I have been shown that my followers will abound in different regions of Russia like the grains of sand.’

Thus it would seem that after the great ruin the two contending blocks will be destroyed and their pride and arrogance would be rubbed into the dust. Their condition would be like a barren level plain in which there would be neither depression nor elevation.

So far as numbers are concerned, Russia would be comparatively better safeguarded. Its population would again grow rapidly and its inhabitants will confess their transgressions and misguidance and will turn in large numbers to faith and will recognise and submit to the Spiritual Leader of

the latter days. They would establish a cultural pattern which would not be afflicted with the perversions of arrogance and injustice, nor suffer from a false sense of dignity and honour which is generated by a denial of God.

It must be remembered, however, that in order to achieve the deliverance presaged in what has just been said, it is essential that today's man should turn to his Lord and Maker with true remorse, sincere heart and pure intent. He should prostrate himself at the threshold of God with running eyes and a sincerely repentant heart and supplicate for Divine mercy seeking forgiveness for his sins and defaults. He should lay aside all pride, arrogance and deviation, and, purifying his heart of every vice and self-indulgence, should seek Divine help to be guided along the straight path. It is then that Divine mercy would be stirred and every seeker after truth would be guided to the straight path which is the path of the Holy Prophet^(sa) in whose teaching there is no deviation. That path is the true and straight path of Islam. So long as

man does not discard every type of deviation and so long as human culture is not rid of every type of inequality, man will not be able to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet^(sa) whose teaching, according to the Holy Qur'an, is subject to no deviation (Ch.20:V.109).

This is a brief outline of the warning and glad tidings which are directed towards today's man. If he does not reform himself and continues inebriated with his fancied power and authority he is bound to encounter such ruin as would be a sample of the Judgement Day and there would be such loss of human lives as is beyond imagination. But if he takes himself in hand and carries out the needed change in his life, and, discarding worldly comfort and luxury, becomes a sincere seeker of spiritual joy and delight, there is the great news for him that he would be redeemed and would become deserving of his Lord's mercy, pleasure and love.

In the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty has set forth a fundamental principle which

regulates His chastisement and His mercy, which is:

I will inflict my chastisement on (those concerning) whom I do determine; but My mercy encompasseth all.

(Ch.7:V.157)

Basing myself on this Qur'anic fundamental, I, Fourth Successor of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement, call all of you to my Lord and your Lord and convey to you the good news that these grave prophecies of ruin and destruction can be averted and man can become heir to God's mercy instead of earning His chastisement. A society patterned on injustice and wrong can be moulded into a pattern of equality and mutual sympathy. The only condition is that man should turn to his Master and Maker and repenting sincerely should establish a true relationship with Him.

Witnessing man's miserable condition in the present age, my heart sheds tears of blood and the love

of humanity and sympathy with my fellow beings compels me to invite you to the following of Muhammad^(sa), the Chosen Messenger of Allah, who was raised as a mercy for the Universe. As a humble servant of his, it is my sincere desire that you should pay attention to this invitation of mine and should reflect on it with unprejudiced minds.

May Allah enable today's man to carry out a change in his condition, mend his ways and discarding the worship of false gods, to prostrate himself at the threshold of his Creator like the followers of the Prophet Jonas^(as) and that the same scene of turning to the only True God may be witnessed in every city and town as was witnessed in the case of the people of the Prophet Jonas^(as). Amin.

Concluding Address at the **JALSA SALANA QADIAN**

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Khalil-ur-Rehman Mullick –

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By the Grace of Allah the 112th Jalsa Salana in Qadian is approaching its conclusion today and will conclude with my address. According to the report, many non-Ahmadi guests are also attending this gathering. They estimate that the attendance is thirty two to thirty three thousands and that it is still increasing.

I have selected the subject of the lofty examples from the teachings of Islam and the expectations of the Promised Messiah^(as) of the

Jama'at as to what type of Jama'at he wanted to create. The beautiful teaching that Muhammad^(sa) presented to the world 1400 years ago includes detailed guidance on even minor matters for Muslims as to how brothers and friends should establish mutual relations and what are the essential requirements for establishing a peaceful

society and what social surroundings can be created which lead to the formation of a peaceful society. In addition to the teachings of mutual relations among the Muslims, he also taught the ways of dealing with the non-Muslims in a lofty manner; he taught the methods and manners of discharging our duty towards fellow Muslims as well as towards the followers of other religions; and, he taught us the methods of worshipping God. In short, there is not a single aspect which the Holy Prophet^(sa) left unattended.

The Holy Qur'an is a complete and perfect teaching revealed to him thus completing the Faith and perfecting the Shariah (law). The Holy Prophet^(sa) did not just convey the Message but presented it to the world backed by his own personal examples, acting upon which the companions of the Holy Prophet^(sa) brought about such phenomenal change in their lives that could not be imagined by man. They also did their best to convey this teaching to the world. Then gradually the Muslims forgot this teaching and

worldliness prevailed amongst them.

Then, as Allah had promised, He raised Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian as the Promised Messiah and Mahdi who was the true devotee and spiritual 'son' of the Holy Prophet^(sa). Once again, he presented to the world the beautiful teachings of the Holy Prophet^(sa) and answered the objections raised by the opponents of Islam, with cogent reasoning and established that Islam now was the only religion that would live until the end of the world. He said: I do not say this casually but prove it with logical arguments. He told the believers that if you listen to me attentively and reflect over what I say, I will teach you the deep knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and then, with this knowledge and by the Grace of Allah, you will be able to set out and proclaim this Shariah to the world, strengthen your faith and bring mankind to the threshold of God, establish His Pure and Pristine Unity and remember that Islam is the only religion in the world under whose protective standard rests the

survival of humanity. He said: Disseminate this teaching to save the world from destruction, for:

‘Surely the true religion with Allah is Islam’
(Ch.3:V.20).

Allah also says

And whoso seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him and in the life to come he shall be among the losers.
(Ch.3:V.86)

Discussing the supremacy of Islam over other religions and why it is the final law and what superiority it has, the Promised Messiah^(as) says:

‘The reality of Islam which the Holy Qur’an teaches is not a new thing; all the Prophets^(as) were sent to give this teaching; and the object of all Divine Books has been the same i.e. to establish mankind on the right path. However, the total supremacy of the teaching of the Holy Qur’an over all other teachings is based on two reasons:

‘Firstly, all the previous prophets were not raised for all mankind. For example, you see that in the time of the previous prophets, there were other prophets in adjacent territories who at the same time called their people to the One and only God. The previous prophets were not appointed for the whole of mankind but were sent only for their own specific people who had limited capabilities and needed to be reformed in their specific habits, beliefs, sincerity and way of life. For this very reason, their Books were limited to those people and brought guidance which was appropriate for those specific people and according to their limited capabilities i.e. they befitted their capacities.

‘The second reason is that those earlier prophets were given such laws which were for a limited time and God had not intended that those teachings should continue to the end of the world. Thus, being limited to a specific time, those teachings brought guidance just for that time and were limited for the time which Divine wisdom had determined

for them.’ (*Ayena Kamalate Islam* p 126).

Explaining this complete and perfect Shariah (Law) of Islam, the Promised Messiah^(as) reminds his followers specifically that the essence of this excellent teaching is that you worship Allah and show true sympathy for mankind and service to them. ‘Dedication of life in the cause of Allah has two segments: firstly, to hold God as your Lord, your Object and your Beloved and there should be no associate in His worship, love, fear and hope. The second part of dedication of life in the cause of Allah is to serve His creatures with true sympathy, seeking a cure for their affliction, lightening their burdens and sharing their grief, undergoing suffering to give comfort to others and bearing distress for the happiness of others.

This shows that the essence of Islam is very lofty and no man can truly deserve the title of being called a Muslim so long as he does not dedicate his life to God with all his capabilities, desires and motives and as long as he does not renounce his ego with all

its ingredients and engages himself in the path of God. Therefore, one will truly be called a Muslim when his ignorant way of life undergoes a radical change and his self that incites him to evil is, all at once, destroyed with all its desires and so that after this death he may develop a new life to become a benefactor for the sake of Allah. That life should be so pure that it should contain nothing but devotion to God and sympathy for His creatures.

‘The service of mankind in this way – that in all kind of needs of God’s creatures which arise as a result of their varying capacities which God as Eternal Apportioner has bestowed on them and has thus made some depend on others – in all these matters, one should give everything purely for the sake of Allah with sincere and selfless sympathy, provide assistance with his God given capacities to everyone who needs it and should do his utmost for the betterment of their life both here and in the hereafter.’

Let me clarify this point. The Promised Messiah^(as) says that the

first requirement to call yourself a Muslim is that you should work according to the will and pleasure of Allah, with all your capacities whether intellectual or physical. You should make yourself come up to the mark of the teachings of God. Destroy your selfish desires also. When Allah commands you to worship Him and says that it is the time for prayers, then instead of attending the mosque you do not engage yourself in worldly pursuits. The Promised Messiah^(as) says you must destroy your ego. In no way should you think of your greatness, your merit, or your piety. At all times you should realise that 'I am a humble servant of God and all greatness and grandeur belongs to God.' You must not think that 'I have given sacrifices for the Jama'at and now the Jama'at should look after me'. Whatever sacrifices you have given, whatever sacrifices you have rendered, you have done it for the sake of God to set right your life here and in the hereafter. If it deserves a reward it is God alone Who can Himself give you your reward.

The second important duty and obligation which the Promised Messiah^(as) says is that Islam has commanded us that we should serve God's creatures. He says that whatever kinds of needs God's creatures have, you should attempt to fulfil them, irrespective of which people or to which religion they belong because Allah has made some people depend on others. This is the on-going social system in this world that one is employed by another in his business or is his personal servant. At times some needy people knock at your door, you should help them. To whatever extent you have the strength and capacity, you should try to assist them in worldly matters as well as in religious matters. Besides fulfilling their worldly needs, tell them about the beautiful teachings of Islam. Acquaint them with it. If they are already Muslims, then exhort them to act upon the true teachings of Islam which the Holy Prophet^(sa) had presented. Only then can it be said that you have achieved the object for which you have been created and for which you have accepted Islam.

So a religion whose essence is to worship Allah and to serve humanity – how can you imagine that its followers will fight in the name of religion as is being alleged these days? If calling himself a Muslim one does that, then he is acting against the teachings of Islam. It is certainly not the teaching of Islam. Islam is a religion of tenderness, of love and affection and of human dignity. Islam honours and respects not only all the prophets but also those who believe in them. It respects leaders of all religions, of all nations and issues commandments to respect them. Rather, as I said, the teaching of Islam has taken respect and honour to such lofty levels that it is reported by Ibn Umar that the Holy Prophet(sa) said

‘When a dignitary of a people visits you, you must respect him.’ (Ibn Maja)

Another report clarifies this further that it is not just dignitaries. Once, there was a dispute between a Muslim and a Jew in Madinah – the Muslim said: I swear by God Who has

‘Islam is a religion of tenderness, of love and affection and of human dignity. Islam honours and respects not only all the prophets but also those who believe in them. It respects leaders of all religions, of all nations and issues commandments to respect them.’

given Muhammad(sa) excellence over all the world. The Jew said: I swear by God Who has given Moses(as) superiority over all the world. At this the Muslim slapped the Jew. The Jew complained to the Holy Prophet(sa). The Holy Prophet(sa) said: Do not express my superiority over Moses (as) (Bukhari).

These are the examples of the lofty morals of the Holy Prophet(sa). Despite the fact that he knew and had firm faith in it, for Allah had told him that he was a law-bearing prophet and the Seal of all the Prophets, and that Allah had given him excellence over all

the Prophets, he could not tolerate that any of his followers should injure the religious feelings of others, so he stopped them. Whereas these opponents today allege that Islam is a belligerent religion and incites wars. It is reported that the Holy Prophet^(sa) said: *It is not permitted that one should declare that I am better than Hadhrat Yunus bin Matta [Jonah^(as)].*

The Promised Messiah^(as) says:

‘This principle that we should declare all Prophets to be true whose religion took root and flourished and millions of people joined their religion is absolutely correct and exceedingly blessed. Despite differences, it lays the foundation of peace and reconciliation. This is an exceedingly good principle. Were the world to adopt this principle it would put an end to much discord and religious contempt which is disturbing peace in the society.’ (*Tohfah Qaisariyya Ruhani Khazain vol 12, p.6*).

The Promised Messiah^(as) says that this is what Islam teaches and it is

a principle that lays the foundation of peace and reconciliation. It is such an excellent principle that should the people adopt it, the whole world would become a cradle of peace. Everyone will begin to respect and honour other men. One should speak of the beauties of one’s religion and must not speak of the evil of other religions. Accusing other religions means that one lacks arguments to defend one’s own religion. A religion that lacks arguments means that falsehood has found its way into that religion. Only those people are ready to fight and kill who lack proof and are not certain of their truth.

Followers of some religions allege that Islam is a warring religion, and it has become so ingrained in their hearts and it has been planted there so firmly that they are not ready to accept that Islam is a peace-loving religion.

The Promised Messiah^(as) says: ‘We can prove conclusively that Islamic wars were fought entirely in defence and did not contain such severity and strictness which

are found in the battles of Moses^(as) and Joshua^(as). If they were to claim that the wars of Moses^(as) and Joshua^(as) were in the form of Divine punishment, then why do they not they regard Islamic wars as Divine punishment? What preference do the other wars have? Whereas compared to Jewish wars, many privileges were granted in the Islamic wars.

The fact is that since the opponents of Islam were unaware of previous teachings, Allah showed much more compassion to them compared to the compassion shown to the opponents of Hadhrat Moses^(as) for God is '*Most Forgiving and Ever Merciful*'. Compared to the Jewish wars, Islamic wars have the great distinction that the Holy Prophet^(sa) and his followers were persecuted most dreadfully for 13 long years. They were oppressed and made to suffer all kinds of misery by those tyrants. For example, many of the Muslims were killed and some died through terrible tortures. It is not hidden from those who have studied the history that women

were murdered in a most shameful manner. For instance, a woman was tied to two camels that were made to run in opposite directions thus splitting the body into two halves. The Holy Prophet^(sa) and his devoted followers bore these atrocities and suffering with patience and great courage for 13 long years. Even then, they did not stop their oppression, and finally they hatched a plot to kill the Holy Prophet^(sa). Learning of their evil plan from Allah, the Holy Prophet^(sa) left Makkah to migrate to Madinah but they pursued him and eventually attacked Madinah. It was then that Allah commanded the Holy Prophet^(sa) to defend themselves against the attack, as it was now the time that as a penalty of their wantonness and evil conspiracies the Makkans should taste Divine punishment.

'So the promise of God that if they did not stop their wickedness they would be destroyed through Divine punishment was fulfilled. The Holy Qur'an itself has recorded the reasons for these wars. It says:

Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged – and Allah indeed has power to help them – Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said: ‘Our Lord is Allah’...
(Ch.22:Vs.40,41)

After this verse was revealed, the series of Islamic defensive wars began.

‘Then whatever privileges you will see granted during Islamic wars you will not find an example thereof in the wars of Moses^(as) and Joshua^(as). In Jewish wars, thousands of children were killed, the old and the women were also killed, the trees of orchards were set on fire and burned to ashes, and all this can be proven from the Torah. Despite having witnessed extreme oppression and the atrocities of the wicked which had not been witnessed before, our Holy Prophet^(sa) gave orders not to kill children, not to kill the old and the women, not to interfere with the monks, not to burn crops or fruit trees and not to

demolish the places of worship.’
(*Al Hakam vol 6 no. 2 Jan 17 1902*)

Now compare them and see which one carries more weight. When the Holy Prophet^(sa) sent soldiers to war, he used to give them specific instructions. The Promised Messiah^(as) says that we find detailed accounts in the Ahadith that when the Holy Prophet^(sa) went to war or sent an army, he used to give them strict orders that no women should be killed, children must not be killed, do not contend with the old, the refugees, the monks and the hermits must not be interfered with, no one should be burnt to death, no animal should be killed, no tree should be cut down and no corpse of the enemy should be defiled in revenge. After victory he used to make this announcement: You must not kill an injured person, do not pursue those who run away. About the prisoners he used to say, treat them kindly. For instance, the prisoners of the Battle of Badr state, by God, that while letting us ride their mounts Muslims used to walk; they went hungry, but gave us food to eat;

they went thirsty, but gave us water to drink (*Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood*).

Those who label Islam as a warring religion and terrorist religion should pause and reflect. Do warring religions give these kind of instructions? Do not call it the teaching of Islam, when it serves the interests of a few individuals or the interests of a few organisations.

Man considers himself most civilised and cultured in the world today, but can we see these high morals being displayed in his wars? When bombs are being rained by aeroplanes or cannons are fired on the inhabitants of a city, you can see how much innocent blood of the children and innocent citizens is being shed. So if there is terrorism, it is being perpetrated by one but its price is being paid by another. Wherever there is turmoil, the media records it in the form of funeral processions of the elderly, the children and women. Which teaching would you then call excellent?

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

Whosoever killed a person for an offence unless it be for murder or for creating disorder in the land shall be considered to have killed the entire human race...

(Ch.5:V.33)

In explanation, the Promised Messiah^(as) says: 'If someone killed a person who was not rebelling or disturbing the peace of the society, nor creating disorder in the land, it would be regarded as though he had killed all the people. So according to this verse of the Holy Qur'an, to kill someone unjustly is, in the sight of Allah, as though one has killed the entire human race.' (*Lecture Chashma-e-Ma'rifat p23-24*)

The Promised Messiah^(as) said: 'Anyone who ignores sympathy, ignores his faith, for the Holy Qur'an says: whoever kills someone unjustly, it is as though he kills the whole world. I say that if someone has not shown sympathy to his brother, then he has not shown sympathy to the

whole world.’ (*Al Hakam vol 9 no. 15, 30 April 1905 p2*).

There is a Tradition in which Abu Aziz Bin Umair brother of Musab Bin Umair reports, ‘I was also taken a prisoner by the Muslims at Badr who were commanded by the Holy Prophet^(sa) to treat the prisoners kindly.’ (*Tabrani*).

Hazan bin Aswad also reports that during one campaign, there were some corpses of children among the dead. When the Holy Prophet^(sa) learnt this, he asked, ‘Who has killed innocent children together with the fighting men?’ Someone submitted: ‘O Messenger of Allah! the children were only the sons of the idolators.’ The Holy Prophet^(sa) said: ‘Those best among you today were also the children of the idolators until yesterday. Now you have accepted Islam but until yesterday you too were the children of the idolators. Remember that when a child is born he is born with a pure nature and he continues in this innocent state until he learns speech. Then his parents make him a Jew or a Christian.’ The purpose of this

admonition was that to kill children for the reason that they are sons of idolators is a major sin.

So you see this is the beautiful teaching that Islam presents. Muslims have been acting upon this teaching and now Jama’at Ahmadiyya also claims to act upon it and is acting upon it.

Since the advent of the Promised Messiah^(as), this is the stand of Jama’at Ahmadiyya that the concept of a belligerent Jihad has become unlawful. What I have mentioned about the killing of children etc., you can see that such evil acts are being perpetrated in today’s world in the wars of those who claim to be civilised. Also the freedom of conscience and freedom of religion which Islam allows, are not to be found to the same standard in any other religion. To illustrate this I will cite an example.

Despite having become the subjects of the rule of the Holy Prophet^(sa), some groups of opponents wanted to continue to

adhere to their old religion. So they wondered what would happen to them for they knew that this was what the Holy Prophet(sa) used to demand that every man should have the right to follow whatever religion he chose. Since the opponents had not accepted his demand, despite knowing that this was what Islam taught, they were fearful as this was not what they themselves practised and they used to compel the Muslims to abandon their faith. When these opponents suffered defeat and the Muslims gained the upper hand, they began to fear. To dispel their fears, the Holy Prophet(sa) once addressed them and said: 'The principle for which I have fought you, shall not be compromised because of your enmity. In view of your oppressive mentality, you had adopted a wrong stand yet the truth will prevail in all circumstances; you are free, there is no hold on you. Each one of you is free to choose his religion. You are our citizens and Allah and His messenger will provide you all kind of protection and this is the freedom of religion.' (*Nasbur Rayah fee Takhreef*

Ahadithul Hadiyyah, vol.4, p.183)

It is alleged that Islam was spread with force. The Promised Messiah(as) says: 'I do not know from where and from whom our adversaries heard that Islam was spread by the use of the sword whereas God declares in the Holy Qur'an:

There should be no compulsion in matters of religion...
(Ch.2:V.257)

Then who sanctioned the use of force? And what means of use of force had existed? Is this the sincerity and strength of faith of those compelled to accept Islam that without receiving a salary and despite being few in number, only two to three hundred people fought thousands? When they were thousands, they fought against hundreds of thousands of opponents. To defend the faith against the onslaught of the enemy, they let their heads be cut off like sacrificial lambs and sheep and with their blood they put their stamp on the truth of

Islam. They had such intense love to preach the unity of God that they bore hardship like dervishes and reached the desert of Africa and spread Islam in those countries and then suffering all kinds of hardship they reached as far as China, not like the fighting soldiers but as dervishes and as preachers of Islam. Tell me honestly, is this the work of those who are forced to accept Islam – whose heart is a disbeliever but whose tongue is a believer? Nay, this is the work of those whose hearts are filled with the light of faith and in whose heart there is nothing but God.’

The Promised Messiah^(as) says: ‘All true Muslims who lived in the world never believed that Islam should be spread by the sword. Islam has always spread in the world because of its innate beauties. Therefore, those who call themselves Muslims and think that Islam should be spread by the sword, do not know the innate beauty of Islam and their activity is like that of the beasts of the jungle. There is a clear injunction in the Holy Qur’an that do not raise the sword to spread

religion and present only the innate beauties of religion and attract people towards you by your good example. Do not think that in the early period the command to take up arms was given to spread religion. The sword was raised in defence against enemy attacks or to establish peace and its object was never to use force for religion.’

What were the lofty standards of Islamic tolerance and broad-mindedness? Let me quote some examples.

A Christian delegation from Najran visited the Holy Prophet^(sa) after Asr (late afternoon) prayer in the mosque and held discussions with him. When the time of their worship approached (probably it was Sunday), they lined up in the Prophet’s^(sa) Mosque in Madinah to perform their worship. The companions of the Holy Prophet^(sa) asked him if they could stop them. The Holy Prophet^(sa) said, ‘do not stop them.’ So in their normal way they faced towards the East and performed Christian worship in their own way. (*Abu Dawood*)

There was an incident at the fall of Makkah. A delegation of Banu Thiqqeef from Taif came to see the Holy Prophet^(sa). The Holy Prophet^(sa) erected tents in the mosque for their stay. The companions submitted, ‘O Messenger of Allah! They are unclean idolatrous people. It is not right for them to stay in the mosque.’ The Holy Prophet^(sa) said that the revelation of Allah:

...Surely the idolators are unclean...
(Ch.9:V.28)

refers to their heart and not physical uncleanliness. One is not unclean in this sense. All human beings are clean and they can enter every sacred place without let or hindrance. (*Ahkam ul Qur'an vol 3 p901*)

How many examples can one recount of the Holy Prophet^(sa)? Let me relate one more incident after which there will be no need to wonder whether Islam was spread by the sword or whether it prescribed the use of force.

Safwan-bin-Umayya was one of

those leaders of idolators of Makkah who continued to fight the Muslims throughout their lives. On the occasion of the fall of Makkah, despite the declaration of truce, Safwan joined Ikrama and attacked the detachment of Khalid-bin-Waleed. Despite this crime, the Holy Prophet^(sa) did not announce any specific punishment for them. After the fall of Makkah, Safwan and Ikrama were afraid and felt shame and so ran towards the Yemen. Since Safwan was well aware of his crimes, he thought there could be no amnesty for him. His uncle Hadhrat Umair-bin-Wahab approached the Holy Prophet^(sa) and submitted, ‘O Messenger of Allah! You have offered protection to all and sundry. You should think of your cousin and pardon him too.’ The Holy Prophet^(sa) said: ‘I pardon him.’ Immediately, Hadhrat Umair set out towards Yemen and caught up with his nephew and gave him the news that he had been pardoned. Safwan found it hard to believe that he could be pardoned. His crimes appeared unforgivable. He repeatedly told Hadhrat Umair: ‘You are lying,

leave me alone. How can I be forgiven, I fear for my life at the hands of the Muslims.’ Hadhrat Umair explained to him that the Holy Prophet^(sa) was more compassionate than he could ever imagine and was extremely forbearing and benevolent. ‘His home is your home and his rule is your rule.’ After these assurances Safwan went to the Holy Prophet^(sa) and the first question he asked was, ‘have you granted me protection?’ The Holy Prophet^(sa) replied: ‘Yes, I have given you protection.’ Safwan then submitted: ‘Give me two months’ leave to continue to follow my religion for I will not accept Islam yet.’ The Holy Prophet^(sa) said, ‘You are asking for two months’ leave, I will give you four months’ leave.’ This was kindness of the highest level and the greatest moral quality. Its glorious example was set by the Holy Prophet^(sa).

Although Safwan was given leave for four months, yet as he had witnessed the Holy Prophet^(sa)’s kindness and his generosity, he accepted Islam only a few days later. This is how it happened.

After the siege of Taif, when the Holy Prophet^(sa) passed by a valley Safwan was also accompanying him. The Holy Prophet^(sa)’s flock of goats and camels were grazing in that valley and Safwan gazed at them with wonder and covetously. The Holy Prophet^(sa) suddenly noticed his envious gaze and said, ‘O Safwan! do you find the flocks attractive?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ The Holy Prophet^(sa) said: ‘I bestow them upon you.’ At this Safwan uttered involuntarily: ‘By God! such great bestowal cannot be made so happily except by a Prophet of God.’ There and then, Safwan recited the *Kalima* (the affirmation of the Unity of God and of Muhammad being the Messenger of God) and accepted Islam.

These are the lofty standards of the teachings of Islam and its manifestations which once again were taught to us by the Promised Messiah^(as) who urged us to put them in practice so that an atmosphere of love, tolerance, and friendliness is created and established throughout the world and InshaAllah (God willing) with great resolve Jama’at

Ahmadiyya will continue to convey the message to the whole world.

Briefly these are some aspects of the teachings of Islam. There are many more examples which can be quoted but in view of the limited time, I will end here. These are the aspects which the Holy Prophet^(sa) urged us to follow and demonstrated them to us through his noble example.

As I said, the life of the Holy Prophet^(sa) is filled with these lofty moral values but because of the constraint of time I cannot narrate them here. The example of these high moral values are observed not only in the life of the Holy Prophet^(sa) but his spiritual powers and training developed this high standard of character in his companions also.

In this connection, I want to remind you that an Ahmadi's conduct should also reflect this in the footsteps of our great leader the Holy Prophet^(sa) so that even the strangers looking at an Ahmadi should say that if you want to see the true and chaste

example of Islam you should see it in the Ahmadis.

Now I will put before you, in the words of the Promised Messiah^(as), his expectations from us as to what he wants to see in us. Every Ahmadi should try to act upon it. He says: 'O my friends, hold fast to this principle. Treat every person gently; gentle behaviour enhances wisdom and tolerance and develops deep thought. Whoever does not follow this method, he is not one of us. If someone from our Jama'at cannot exercise self-restraint at the abuse and harsh words of our opponents, he has the option to seek legal remedy in the courts, but it is not proper that he should abuse or use harsh words in retaliation and thus create mischief.' This is the advice which we have for our Jama'at and he who does not follow this advice, we expel such a person from our Jama'at.

The Promised Messiah^(as) also says: 'I see that there are many who have no sympathy for their brothers. If a brother is starving, the others pay no attention and are

not prepared to look after him or if he is facing some other difficulties they do not spend a part of their wealth on him. In the Hadith there is an injunction to look after one's neighbour and show sympathy for him. It even says that if you are cooking meat, increase the broth so that you can share it with your neighbour. What do they do nowadays? They are selfish and show no concern for their neighbour. Do not think that neighbour means only the one who lives next-door. Your brothers are also your neighbours even if they live 100 miles away.'

The Promised Messiah^(as) says further: 'Show compassion to the people and do not harm them with your speech, or hand, or with any trickery. Continue to endeavour for the welfare of all creatures, display no pride over anyone even if he be your subordinate. Do not swear at anyone, even if he swears at you; become humble, forbearing, well-meaning and kind to people so that you are acceptable to God. Being superior, show compassion to your juniors, not contempt; being knowledgeable, admonish the

'Remember that, in my opinion, the sphere of sympathy is extremely vast. One should never leave out any people or any individual. Like the ignorant men today, I do not want to say that you restrict your sympathy to the Muslims alone. No, I say that you should show sympathy to all creation of God, be he a Hindu, a Muslim or anyone else. I never like the talk of those who want to limit their sympathy to their own people alone.'

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi^(as)

ignorant, and do not humiliate them with self-conceit; being rich, serve the poor and do not show pride with vanity; be fearful of the paths leading to ruin.'

Warning his Jama'at the Promised Messiah^(as) says: 'You should never think of harming anyone belonging to any religion, any nation or any group. Become a genuine well-wisher for everyone. No troublesome, wicked or

immoral man should ever have access to your gatherings nor should they stay in your home for some time they are likely to be a cause for you to stumble.’

The Promised Messiah^(as) says, ‘These are the things and conditions which I have been stating from the very beginning. It will be obligatory for every member of my Jama’at that they should act upon all of this admonition. In your gatherings there should never be a vocation of impiety, ridicule, jest and derision. Walk the land with pious heart, pure nature and pure motives. Remember that every mischief is not worth confronting. Therefore, it is vital that you cultivate a habit of pardon and forgiveness; exercise patience and forbearance and do not attack anyone unjustly; keep your passions and emotions under check. If you hold a debate or religious discussion, you should speak gentle words and conduct yourself in good manners. If one displays ignorance, bid salam (farewell) and immediately leave such a gathering.’ (*Majmoo’ah Ishthiharat, vol. 3, p.47*)

He says: ‘You will be recognised by your five daily prayers and your moral state. Whoever possesses a seed of evil, cannot adhere to this admonition.’

Regarding kindness to Muslims, to relations, and to strangers and to the followers of other religions, he says: ‘Sympathy for mankind is such a quality that if a man were to leave it and continuously distance himself from it, then gradually he would turn into a savage. Man’s humanity demands it and he remains a human being only as long as he treats his brother with politeness, civility and kindness and makes no discrimination.’

‘Remember that, in my opinion, the sphere of sympathy is extremely vast. One should never leave out any people or any individual. Unlike the ignorant men today, I do not want to say that you restrict your sympathy to the Muslims alone. No, I say that you should show sympathy to all the creation of God, be he a Hindu, a Muslim or anyone else. I never like the talk of those who want to limit their sympathy to

their own people alone. Remember that Allah likes goodness the most and He desires that we should be kind to His creation. If He liked evil, He would have enjoined evil but Allah is Holy and above such an imputation.

‘You who have developed a link with me should remember that you should be kind to everyone, no matter to which religion he or she belongs and do good unto everyone without differentiation because this is the teaching of the Holy Qur’an.

They feed for the love of God the poor, the orphan and the prisoner.

(Ch.76:V.9)

The Promised Messiah^(as) says ‘the prisoners were mostly disbelievers.’

So this is the beautiful teaching which the Promised Messiah^(as) is giving us. May Allah enable all of us to act upon the admonition of the Promised Messiah^(as). May he enable us in the true sense to become the worshippers of

Rahman (Gracious) God. Each one of us at all times should be ready to serve mankind. May Allah so destine, and may He make the whole world to realise the importance of human life so that an atmosphere of peace, tranquility and brotherliness may prevail in the world. Amin.

Those who have come to attend the Jalsa, may Allah enable them to avail of the blessings of Jalsa. As from their arrival at the land of the Messiah, may Allah always continue whatever spiritual blessing they have gained in their progeny also and may Allah accept whatever supplication they have been enabled to make. May Allah make all the participants inherit all the prayers which the Promised Messiah^(as) had said for these who attend this Jalsa. May Allah enable all of you to spread the peaceful teachings of Islam and Ahmadiyyat throughout the world, which was conveyed to us by the Holy Prophet^(sa) about which the Holy Prophet^(sa) admonished about and expected all the Muslims to act upon. May Allah take all those attending the Jalsa in Qadian back to their

homes safely and in good health with Allah's grace and may Allah always protect them. Amin.

Before silent prayer, I want to make a brief announcement – in the past few days there was a dreadful earthquake which left widespread destruction in Iran. Sympathy demands that we pray for them and give financial support. Arrangement must have been made in various countries to take the aid to them. In any case the Amirs of the various countries should assess their circumstances and propose a plan and try to help the affected people*. May Allah enable them to do so. Amin.

In the first report received from Qadian, they were expecting the attendance would reach 50,000. We have not received further reports. In any case this is a large gathering for Qadian. Press and electronic media, with the grace of Allah, is giving good coverage to the Jalsa. Alhamdulillah. Many ministers and other dignitaries have either attended the Jalsa or have sent goodwill messages. May Allah reward generously those who with open-heartedness

are expressing feelings of fraternity without distinction of religion. Amin.

Let us now join in silent prayer.

* Pursuant to the above directive, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community contributed generously throughout the world; the collections were handed over to the Iranian embassies directly or through an associated charity, Humanity First, to help the earthquake victims of Bam. A year later, when the Tsunami caused havoc in south East Asia, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community sent several containers of aid, operated soup kitchens and provided primary medical care in Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. Humanitarian assistance continues –
Ed.

JESUS^(as) as 'Son of God'

From *The Muslim Sunrise* 2004 Issues
1-3 'Metaphoric Light ,Literal Darkness',
Christian Theology and Modern
Scholarship; (Published by the
Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, USA)

By Anwer Mahmood Khan – USA

The concept of Jesus^(as) as 'Son of God,' although formulated in 323 A.D., has been under close scrutiny for its efficacy and origin. Scores of scholars have thoroughly reviewed all the connotations of its usage and have arrived at the conclusion that the expression 'Son of God' is a metaphoric expression suggesting Jesus' closeness to God – a title of veneration with no implied literal meaning. This expression was used for angels, kings, pious elites, Israelites, and many other righteous men. In the literal sense, it was never applied to Jesus^(as) during his life. In his zeal for spreading the Gospel message to Greeks (who professed three Gods), Paul created the idea of trinity to attract Greeks to Christianity. The phrase 'Son of God' is clearly a later inter-

polation that has no basis in the Bible. Several reputable theologians from various countries of the world attest to the metaphoric usage of the phrase. We present a number of excerpts from the writings of these scholars. This modern understanding, when compared with Islamic teachings, finds concordance rather than parity. We hope that our Christian readers will re-evaluate these findings and arrive at their own conclusions.

TRADITIONAL BELIEF:

Jesus Christ is the only begotten 'Son of God.' He is the second deity in the Trinity.

CONTEMPORARY BELIEF:

The phrase 'Son of God' is a metaphoric expression denoting the strong love and affection God had for Jesus.

This phrase does not imply that Jesus is the literal son of God.

Several scholars have studied the phrase 'Son of God' in the various connotations recorded in the Bible and have attempted to understand it using its traditional parlance. In light of their investigations, they have arrived at the understanding that this phrase is a metaphoric expression of the closeness of God with Jesus^(as). Most of these scholars are of the opinion that the traditional meaning of the expression 'Son of God' that was formulated into the Apostles' Creed in A.D. 325 at Nicea has evolved, and Jesus^(as), initially considered human, has attained this Christological image of Christ.

Reverend Raymond Brown, Auburn Distinguished Professor of Biblical Studies at Union Theological Seminary, considers 'Son of God' to be a post-Crucifixion expression. The term was never used by Jesus^(as) during his life. He writes:

“When we turn to the use of ‘the Son of God’ by or about Jesus in his lifetime and its possible appearance in AD 30/33 in Jewish inquiries made about him, there is far less evidence than there was for ‘the Messiah.’ In ancient near Eastern and Greco-Roman polytheism, rulers, heroes and wonderworkers were entitled ‘son(s) of god’ because mythically or literally they were thought to have been begotten through a god’s mating with a human being. In Israelite thought angels could be called figuratively ‘sons of God’ (Gen. 6:2; Job 1:6; Ps. 29:1; Dan. 3:25[3:92]). God speaks of Israel as ‘my son’ (Hosea 11: 1); and a pious individual could be referred to as ‘Son of God’ (Wisdom 2:18) or a ‘son of Most High’ (Sirach 4:10).”¹

After describing the different usages of the expression 'Son of God,' Rev. Brown concludes that the conventional usage of Jesus as 'Son of God' occurred

after the crucifixion event. He writes:

‘Thus there is reason in the Gospels, read perceptively, to think that unlike ‘the Messiah’ the title ‘Son of God’ was not applied to Jesus in his lifetime by his followers’ or a fortiori by himself. It was a revealed early post-ministry insight. This would mean that the High Priest’s question phrased in Mark 14:61, “Are you ... the Son of the Blessed [=God]?” was not the formulation in a Jewish investigation of Jesus in AD 30/33.’²

Reverend Brown compares the two titles ‘Son of God’ and ‘The Messiah’:

‘Overall then, if Jesus was accused of Blasphemy in AD 30/33, it is not likely that the sole or even principal basis for that accusation was that the followers hailed him as the expected Messiah of the

House of David. It is unlikely that this title [‘Son of God’] was used of Jesus during the lifetime by himself or by his followers.’³

The foregoing tends to negate the use of the expression ‘Son of God’ by Jesus^(as) in his lifetime or by his followers. The expression is clearly a later addition to the Gospels. If this opinion is factual, then it could rule out the expression's divine efficacy and render it but an ordinary expression of veneration. This would, in turn, deny the literal sonship of Jesus^(as).

Another English scholar, John Hick, Professor Emeritus at Claremont School of Graduate Studies and Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Research in the Humanities at the University of Birmingham, has written several books in the field of re-evaluating Christian dogmas. His book *The Metaphor of God Incarnate* includes the following description of his work:

‘In this major theological work, John Hick refutes the traditional Christian understanding of Jesus of Nazareth as God Incarnate, who becomes a man to die for the sins of the world and founded the church to proclaim this. Hick, editor of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, offers an intriguing alternative view. He argues “that Jesus did not teach what was to become the Orthodox Christian understanding of him; that the dogma of Jesus’ two natures, human and divine cannot be presented satisfactorily; that the traditional dogma has been used to justify great human evils, that the idea of divine incarnation is better understood metaphorical than as literal, that we can understand Jesus to be our Lord and the one who has made God real to us; and that a nontraditional Christianity based upon this understanding of Jesus can be seen as one among a number of different human

responses to the ultimate transcendent reality we call God.’”⁴

In the third chapter of his book, Hick writes:

‘A further point of broad agreement among the New Testament scholars is even more important for understanding the development of Christology. This is that the historical Jesus did not make the claim to deity that later Christian thought was to make of him; he did not understand himself to be God, or God the Son, incarnate... But it is extremely unlikely that the historical Jesus thought himself in any such way. Indeed he would probably have rejected the idea as blasphemous; one of the sayings attributed to him is, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone” (Mark 10:18).’⁵

Explaining his thesis, Hick further writes:

‘And my thesis concerning the Christian doctrine of incarnation is that as a literal hypothesis it has not been found to have any acceptable meaning. Every content that has been suggested has had to be rejected as mistaken or, in traditional ecclesiastical language, heretical. Indeed, the basic heresy has always been to treat religious metaphor as literal metaphysics.’⁶

The last sentence of the above quote is quite intriguing. We have noticed that what most scholars have done is simply look to the Scriptural text, the time and environment it was composed, and compared it with the verbiage and language of that time; objectively evaluating these expressions of veneration, these scholars ultimately adjusted the true meaning of these expressions in the light of modern understanding. It is important to point out that historically there were two different cultural settings: a Jewish one and a Greek or

Hellenistic one. The same expressions have had different perspectives and meanings in the two cultures. Paul, who was a zealous preacher of the Gospel, wanted eagerly for the Greeks to join the fold of Christianity. To satisfy the Greeks, he managed to compromise basic ideologies. At the time, the Greeks held beliefs in three Gods, and since Jesus taught the Unity of God, the concept of trinity was a convenient tool to win the sympathies of the Greeks. As such, the ‘sonship of Jesus’ was construed literally in spite of a dearth of evidence in the New Testament pointing to that construal.

Marcus J. Borg is Henderer Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture in the Philosophy department at Oregon State University. He is one of the modern scholars who have brought forth new meanings to the age-old dogmas. His book *Jesus: a New Vision* published in 1987 made the bestseller list. He also edited *Jesus at 2000*. In the second

chapter of *Jesus: A New Vision*, Borg raises the question of how a Jew from Galilee turned out to be the 'Son of God' and concludes that the expression was historically understood as metaphoric, but has now been transformed into a principle Christian doctrine. He writes:

‘What becomes the dominant way of speaking about Jesus in the Christian tradition – Jesus as Son of God – provides an excellent illustration of this (conceptual development – author) process. Son of God began as a relational metaphor. Within Judaism by the time of Jesus, it had a number of meanings. In the Hebrew Bible, it could be used to refer to the king on the day of his coronation: “You are my son; today I have begotten you” (Ps 2.7). It could also be used to refer to Israel as a whole: “When Israel was a child, I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son” (Hos. 11.1). According to Jewish tra-

ditions near the time of Jesus, this metaphor could be used to refer to other Jewish persons. What all of these have in common – the king, Israel, a Spirit person – is a relationship of intimacy with God. Thus to call Jesus Son of God was to speak of an intimacy of relationship between Jesus and God. As Son of God developed in early Christian tradition, it moved from being a relational metaphor to being a biological metaphor in the birth stories in Matthew and Luke. In these stories, ‘Jesus is conceived by the Spirit and, if the texts are read literally, is Son of God’ became conceptualised. Specifically to call Jesus Son of God became an ontological and doctrinal statement about the ultimate status of Jesus, reaching its climax in the Nicene Creed. There, in the language of fourth century Christian theology, with strong undercurrents of Hellenistic philosophy,

Jesus is spoken of as “the only begotten Son of God,” “true God of true God,” and “of one substance as the Father.” Metaphor became doctrine.’⁷

In the next two paragraphs, Borg describes the timing of this transformation when this metaphoric expression underwent change. In A.D. 50, Paul wrote of Jesus^(as) as ‘descended from David according to the flesh, and designated Son of God in Power by his resurrection from the dead’ (Rom. 1.3-4). Further: ‘This Jesus whom you crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ’ (Acts 2:36). Here God made Jesus both Lord and Christ after Crucifixion. Borg continues:

‘As the New Testament developed, Jesus’ status as Son of God was pushed further and further back into his life. According to Mark, our earliest Gospel, Jesus at his baptism heard a voice declaring him to be the Son of God. According to

Matthew and Luke, written some twenty years later, Jesus was Son of God from his conception. And in the first chapter of John, that which became incarnate in Jesus was “from the beginning.” Thus, Jesus’ status as Son of God was finally pushed back into the time before his life. Again we see the process whereby Son of God undergoes a development that moves metaphor to ontological claim.’⁸

Borg also compares the characteristics of these two figures of Jesus^(as) before and after Easter and explains that the peasant Jew who was a beloved of God and showed the way became God Himself or God-the-Son, the second deity in the concept of Trinity.

Hans Kung is a renowned German Theologian. He has been Professor of Dogmatic and Ecumenical Studies at the University of Tübingen, Germany. Kung revisited the

Nicene and the Chalcedony Creeds that spelled out the belief that Jesus^(as) is the only begotten Son of God, made from the same substance and hence the second deity in the Godhead. Kung suggests that these do not carry any literal weight and have been outdated with the passage of time. What they simply mean is that God was present in Jesus^(as) and revealed Himself through Christ – essentially a role that all prophets of God display. Kung opposed the physical resurrection of Jesus^(as) and simply equates this resurrection to the exaltation of Jesus' spiritual status. Most contemporary scholars opposed Kung and urged him to retract his ideologies. In response, Kung wrote another book entitled *Nothing But the Truth* in which he responds to the allegations levelled against him. The ecumenical church leaders, he maintains, view Jesus' Christology from above or descending from God, while he observes it from below where Jesus^(as) as man rose to spiritual excellences by obeying God and

loving mankind. Excerpts from his book *On Being a Christian* are reproduced below.

Discussing the expressions used for Jesus^(as), Kung writes:

‘All these metaphors are meant to express both the unique relationship of the father to Jesus and of Jesus to the father as also the unique relationship of Jesus to men: his work and his significance as God's revealer for the salvation of the world. Hence it is obvious why talk about Jesus Christ always easily turned into talk to Jesus Christ, why faith and profession of faith were always accompanied by acclamation, invocation, prayer.’⁸

Jesus^(as) as a Messenger of God turns into deity because veneration and talk of Jesus turns into talking to Jesus.

Bishop John Shelby Spong, an Episcopal Bishop of Newark,

New Jersey, has written many critical books that attempt to re-examine traditional dogmas and boldly refute their current import. He urges the Church administration to rethink their stance on these fundamental beliefs that no longer are able to sustain awakened rational minds. He further asserts that if this traditional cloak will not be changed the collapse of Christendom is imminent. He coins the term 'Christians in Exile' for all those believing Christians who cannot repeat the Apostle's Creed with honesty and from their hearts. They pay lip-service to their beliefs with no verification from their hearts. Concepts of trinity, the sonship of Jesus^(as), resurrection, the physical ascension of Jesus^(as) and his return must be re-examined according to Bishop Spong. In his book, *Why Christianity must Change or Die*, Bishop Spong writes:

[Jesus] is first called God's "only son." Does this mean none of the rest of us is or can be the son or daughter of

God? That kind of exclusive claim has been made throughout the ages with great power by the Christian Church. It is part of our religious mentality, no matter how limited and ungodlike it makes God seem to be. This phrase also seems to suggest that none of the other religious systems of the world can offer its people a point of connection with the Divine. Many Christians have also made exactly that claim, and its effect for centuries has been to fuel a quite unholy attitude of religious imperialism. This arrogant claim also denies our own modern experience. I have met holiness in Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, which I am not willing to deny or to denigrate. So what does the phrase "God's only Son" mean to those of us who cannot and will not be bound by the religious prejudices of the past?'⁹

In *Rescuing Bible from Fundamentalism* Bishop Spong

explains that the 'Son of God' expression is a metaphor and cannot be taken literally.

Andrew Harvey is a mystical scholar and has authored more than thirty books. In his book *Son of Man*, Harvey sketches the mystical path of Jesus^(as) to Christ. Regarding the Sonship concept, he writes:

'Modern scholarship also makes clear that there is no firm evidence to suggest that Jesus thought of himself as the Messiah, or as "the unique Son of God"; the only title we can safely say he gave himself is Son of Man. (as in Matthew 11:19). He likely used this generic term to identify himself with those he was addressing and to emphasise that he shared with them a common destiny and destitution... The Saviour icon, in other words, is a later "inspiration" of the early Christian Church, reeling under the impact of Jesus' life and of transmission of his mystical force

and essence that continued after the crucifixion and resurrection; it has nothing to do with Jesus' own vision of himself and of his mission. Jesus' self-understanding did not include thinking and speaking of himself as the "Son of God," and his message was not about believing in him.

'Knowing Jesus in this way challenges the beliefs not only of all fundamentalist churches but also of all those who place emphasis on Jesus Christ as the unique and all powerful saviour; the historical Jesus never claimed for himself such an honour, never saw himself in such inflated and exclusive terms, and never interpreted his crucifixion as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Such interpretations represent the visions of later followers and have nothing authentic about them (except the wonder and enthusiasm that prompted their evolution in the first place).'¹⁰

The following are various opinions of scholars who have construed 'Son of God' to mean affection and love for Jesus rather than the biological Sonship of God.

Maurice Wiles denounced the concept of Sonship of Jesus along with six Anglicans in their works published as *Myth of God Incarnate*. Wiles dismisses Biblical references that allegedly deal with the Divinity of Christ or his Sonship as is recorded in John's Gospel. 'These are later interpolations and have no origins in Christianity whatsoever,'¹¹ argues Wiles.

James Dunn, an eminent British Theologian in his book *Christology in the Making* writes:

'In the Roman world of the New Testament period, "divine" and "son of God" and even "God" were used more or less interchangeably. Heroes were frequently called "divine" in Homer, and from Augustus

onwards 'divine' became a fixed term in the imperial cult, "the divine Caesar." At the other end of the spectrum it could mean simply "pious", "godly"'.¹²

Geza Vermes, another theologian, pens his views in his book *Jesus and the World of Judaism* thus:

"Son of God" was always understood metaphorically in Jewish circles. In Jewish sources, its use never implies participation by the person so-named in the divine nature. It may in consequence safely be assumed that if the medium in which Christian theology developed had been Hebrew not Greek, it would not have produced an incarnation doctrine as this is traditionally understood.'¹³

Islamic View

Say He is Allah, the One, Allah the Independent, Besought of all. He begets not

*nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him.'*¹⁴

This is the cardinal doctrine of *Tauhid* or the Unity of God as taught in the Holy Qur'an. In the chapter 'Maryam' (named after Mary, the mother of Jesus^(as)), Allah categorically rejects the Sonship alleged to God in Christianity. He says:

*That was Jesus, son of Mary. This is a statement of the truth concerning which they entertain doubt. It does not befit the majesty of Allah to take unto Himself a son. Holy is He. When He decrees a thing, He says, 'be' and it begins to take shape and comes into being. Said Jesus, 'Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him alone, this is the right path.'*¹⁵

In the same chapter, in verses 89-93, we read:

'And they say, "The Gracious God has taken unto Himself a son. Assuredly, you have indeed uttered a most hideous

*thing. The heavens might well nigh burst thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces, because they ascribe a son to the Gracious God. It becomes not the Gracious God that He should take unto Himself a son.'*¹⁶

Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad^(ra), in his commentary on these verses, writes:

'The dogma that Jesus is the Son of God is so hideous that the heavens, the earth and the mountains might well break into pieces and fall asunder at its enormity. The belief is repugnant to heavenly beings (al-Samawat) because it is against Divine attributes and against all that they stand for. It is revolting for human beings on the earth (al-Ard), because it offends against the dictates of human nature and man's intellect and reason recoil in sheer disgust from it.'¹⁷

We sincerely invite all the Christians of the world to reflect on the contemporary views of some Christian scholars as these views might bring forth an era of reconciliation between Islam and Christianity.

End Notes

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THE NEED FOR Religious *Harmony*

Based on a speech delivered at the International Seminar at the Department of World Religions, Dhaka University.

Meer Mobasher Ali – Bangladesh

This is a very crucial juncture in the history of mankind and this subject needs to be addressed and discussed repeatedly, because in the final analysis, religious animosity plays a vital role in international, racial and social clashes. It gives me immense pleasure to tell society that harmony in the religious world is very much possible by following the true teachings of Islam.

It is always good to hear words of peace and harmony. People come and say good things about religion: we are heading towards the same goal, all mankind has the same common values. But allow me to put the matter in a different perspective.

Every man committed to his faith must believe that his is the best.

A Jew is a Jew because he believes ‘Judaism’ is the true way to reach God. A Hindu believes his version of ‘Sanatan Dharma’ is the chosen way of ‘Parmeshwar’. Similarly, a Christian believes that Jesus^(as) is the only Saviour of mankind. Being a Muslim, I believe that Islam is the best of all religions and presents a complete code of life. Having said this, a natural question arises as to how to create bondage of harmony and tolerance? According to me, the Holy Qur’an, the last revealed Book, clearly outlines the ways and means of creating the bondage of peace and harmony despite all differences.

Jews are of the opinion that Moses^(as) was the best of Prophets and that the Children of Israel are

the chosen people of God. They do not accept Jesus^(as) as the Messiah. On the other hand, the Christians believe all men are sinners; they have inherited the ancestral sin in their blood. To save them, God sent Jesus^(as) to love them and to die for them. In short, these beliefs are not at all sufficient to create common grounds of peaceful co-existence. In sharp contrast to these concepts, Islam portrays a different picture altogether. Islam says that the true path of Allah is one and the same. Islam is the only religion which openly declares all the earlier Prophets of God to be true. Islam goes even further by stating that one of the basic fundamentals for a Muslim is to declare all the Prophets of God to be true in their pristine origin. The completion of religion took place with the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). He was given such a marvellous code of conduct that it ensures religious harmony.

During the time of Prophet Muhammad^(sa) all previously revealed faiths were in exis-

tence. The Holy Qur'an amply outlines how to go about regarding other faiths and establish peace and harmony. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah has taught us how to start a dialogue between people of different beliefs. It says:

Say, 'O people of the book! Come to a word equal between us and you – that we worship none but Allah and that we associate no partner with Him, and that some of us take not others for Lords beside Allah.' But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that We have submitted to God.'
(Ch.3: V.65)

This verse categorically shows us the way to common values. It also says that despite sharp differences and animosity, people can have peaceful co-existence.

One of the major causes of conflict and animosity is speaking ill of religious founders. A person of a particular religion may hurt the feelings of a certain

group by criticising their beloved prophet. Misunderstanding may erupt by under-estimating a founder of a certain faith and belief. Islam lays the very foundation to uproot this evil by saying:

This Messenger of Ours believes in that which has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers: all of them believe in Allah and in His Angels and in His books and in His Messengers saying, 'We make no distinction between any of His Messengers...'
(Ch.2: V.286)

One of the major elements of religion is life after death and eternal salvation. Usually people start quarrelling on this issue of salvation. Islam claims that there is no monopoly in the matter of salvation. Salvation depends entirely on Allah. In this respect, the Almighty and benevolent Allah assures us by saying:

Surely, the Believers, and the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians – whichever party from among these truly believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds – shall have their reward with their Lord and no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve.
(Ch.2: V. 63)

The Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa), lived a holy life according to the Qur'anic teachings. During his lifetime he practised total religious harmony. The historic 'Treaty of Madinah' amply demonstrates his attitude towards people of other faiths especially Christians, Jews and idolators.

As far as the present world scenario is concerned, the world has only one way to attain peace by ensuring absolute justice to all people. Unfortunately, those who claim to be the custodians of human rights and freedom are themselves violating the golden principles of absolute justice by not insisting that the resolutions

passed by the body of nations must be upheld by the relevant defaulting nations. This absurdity and injustice leads to intolerance and destruction. On one hand superpowers themselves claim to be democratic and on the other hand they keep the right to veto intact under their disposal. The judgment of the International Court of Justice cannot be made binding even with the support of an overwhelming majority of nations. The Holy Qur'an totally rejects injustice and teaches us to guarantee justice to all, even to enemies! Addressing the believers, Allah says:

... and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness.
(Ch.5: V.9)

What a wonderful guidance to establish peace in the world!

Inter-religious peace and harmony is a pre-requisite for social, national and international

stability. From the Islamic principles mentioned above, it seems very obvious that Islam sets the correct way of achieving it. The only thing required is to understand and practically demonstrate the true teaching of all religions. These golden principles should be followed by the leaders of different faiths to establish peace and harmony in the society.

There is a sect in Islam which is practising and demonstrating these golden principles under divine leadership. This sect is known as the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Those interested in going into details of Islamic teachings on peace and harmony are referred to the book *Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues* by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. Before I finish, I will quote a small extract from the writings of the Holy Founder of Ahmadiyya Community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as). He wrote:

‘It is our principle to be sympathetic towards the

whole of mankind. If a person finds his Hindu neighbour's house burning and he does not get up to extinguish the fire, then let me assure you, he does not belong to me. And if a person amongst my followers sees that someone is about to kill a Christian and he does not help to save

him then let me tell you with certainty that he is not one of us.'

(*Siraj-e-Muneer*, Pg.28)

May Allah enable us to follow His choicest path and attain peace and harmony in all spheres of life.



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HONEY

the Healer

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Honey enjoys a special place in the tradition of Islamic medicine and cures. The Holy Qur'an calls it a healing for mankind.

And thy Lord has inspired the bee, saying, 'Make thou houses in the hills and in the trees and in the trellises which they build. Then eat of every kind of fruit, and follow the ways of thy Lord that have been made easy for thee.' There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying hues. Therein is a cure for men.

(Ch.16: Vs.69-70)

Ibn 'Abbas narrated that the Prophet of Islam^(sa) had said,

“Healing is in three things: A gulp of honey, cupping, and branding with fire (cauterising).”¹ Honey has been mentioned repeatedly in the Traditions of the Prophet both as a spiritual rejuvenator^{2,3} and as a physical cure.⁴

Although the mainstream modern medicine has largely overlooked the usage and effectiveness of honey, due to a tremendous resurgence of interest in herbal and alternative medicines in recent years, clinical researches are being conducted around the world investigating its health benefits. Initial studies suggest that honey may have an important role to play, especially in wound healing and restoration.

Honey has been used with great efficacy in burns, infected wounds, and skin ulcers. Avicenna, back in the tenth century, recommended honey in the treatment of tuberculosis.⁵ A recent study demonstrated that honey in adequate concentration was bactericidal to many other

common human pathogens, especially *E. coli*, *P. aeruginosa*, and *H. influenzae*.⁶ This is in part thought to be due to the presence of multiple traditionally used antibiotic residues found in honey.⁷⁻⁹ The use of honey as a wide-spectrum antibiotic is particularly appealing in the background of emergence of multi-resistant organisms in the general community. Its good antimicrobial effect, sterility, low cost, and easy availability make honey an ideal antibacterial agent.

Bedsore are a major cause of morbidity among patients with immobility, and a great challenge to the clinician. Use of topical honey has been shown to rapidly and completely heal pressure ulcers. As a result, honey alginates are now being used as the 'standard of therapy' for chronic wounds in many nursing homes.¹⁰ Likewise, successful treatment of burn patients with topical honey is well documented. In Nigeria, for instance, where up to 10% of the burn victims are cared for by this

method alone, the results were similar to using topical antibiotics.¹¹ There also exists a large volume of literature which suggests that honey has potential for the treatment of periodontal disease, mouth ulcers, and other ailments related to oral health.¹²

Honey, a chemically complex structure, is comprised primarily of sugars, but also contains many other active elements, including antibiotic residues as mentioned above and several biologically significant antioxidants. An antioxidant is a chemical that prevents the oxidation of other compounds. In biological systems, the normal processes of oxidation produce highly reactive free radicals. These can readily react with and damage other molecules. This may result in the damage to the body's own cells, giving rise to cell decay and cancer. The presence of antioxidants in the system can 'mop up' free radicals before they damage other essential molecules. Honey has been known to exert significant *in vitro* antioxidant activity, in part

due to its phenolic content.¹³ Researchers have been able to reproduce some of these effects in animal models as well. In one study conducted at the University of Illinois on Trp-p-1 mutagenicity,¹⁴ all types of honey used exhibited significant inhibition in a log-linear correlation, signifying its beneficial effects on cell death and carcinogenesis.

Honey has also been described as a pre-biotic, a food ingredient that beneficially affects host health by selectively stimulating the growth and activity of useful bacteria in the colon. These favourable effects include increasing calcium absorption, increasing fecal weight, shortening of gastrointestinal transit time, and possibly lowering blood lipid levels.¹⁵ There in fact exists a Tradition of the Holy Prophet^(sa) in which he prescribed honey to one of his companions for upset stomach and diarrhoea.

In a world of novel diseases and emerging pathogens, honey can

play a significant role in healing and physical well-being. Wider-scale investigations are, however, needed to fully understand its far-reaching health benefits. Its potential in preventative medicine, for example, needs to be further examined. The words of the Qur'an and the admonitions of the Holy Prophet^(sa) could serve as our guiding light.

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