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EDITORIAL

By Fazal Ahmad

It is a sad fact of humanity that while we seek to blame others for any misfortune that befalls us, often it is our own actions that lead to catastrophic results.

In this issue, we examine this trait from several directions. Firstly, on the spiritual side, man has often used evil methods to force people to adopt a set of values. The Inquisition was such a tool used not only to quell unorthodox Christian beliefs, but also to force Muslims and Jews who maintained a view of their original faith even under pressure to convert.

If we examine Mythology which is largely oral traditions from around the world, it is possible that we can find traces of original religions that were never recorded in written form.

All religions teach peace, yet it is mankind that abuses religion to

create disorder between different religions.

In the physical sphere, Science has both positive and negative elements. It depends upon how we use it. Who better than Professor Salam to remind us of the two extremes in the world created by either an excess or a paucity of Science?

Religion teaches man to adopt a middle path, develop all faculties available to man, and at the same time, be conscious of our neighbours and nature around us. If we adopted this practice, we would be tolerant towards other belief systems and not force our views on others. Likewise we would ensure the benefits of technology are available to all. A balance in all spheres would lead to a more peaceful world.

Notes & Comments

Waves of Compassion

Everyone has heard of the terrible Tsunami of December 26th 2004 which has certainly killed more than 150,000 people in South-East Asia. Given the huge number of missing people who must by now be presumed dead, the actual death toll is estimated to be nearer 200,000 people. The countries that took the bulk of the damage and death toll are Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India, but many others such as Malaysia, and even more distant countries such as Somalia in East Africa suffered some death toll.

The harrowing images of children being swept away from screaming parents, entire villages being washed away, and the helplessness will stay with us for a very long time. It is obvious that people were caught totally unprepared. Following exactly a year after the earthquake in Bam (Iran), the second wave of the tsunami tossed

boats to the rooftops of three-storeyed buildings, utterly destroying everything in its path for several kilometres in-shore and either burying the inhabitants or sweeping them away to the depths of the ocean.

Some commentators have focussed on the size and coverage of the tsunami as being a sign from God. A leading Church authority doubted whether there is a God – a God who could cause such havoc while a Rabbi claimed that it was a punishment for the world forgetting Israel. Certainly, many of the areas hit were dependent upon the tourist industry. It certainly was one of several disasters aimed at warning the human race.

A warning is one which should be heeded and acted upon in several ways. Our response should therefore be in two spheres: firstly, has mankind removed itself far

from its Creator and are we doing things that we should now change, and secondly how can we respond as human beings to the tragedy that has just unfolded?

The response of the general public around the world to this tragedy has been incredible. The amount of money collected through ordinary people in so many countries is once again heartening. The way so many people have offered to help the victims recover shows the qualities of compassion which thankfully have not evaporated, even in the modern materialistic world. If anything, the Governments were left trying to catch up with the waves of human compassion. The general public, response was instant and unconditional.

Many philanthropists and other donors contributed to charities and NGO's which were overwhelmed by the unending public response. The afflicted were in a state of shock. They did not need the quick-fixes of foreigners. Despite this catastrophe, they had not lost their minds. Countries like Indonesia were astute enough to

immediately put a stop to the export of orphans to other countries. South East Asian countries knew that the millions of dollars promised by the rich countries following Bam never translated into hard cash: pledges were not going to rehabilitate their people. Meanwhile, unable to help the victims of the disaster, many charities have begun to return the money collected. Will the people have enough confidence in such charities when the next disaster strikes?

The waves of compassion seen from the general public towards this tragedy and also the ongoing difficulties in Africa demand a long-term solution. It is no longer acceptable to keep these countries compliant through aid with strings attached. India has provided a good example in wanting to deal with its own problems. These countries need to be helped in a manner that allows them to become self-sufficient and able to withstand catastrophes of this nature.

by Fazal Ahmad – UK

The Will & Power of God

(Part 8)

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 Almighty operates in this world in three capacities: one, in the capacity of God; two, in the capacity of a friend; and three, in the capacity of an enemy. His treatment of His average creatures proceeds from His capacity as God and His treatment of those who love Him and whom He loves, proceeds not only in His capacity as God, but also predominantly in His capacity of a friend. The world feels that God is supporting the person concerned like a friend. His treatment of His enemies is characterised by painful chas-

tisement and such signs as indicate clearly that God Almighty is the enemy of that people or that person. Sometimes God tests a friend of His by making the whole world his enemy and for a time subjects him to their tongues and their hands, but He does not do this because He desires to destroy His friend, or to disgrace or humiliate him. He does this so that He might show His sign to the world and so that His impertinent opponents should realise that despite their utmost efforts they were not able to

harm the person concerned.

(*Nuzul-ul-Masih, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 18, pp. 517-518)

In the Holy Qur'an, the attributes of God Almighty are mentioned in the subjective and not in the objective. For instance, He is Holy, but He has not been described as safeguarded, because then it would have to be supposed that there was someone to safeguard Him.

(*Malfoozat*, Vol. IV, p.119)

Our God has power over everything. They are false who say that He created neither souls nor the particles of the body. They are unaware of God. We witness His new creation every day and He always breathes a new spirit of progress into us. Had He not the power to bring into being from nothing that would have been the death of us. Wonderful is He Who is our God. Who is there like unto Him? Wonderful are His works. Who is there whose works are like His? He is Absolute Power.

(*Nasim-e-Da'wat, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 19, p.435)



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.

The real cause of worship of other deities and of belief in the doctrine of transmigration of souls is the denial of Divine attributes and considering God Almighty as disabled from

exercising complete control over the universe. Since God's wise and just attributes were supposed to have been suspended, other deities were invented for seeking fulfilment of needs, and natural changes and upsets were described as the consequence of deeds done in a previous existence. Thus, transmigration of souls and the worship of other deities resulted from this one fundamental mistake.

(*Shahna-e-Haqq, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 2, pp. 407-408)

Through His Might, does God prove His existence; This is how He unveils His invisible countenance.

Whatever God wills and is pleased to announce cannot be averted, for such is the power of God.

(Announcement dated 5 August 1885, *Majmu'a Ishtiharat*, Vol. 1, p.143)

Our God possesses many wonders, but they are visible only to those who become His out of sincerity and loyalty. He

does not disclose His wonders to those who do not believe in His Power and who are not sincere and loyal to Him. How unfortunate is the man who does not know that he has a God Who has power to do all that He wills. (*Kashti Nuh, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 19, p.21)

His powers are unlimited and His wonders are without end. For His special servants He can even change His law, but even that changing is part of His law. When a person falls at His threshold with a new spirit and carries out a change in himself, only to win His pleasure, God also makes a change for such a one so that the God Who appears to him is quite a different God from the One known to the average person. God appears weak to a person whose faith is weak, but to him who appears before God with a strong faith, He shows that for his help He too is Strong. Thus in response to changes in man there are changes in Divine attributes. For him who is without any strength in his faith as if he is dead, God also

withdraws His help and support and becomes silent, as if, God forbid, He had died. But all these changes He carries out within His law and in accord with His Holiness. No one can set a limit to His law. Therefore, to assert hastily that such and such a matter is contrary to natural law without any conclusive reason, which is bright and self-evident, would be mere folly, for no one can argue on the basis of something whose limits have not yet been defined and who cannot be the subject of conclusive reasoning.

(Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 23, pp. 104-105)

If God is not believed in as All-Powerful, all our hopes would be frustrated. The acceptance of our prayers is dependent upon the belief that when God wills He can create in the particles of the body or in the soul powers that they may not possess. For instance, we pray for the recovery of a person who is ill and he appears likely to die. Then we supplicate that God may create in the particles of his body

a strength that should save him from death. We observe that very often such supplication is accepted. In many cases, we are at first intimated that a certain person is about to die, and that his powers of life are at an end. But when our supplication reaches its climax and its intensity becomes poignant and painful, we seem to arrive at the point of death, then it is revealed to us by God that the powers of life have been revived in the person concerned. Then suddenly he begins to show signs of health as if he was dead and has come to life. I remember that at the time of the plague I supplicated: O Mighty and Powerful God, safeguard us against this calamity and create in our bodies an antidote which should save us from the poison of the plague. Then God Almighty created that antidote in us and said: 'I shall safeguard you against death by plague and all those who dwell within your house and are not arrogant', that is to say, those who are not disobedient to God and are righteous would all be saved.

God also said that Qadian would be safeguarded, that is to say, Qadian would not be destroyed by the plague like many other villages.

This is what we all saw, and we observed the fulfilment of all these things.... Thus our God creates new powers and qualities in the particles of the body. Having been reassured by God the Perfect, we avoided the human precaution of inoculation against the plague. Many of those inoculated died, but we are, by the Grace of God Almighty, still alive. Thus does God Almighty create particles as He created particles in our bodies by way of antidote. He also creates souls as He breathed into me a pure soul by which I came alive. We need not only that He should create the soul and revive our body, but our soul also needs another soul which should revive it. Both these souls are created by God. He who has not grasped this mystery is unaware of God's Powers and is heedless of God. (*Nasim-e-Da'wat, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 19, pp. 390-391)

Limitless Manifestation of God's Attributes

God's Divinity and Godhead is related to His unlimited power and countless mysteries which man cannot confine within the limits of law. For the recognition of God, it is an important and fundamental principle that the Powers and Wisdom of God the Glorious are unlimited. By understanding this principle and reflecting deeply upon it everything becomes clear and one is able to see the straight path of the recognition of Truth and the worship of Truth.

We do not deny that God Almighty always operates in accordance with His eternal attributes, and it would not be improper if we were to call this act according to eternal attributes by the name of Divine law. What we question is whether the act in accordance with those eternal attributes, or in other words, the eternal Divine law, should be regarded as limited and defined. We believe that the effects of the attributes, which are part of God's Being and are unlimited,

are manifested at their appropriate times and nothing occurs outside of them and those attributes affect all creation in heaven and earth. The effects of these attributes are called the way of Allah or the law of nature; but because God Almighty, along with His perfect attributes, is Unlimited and Endless, it would be folly on our part to claim that the effects of those attributes, that is to say, the laws of nature, do not extend beyond our experience, intelligence or observation.

It is a great mistake on the part of those who are philosophically inclined that they first regard the law of nature as something which has been completely defined and then they refuse to accept anything new which they encounter. It is obvious that this attitude is not well-founded. Had this been true no way would have been left open to accept anything new and it would have become impossible to discover new things, for in such a case everything new would appear to contravene the laws of nature and

one would have to reject it which would mean the rejection of a new truth. A contemplation of the lives of the philosophers would show along how many tracks their thinking has proceeded and how often they have shame-facedly discarded one view in favour of another, and having held for a long time that something was contrary to the law of nature and having denied it, they in the end accepted it remorsefully. What was the cause of this change? It was that what they had adhered to at one time was a doubtful thing which was falsified by new experience. As new experiences came to light their thinking went on changing in accordance with them. Their thinking has been guided by new experiences and yet even now there is a good deal which is hidden from their view and concerning which it is to be hoped that, after stumbling and passing through diverse humiliations, they would in the end accept it.

The laws of nature are not so firm within the ambit of human

reason that they should exclude new research. Can any reasonable person imagine that in the school of this world, man, despite his short age, has completed his knowledge of eternal mysteries, and that his experience of Divine wonders has become so comprehensive that whatever falls outside this experience is outside the Power of God Almighty? It is only a shameless and foolish one who would entertain any such idea. Those philosophers who were truly good and wise and whose thinking was inspired by spiritual values have confessed that their thinking, which was limited and tentative, could not become the means of discovering and recognising God and His limitless secrets and wisdom.

It is an established truth that everything contains within itself a quality which continues to be affected by the limitless powers of God Almighty. This shows that the qualities of things are limitless whether we come to know of them or not. If all philosophers, ancient and

modern, were to employ their intellectual capacities till the Day of Judgement in discovering the qualities of a grain of poppy seed, no reasonable person would believe that they would comprehend completely all those qualities. Thus there is nothing more foolish than to think that the qualities of heavenly and earthly bodies are limited to those which have so far been discovered through astronomy or physics.

In short, the law of nature is something which cannot withstand an established truth. The law of nature means such Divine action which was manifested or might be manifested in a natural way, but God Almighty has not tired of manifesting His Powers nor has He become disabled from doing so, nor has He gone to sleep, nor has He moved away into a corner, nor has He been overpowered and has under compulsion ceased manifesting His wonders, leaving us only His actions during a few centuries. Reason, wisdom, philosophy,

literature and education all demand that we should not confine the body of natural law to the few demonstrated phenomena of which hundreds of details are still to be discovered and we should not foolishly insist that the action of God Almighty cannot go beyond what we have already observed....

I wonder how can such things as are still awaiting a complete explanation of themselves, be the absolute measures of truth or be the criteria for judging it. This complicated problem has confused the philosophers so much that some of them, namely the Sophists, have denied altogether the qualities of matter, and some of them have asserted that though the qualities of matter are admitted yet they lack permanence. Water puts out fire, but it is possible that under some heavenly or earthly effect the water of a spring might lose this quality. Fire burns wood, but it is possible that some fire, by reason of some inner or outer effect, might not exhibit this

quality. Such wonders continue to happen from time to time.

Philosophers have also said that certain heavenly or earthly qualities are manifested after thousands or hundreds of thousands of years. They appear supernatural to the uninitiated. Sometimes wonders occur in the heavens or on earth which confound great philosophers. They are driven to invent some law of physics or astronomy to accommodate them so that their law of nature may not be upset. So long as no flying fish had been observed, no philosopher admitted its existence. So long as through the process of continuously cutting off the tails of some dogs, tailless dogs were not produced, no philosopher admitted this possibility. So long as it was not discovered that in consequence of a severe earthquake in some place, a fire had started which melted stones but did not burn wood, philosophers considered such a quality as contrary to the law of nature. So long as an aspirator was not invented, which philosopher

knew that trans-fusion of blood was part of the law of nature? Could anyone name a philosopher who admitted the possibility of machines being run with electricity before electricity was discovered?

‘Allama Shareh Qanun, who was both an eminent physician and a learned philosopher, has recorded in his book that among the Greeks it was generally known that some chaste and righteous women gave birth to children without consorting with a male. He expresses his own view that all these incidents cannot be rejected as false as they could not have been invented without some factual basis.... He has recorded that although all human beings are of one species and as such they are all alike, yet some of them, in rare cases, are endowed with certain high abilities which are not matched among the rest of their contemporaries.

It has been established that in modern times there have been cases in which a person has

attained the age of more than three hundred years, which is most extraordinary. Some have been endowed with memories or eyesight of so perfect a nature as is not equalled in anyone of their contemporaries. Such people are rare and appear once in a while after hundreds and thousands of years. As the common people have in mind only that which happens on a large scale and frequently they are apt to regard that as the law of nature, that which is rare is looked upon with doubt and is considered false.

The mistake philosophers make is that they fail to make research into that which is rare of occurrence and get rid of it by describing it as mere tales and stories. It is the eternal way of Allah that occasionally He manifests rare wonders along with that which is of common occurrence. There are many instances of this, but it would take too long to set them down. Hippocrates, in one of his books of medicine, has mentioned certain cases known to him of people who were suffering from

diseases which, according to the laws of medicine and the experience of physicians, were not susceptible of treatment and who yet recovered their health. Concerning these cases, he has noted that their recovery was due to some rare heavenly or earthly effects.

We wish to add that this phenomenon of common occurrence and rare occurrence is not confined to man alone, but is to be discovered among other species also. For instance, a swallow wort is bitter and poisonous, but sometimes after a long period, it produces a vegetable which is very sweet and delicious. A person who has never seen it and has always associated swallow wort with extreme bitterness, is bound to regard the new vegetable we have mentioned, as a contravention of the law of nature. In the same way, among other species also, after a long time, a rare quality is manifested. A short while ago, in Muzaffargarh, a he-goat was found which yielded milk like a

she-goat. When this became generally known in the town, Mr. Macauliffe, the Deputy Commissioner of Muzaffargarh, sent for the he-goat deeming it contrary to the law of nature that it should be yielding milk. When the he-goat was milked in his presence it yielded about three pints of milk... Three serious-minded, trustworthy and respectable gentlemen testified before me that they had seen some men who yielded milk like women.... Some people have observed a female silkworm laying eggs without the intervention of a male, these eggs were hatched in the normal manner. Some people have seen a rat emerging from dry clay with half its body still as clay. A physician Qarshi or 'Allamah (Shareh Qanun) has recorded that he had seen a patient whose ear had ceased to function and he had become deaf. Later, a sore appeared below his ear in which there was a hole through which he could hear. In this way God bestowed another ear upon him....

Galen was asked: Can a man ever hear with his eyes? He answered: Present experience does not support this, but it is possible that there might be a hidden relationship between ears and eyes which as a result of an operation or through some heavenly intervention might manifest itself in this form, because the knowledge of the qualities of bodies is not yet complete.

Dr. Bernier, in his journal describing the ascent of Pir Panjal in Kashmir, has mentioned a strange incident at page 80 of his book, that at one place they saw a big black scorpion which had emerged from under a rock, which was taken up by a young Moghul of his acquaintance and he passed it on to Dr. Bernier and a servant of his, but it did not bite any of them. The young Moghul stated that he had pronounced a verse of the Holy Qur'an upon it and that in this manner he often seized scorpions which proved harmless. The author of Futuhat and Fusus, who is a well-known and

learned philosopher and mystic, has written in his book that on one occasion at his house there was a discussion between a philosopher and another person with regard to the burning property of fire. In the course of the discussion, the other person took hold of the philosopher's hand and thrust his own hand and the philosopher's hand into a charcoal fire which was burning in a stove and kept them there for a while. Fire did no harm to the hand of either of them. I myself saw a dervish, who on a very hot day would recite the verse:

*And when you lay hands upon
any one, you lay hands as
tyrants.*

(Ch.26: V.131)

and would seize hold of a wasp and be immune to its sting. I have also experienced some wonderful effects of verses of the Holy Qur'an, which display the wonders of the Power of God, the Glorious. In short, this museum of the world is filled with numberless wonders. Wise and noble philosophers have

never taken pride in their limited knowledge and they have considered it a shameless impertinence to call their limited experience by the name of God's law of nature...

Can one set a limit to the Powers of the One Who has created this splendid heaven which is

ornamented with the sun, the moon, and the stars, and has created this earth which is the envy of gardeners and which is peopled by diverse types of creatures, without the least effort, only by the exercise of His will?

(*Surmah Chashm Arya, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 2, pp. 90-101)

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 '*Rahemallahu Ta'ala*' means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him.

Care of the Aged



Excerpt from *Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues* by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru), Khalifatul Masih IV.

The responsibility for care of the aged is gradually shifting to the state. Care of the aged represents a heavy burden on the national economy. However much a state is ready to spend, it can never buy them peace and contentment. The most terrible feeling of having been rejected, left out and abandoned, and the most painful realisation of a growing void of loneliness within are problems beyond the reach of many to resolve. To consider that a comparatively remote relative would ever be taken care of by the rest of the family has become almost impossible to imagine.

In such societies, the need for homes for the aged grows with

the passage of time. Yet, it is not always possible for a state to apportion enough money to provide for them even the minimum requirements of a decent life.

Physical ailments are much easier to cure or alleviate but the deep psychological traumas from which a considerable number of elderly members of modern societies are suffering, are far more difficult to treat.

In predominantly Muslim countries, however much values may have deteriorated, the condition which prevails in the rest of contemporary society is unthinkable. It is considered a disgrace and dishonour for the

old and aged to be treated with such disrespect and callousness. It is a matter of shame for most Muslims to hand over the responsibilities of elderly relatives to the state even if the state is willing to look after them.

As such, the role of a Muslim woman amidst her home and family is far from over with the coming of age of the children. She remains deeply bonded to the past as well as to the future. It is her kind and humane concern, and her innate ability to look after those who stand in need of care, which comes to the rescue of the older members of society. They remain as precious and respected as before and continue to be integral members of the family. The mother plays a major part in looking after them and providing them with her company, not as drudgery and tedium, but as live natural expression of human kinship. Thus, when she grows older she can rest assured that such a society will not eject her nor leave her abandoned as a relic of the past.

Of course, there are exceptions in every society and there are old remnants of the past considered as tiresome burdens in some Muslim families living under the influences of the so-called modern trends. But on the whole, Muslim societies are relatively free of homes for abandoned parents unlike other societies.

This reminds me of a joke which may make some people laugh yet move some others to tears. Once a child observed with much pain and unease the ill-treatment of his grandfather at the hands of his father. He was gradually transferred from a well-provided and comfortable main bedroom to a smaller and less convenient accommodation until it was finally decided to remove the grandfather to the servant's quarters. During an exceptionally severe winter, the grandfather complained of his room being too chilly and his quilt being too thin to make him feel warm and comfortable. The father started looking for an extra blanket from a stock of old, useless rags. Observing this, the

child turned to his father and requested: 'Please do not give all the rags to grandpa. Keep some for me so that I may be able to give them to you when you grow old.'

In this innocent expression of a child's displeasure is concentrated all the agony of the older generation in modern times.

In Muslim societies, it is as rare to find such exceptions, as it is rare and becoming more rare to find exceptions in modern societies amongst relatives in their treatment of the old. Muslims are taught:

Thy Lord has commanded:

Worship none but Him, and show kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age with thee, never say unto them any word expressive of disgust nor reproach them, but always address them with kind words. And lower to them the wing of humility out of tenderness. And say, 'My

Lord, have mercy on them even as they nourished me when I was a little child.

(Ch.17:Vs.24,25)

These verses are the most significant on this subject. After the Unity of God, human beings should, through their attitude of love, affection and kindness, give priority over all other things to their parents who have reached an old and difficult age.

Further, the verses speak of situations when the behaviour of one or both of the parents becomes extremely trying and sometimes offensive. In response to that, not even a mild expression of disgust or disapproval should pass one's lips. On the contrary, they should be treated with profound respect.

The emphasis on the most excellent relationship between one generation and another slowly passing away guarantees that no generation gaps appear. Such gaps always interrupt the transmission of traditional moral values.

Islamic social philosophy, therefore, teaches that no generation should permit a gap to appear between it and the outgoing generation and between it and the future generation. Generation gaps are totally alien to Islam.

As stated earlier, the family concept in Islam is not limited to members of a single home. The following verse instructs Muslims to spend not only on their parents but also their kith and kin who are mentioned next to parents in order of preference so that their sense of dignity is not injured and mutual love is promoted.

Worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and to kindred, orphans, the needy and to the neighbour who is a kinsman and the neighbour who is a stranger, and the companion by your side and the wayfarer and those who are under your authority. Surely, Allah loves not the arrogant and the boastful.
(Ch.4:V.37)

If contemporary society learns the lesson from those injunctions, many problems which it faces today and which represent a blemish on an advanced society, would cease to exist. No elderly homes or homes for the aged would be needed, except for some aged people who, unfortunately, have no close relative to look after them. But in an Islamic society, the love between parents and children is so repeatedly emphasised that it is impossible for a child to abandon his or her parents when they grow old for the sake of his or her own pleasure.

Abu Hurairah relates that a man came to the Holy Prophet^(sa) and asked: Messenger of Allah, which of all the people is best entitled to kind treatment and the good companionship from me? He answered: Your mother. The man asked: And after her? He said: Your mother. And after her? He said Your mother. And after her? Your father.
(*Bukhari and Muslim*)

INQUISITION

Intellectual Terrorism?

The following is a historical account of the development and activity of the Inquisition in Europe. It traces the role of the Medieval Church within the control and decision making.

By Zakaria Virk – Kingston, Canada

The Inquisition was a religious court established during the Middle Ages in Europe by the Catholic Church to suppress heresies threatening the faith. Its primary objective was to detect and identify deviants from the faith, to secure their return to the Catholic Church and to punish those who refused to abandon their erroneous beliefs. The Spanish Inquisition that lasted from 1478 to 1834 was one of the saddest episodes in the history of human thought, and the darkest chapter in the record of Jewish and Muslim history in Spain. This led to the decline of Spain from the high status accorded to her as an imperial power.

Heresies (Gk. – school of belief) were a problem for the church from the very beginning. Initially, heresies were sup-

pressed as they arose. In the early centuries of Christianity, there were the heresies of Arius and the Manicheans; in the Middle Ages, there were the Cathari, and Waldenses; and later, there were the Hussites, Lutherans, and Calvinists.

During the Middle Ages a permanent structure was established to deal with this growing problem. Beginning in the 12th century, Pope Gregory IX published a decree that called for life imprisonment with penance for the heretic who confessed, or repented. Capital punishment was for those who persisted in their heresy. The secular authorities would carry out all executions, but Pope Gregory relieved his clergy of this onerous task and made it the duty of the Dominican Order.

Medieval Inquisition

The Medieval Inquisition never existed as a distinct office; however, individual Inquisitors were mandated in 1231 by the Pope to combat heresy. Pope Innocent III urged secular rulers to proceed against the Cathari movement in Southern France, calling it high treason against God warranting death. Since Roman times, heretics had been executed as traitors once handed over to secular authority. Torture was not used if they could persuade the heretic to repent. For instance, Bernard Gui, a famous Inquisitor working in Toulouse (France) executed 42 people out of 700 guilty heretics while he was in office for 15 years.

Roman Inquisition

The Roman Inquisition began when Pope Paul III established the Holy Office on July 5, 1542 as the final court of appeal in the trials of heresy. It was the most benign of three types of Inquisitions detailed in this article. The chief target, of course, was the heresy of Protestantism. In Italy, nearly forty percent of all

trials seem to have dealt with magic. In reaction to the Spanish Inquisition, the Roman Inquisition was tightly controlled under the administration of Francisco Pena. Among Pena's subjects of Inquisition were Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), and Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). Bruno was kept in a dark dungeon for eight years and then taken out to a blazing market place in Rome and roasted to death for being 'an atheist, an infidel and a heretic'. He thought of the Bible as a book that only the ignorant could take literally. He spoke of an expanding universe, a concept that is now accepted as scientific truth.

Galileo, on the other hand, died under house arrest. Galileo was a lecturer at the University of Padua for 18 years. During his scientific studies and experiments, he discredited many Christian beliefs that had long been regarded as Scriptural truths. By using a telescope to observe heavenly bodies, he discovered that the Earth revolved around the Sun and was

not the centre of the universe as people had been led to believe. His claims in *The Starry Messenger* of 1610, shook the Church and his enemies decided to ask him how a moving earth could be reconciled with the statement that God '*fixed the earth upon its foundations, not to be removed forever*'. (Ps 104:5), or with the statement that '*the sun rises and the sun goes down: then it presses on to the place where it rises.*' (Ecclesiastes 1:5)

Galileo wrote a letter to church authorities presenting his views on the relation between the Bible and science. The clergy reminded him in no uncertain terms that no one is allowed to interpret Scriptures except the Fathers of the Church. Upon arriving in Rome in 1615, he decided to present his conclusive proofs of a Sun-centred system to Pope Paul V. He was ordered to appear before Cardinal Bellarmine, and in March 1616, his book *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, was placed on the list of forbidden books.

GLOSSARY

Moors: Around 46 BC the Roman army entered West Africa where they encountered black Africans whom they called *Maures* from the Greek adjective *mauros*, meaning dark or black. Traditionally, the Moors were from modern Morocco and Mauritania. They became converts to Islam in the 7th century and have since been mistakenly identified as Arabs.

Morisco (Spanish "Moor-like") is a term referring to a kind of New Christian in Spain and Portugal. From the late 1400's to the early 1600s Moors (Spanish Muslims) were forced to convert to Catholicism.

Mudejares: derived from Arabic *al-Muta-akh-khar*, person allowed to remain. Prior to their forced conversion, the Moriscos were known as Mudejars, and were allowed to practise Islam among Christians with certain restrictions.

Mozarab: Christians who lived under Muslim rule.

Conversos: New Christians who were Moors previously.

Marranos: a baptized Jew who in public behaved like a Christian but inwardly considered himself a Jew. Marranos, the Spanish word for pigs, was the term given by Catholics to these New Christians.

After being tried several times, in June 1632, he was led to the hall of the Dominican Convent and his sentence was read to him before a full assembly. Ten cardinals signed the document. The prison sentence was never imposed, though he remained under house arrest until his death in 1642. Nearly a century after his death, the church authorities granted permission in 1737 for the erection of a monument over his tomb. It was not until 1835 that his books were taken off the Index.

Index of forbidden books

In 1405, Pope Innocent IV published a list of forbidden books, and at the end of that century a decree was issued that has been called the first *Index of Forbidden Books*. It listed the genuine books of the Bible, the apocryphal books (those not considered authentic, but not harmful either), and heretical (harmful) books. Henceforth, Popes and Councils periodically published lists of forbidden books. For many books, permission from Church author-

ities is still required. Freedom of thought and written and oral expression is a relatively recent development. The idea that anyone could think and say or write what he wanted was considered abnormal just a hundred years ago.

The Spanish Inquisition

When Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand united Spain in 1479, they were paranoid in their fear of revolt. When the queen's confessor, Tomas de Torquemada (1420-1498), of Jewish origin himself, whispered into her ears that Jewish converts were secretly practising their Hebrew faith and corrupting good Christians, Isabella was horrified and frightened. She asked Pope Sixtus IV for permission to establish the Inquisition in Spain, and this was granted immediately.

Up until 1480, Spain had been one of the least affected by Inquisitions. The stimulating influence of Muslims and Jews had helped it to stay culturally active and intellectually creative.

For centuries Spain had been multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and there was a mixture of races and creeds to be found in no other land. The Spanish Inquisition was a court of inquiry instituted by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1480 to enforce strict religious standards for all Catholics in Spain, especially the suspected New Christians. The court was instructed not to conduct its work among professing Jews. It is estimated that at the time the Inquisition started, nearly half of all Jews had converted to Christianity. While they attended churches regularly, at home they lit Sabbath candles, abstained from eating pork and observed Jewish holidays.

As for Muslims, originally they were allowed to freely exercise their religion. Nevertheless, in 1501 the Spanish sovereigns issued a decree ordering all Muslims to leave Castile and Granada, except those who were willing to embrace Christianity. Though most of the Muslim converts received baptism, many

of them adulterated their Christian rites with Muslim practices, even secretly apostacised.

The Inquisition began in Seville, and the cruelty and terror for which it is known began immediately. The guilty often had their hands chopped off before they were burnt alive. Thousands of Jews fled Seville, their property confiscated by the Crown through this ploy. Soon the royal coffers were swelling with the loot of the Jewish victims. The Vatican issued directions that all judges of the court must be at least 40 years of age, of good reputation, noted for virtue and wisdom, masters of theology and must follow all ecclesiastical rules and regulations.

In 1483, Pope Sixtus IV bestowed on the Dominican monk, Tomas Torquemando, the office of the Grand Inquisitor in Spain. This centralised authority of Inquisition was characteristic of the Spanish Inquisition. A network of prisons across the land was set up. Informers were

encouraged to turn in neighbours and family as a means of self-preservation. Torture was used as a tool for extracting confessions. Punishments ranged from fines, confiscation of property, and life imprisonment to burning at the stake. Because of Torquemando's superior organisational skills, there were 19 courts in operation by 1538. Some estimates suggest that nearly 8000 Jews were burnt alive as well as a small number of Moriscos (Muslim converts) during the fifteen years Tomas Torquemada was Grand Inquisitor.

Organisation of Inquisition

The Inquisition in Spain was deeply centralised. The Grand Inquisitor, who was nominated by the King and confirmed by the Pope, headed it. He delegated powers to other persons suitable for the job and received appeals from the Spanish courts. A Supreme Tribunal consisting of five members assisted him in his work. It heard all appeals and decided on disputed questions. The independent status enabled the Tribunal to hoard wealth

through property confiscations, and rendered itself a force to be reckoned with in the political affairs of the country.

With so much authority vested in this Tribunal, the Spanish Inquisition soon became a state within a state. The Inquisitors paid no taxes and gave no account of their confiscations. They could bear arms and could prosecute their critics under the charge of heresy. In short it soon evolved into a political institution. All Inquisitors were appointed by the King, and worked to enrich the royal treasury. Despite all this, it remained fundamentally a Church tribunal sanctioned by the Vatican. Popes always admitted appeals from the Inquisition, called in trials at any stage, even deposed Grand Inquisitors. Therefore the church must share the responsibility for proceedings of the tribunal, whose actions were marked by cruelty and savagery. They have left ugly stains on the pages of history.

The 15 Spanish Tribunals were situated in Barcelona, Cordoba, Cuenca, Granada, Llerena, Logrono, Madrid, Murcia, Santiago, Seville, Toledo, Valencia, Valladolid and Saragossa. Of these, the ones in Madrid, Seville and Toledo were more active than the others due to large numbers of New Christians living nearby.

The Inquisition Tribunal

In less than ten years, the Inquisition had become an established institution in many European countries. By the end of the 13th century the Inquisition in each region had a bureaucracy to help in this function. The judge or Inquisitor could bring a case against anyone. The accuser had to testify against himself and had no right to question the accuser (usually a member of the clergy). In any town where a Tribunal was established it was customary to publish an Edict of Grace, inviting heretics to come forward and confess their transgressions, on the understanding that they would receive

merciful treatment. A Term of Grace – a time limit of 30 to 40 days – was assigned for this purpose. Once this period expired, guilty persons were liable to be proceeded against with the full rigour of the Inquisition.

An Edict of Faith was periodically issued summoning all the faithful to report to the authorities any person whom they knew or imagined to be guilty of heretical offences. It was acceptable to take testimony from criminals, persons of ill repute, even heretics. Jealous relatives informed on each other, servants on their masters, students on their teachers. The Confidants were the official spies who peeked into windows, listened to gossip and questioned servants. They were particularly active on Friday evenings and on Saturdays, the day of the Jewish Sabbath. In one instance, a woman was turned over to the Inquisition when she set a white cloth on her dinner table on a Friday evening.

The accused had no right to a lawyer. The sentences handed to the guilty could not be appealed against. Inquisitors sometimes questioned the entire village in their jurisdiction. The accused was given a summary of the charges he was facing, and made to take an oath to tell the truth. To get the co-operation of the accused, various methods including torture were employed.

The law decreed that heretics forfeited all of their property the day they wavered in faith. Wealth willed to children and grandchildren was confiscated. Even people long dead were brought to trial in absentia. If they found their graves, they were opened and the remains burned.

In Carcassonne, France, parades were held by a group of people each carrying the decomposed body of one or more burned heretics. A person who had died several decades ago could be judged heretical, and his property taken from his heirs.

Punishment ranged from visits to churches, pilgrimages, wearing the cross of infamy in public or even burning at the stake. These punishments were conducted in public ceremonies called *autos-da-fe* which lasted for a whole day. The guilty were often flogged, or some had their hands chopped off before they were burnt, alive in many instances.

The Inquisition Procedure

In the early period of the Inquisition, the Inquisitors rode through the countryside in search of heretics. Soon they were empowered to summon suspects from their homes to such places that were considered safe. Gradually Inquisition Centres were established. The Inquisitor could bring a lawsuit against any person who might even vaguely be subject to public rumour. The accused was kept in the dark as to the identity of the witnesses for the prosecution. Blood relationship did not excuse a person from testifying. The accused were denied the services of court clerks and lawyers, and there was no appeal process.

Anyone suspected of heresy over the age of fourteen was tortured. Without any regard for the sex of the heretic, the victim was stripped, and usually given a small covering around the loins. For instance a girl, who was thirteen and survived the torture, was subjected to one hundred lashes. Old men and women whether they were 60, 70 or 80 were tortured or burned alive. Pregnancy offered no immunity either, except that she was tortured in a sitting position. During the entire time of torture the secretary of the Inquisition stood by, recording every cruel act and every shriek of agony.

Some have estimated that between 1480 and 1808 nearly 32,000 persons were burned in Spain. The French historian Langlois has reported that twelve hundred conversos, and relapse heretics were present at the Inquisition session in Toledo in 1487. Torquemada, the inquisitor-general of Spain, sentenced around 2000 heretics in twelve years.

Execution by burning

Execution by burning had been legal for crimes of heresy, treason or the practice of witchcraft. The form of execution in which the condemned was bound to a large stake and burned was called *autos-da-fe*. Many of the early Christian martyrs died in this way. In 1184, the Synod of Verona legislated that burning was to be the official punishment for heresy. Witch trials became very popular in Scotland, Spain, England, Austria and Germany during the 14th and 15th centuries. It is estimated that up to **4 million** convicted witches and heretics were burned at the stake during this time. Among the best-known convicted heretics were Jan Hus (1415), Joan of Arc (1431) and Giordano Bruno (1600).

Auto de fe

In Spanish *auto-da-fe* means ‘act of the faith’. It was the ritual public execution by fire or humiliation of heretics and apostates that took place when the Spanish Inquisition released

the condemned to secular rule. Some of the prisoners were burned alive, but if they submitted to the church, they would be strangled at the stake before the fires were lit. The *auto-da-fe* was staged like a theatrical presentation. Dignitaries dressed in colourful uniforms were prominently seated, and Church officials wore their finest vestments. When all was ready a procession was formed. At its head flew the large banner of the Inquisition. Behind it marched the Inquisition officials, next came the prisoners, dressed in unique costumes. They wore large vests upon which were drawn designs and phrases indicating the crime: 'This person has Judaised.' A cone shaped hat sat on their heads, and each carried a tall yellow candle.

The first *auto-da-fe* in Seville took place in February 1481 when six people were burned at the stake in front of a large crowd of nobles, clergy and citizens. By coincidence 1481 marked the beginning of a terrible plague that lasted until 1488 in which

many died, and some saw the plague as a punishment. The last *auto-da-fe* execution in Spain was a school teacher, Cayetano Ripoll on July 26, 1826 whose trial lasted for two years.

Against scientific inquiry

The Inquisition offends modern ideals of justice and spiritual freedom besides contradicting the teachings of Church Fathers such as St Bernard, who said "Faith must be the result of conviction and should not be imposed by force." The Inquisition often denied elementary justice to the defendant, it showed hostility to the spirit of scientific inquiry (Galileo) and it permitted torture and the death penalty. It has to stand as a symbol of cruelty, intellectual terrorism and religious intolerance. However, one ought to remember that penalties inflicted by the Inquisition were those in current use in their day. For instance, counterfeiters were burned alive, those giving false weights and measures were scourged, burglars were hanged, and thieves were put to death. Still more revolting was the

torture on the wheel, on which the victim was left with broken bones and limbs to die a lingering death.

Treatment of Jews and Muslims

At the Council of Vienna in 1311, Pope Clement V issued directions to all princes to prohibit Muslim muezzins to make the public call for prayer (adhan) from their minarets. For over one hundred years this decree was ignored until the reign of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain when it was enforced.

Jews were given the privilege to have Jewish witnesses to testify against Jewish defendants. As a common practice Christians patronised Jewish physicians because of their expertise. Soon rumours started circulating that Jews took advantage of their position to bring about deaths of their Christian patients. Accordingly, a law was passed forbidding the employment of Jewish doctors. This was re-enacted in 1335 and 1412.

In 1412 it was decreed that Jews and Muslims should be isolated in their ghettos and were forbidden from attending Christian weddings and funerals. When the Black Death was ravaging Spain in 1348, a great number of people blamed it on the Jews. Pope Clement VI rejected this charge and showed how the plague raged in areas where there were no Jews. In the city of Seville a Holy War against the Jews was launched in 1391 by Martinez, the arch-deacon of Seville. A mob tore down synagogues and stormed the Jewish ghettos; those who survived accepted baptism. Soon it spread to the cities of Valencia, Toledo, Palma and Saragossa. The choice was always between baptism or the sword.

Soon the conversos were so many that they formed a separate class in Spain. By 1449 some of the noblest houses had Jewish blood in them like King Ferdinand, the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada and the archbishop of Granada. In 1492, the government of King Ferdinand

passed a decree expelling all Jews. It gave the entire Jewish population until July 31 to leave Spain under penalty of death. This meant all of their possessions must be sold at reduced prices and in many cases they could not collect debts. For those Jews who overstayed, total confiscation was enforced. Whatever possessions they could carry were taxed at the equivalent of the daily wages of 120 labourers.

During the great exodus, more than 200,000 Jews fled Spain, of whom 120,000 went to Portugal. Here they could pay to stay for a further 6 months, after which they again had the choice to convert or leave. Many went to North African Muslim countries. Others sailed to Italy, Holland and Mediterranean ports.

Turkish Sultan Bayazet II made them particularly welcome and looked forward to having his nation enriched by their knowledge of business and finance. In Constantinople they became wealthy international

traders. They spoke Spanish and surrounded themselves with their old culture. By the middle of the 1500's, over 15,000 Jews lived in Istanbul.

When 24 Jews of Ancona, Italy, were burned in an *auto-da-fe* in 1556, the Jews of Turkey banded together to retort with an economic boycott. The Sultan even sent an ambassador to Ancona to demand the release of Jews held in prisons. It is worth noting that in contrast, the tolerance that had previously been shown to Jews by Muslims has been described by Jewish scholars as 'the golden age of Jews'. The 1492 Expulsion Edict of Ferdinand and Isabella was not officially withdrawn until 1968.

Persecution of Muslims

The wholesale expulsion of Jews is no less pitiful than the expulsion of Muslims (Moriscos or Moors) from Spain. It has been described by Cardinal Richelieu as one of the most barbarous in human annals. Under threat of torture, most of

the native Muslims accepted baptism but remained Muslim at heart. In Castile, many of the Mudejares abandoned their native dress and language to blend in with the locals. After numerous threats, an Edict of Expulsion was issued in 1502 for the Muslims. All the children were detained and baptised. Expatriation was made very difficult. They were prohibited from taking with them any gold, silver or certain articles. They were told they could not go to a Christian country, Turkey or to North Africa.

In the kingdom of Aragon, Moors succumbed to such threats. In 1525, King Charles V proclaimed that no Muslim should remain in his kingdom. In view of these circumstances, whole communities in some places embraced Christianity. In 1538, a group of Moorish slaves was punished on the charge of coming together at night to play musical instruments and perform zambras (Moorish dances) and to eat Kuskus.

In 1556 when Phillip II came to the throne, a member of the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Granada was ordered to carry out a rigorous policy of suppression. In this respect an edict was issued and duly enforced. Use of the Arabic language was forbidden, no one could wear Moorish garments, Moorish baths were to be closed down, and Christian midwives were to be present at all births so as to ensure baptism. The next year, orders were issued to abandon Moorish costumes at once, and to surrender all children between the ages of three and fifteen to the priests so as to teach them Christian doctrine. These stringent measures resulted in an uprising in December 1568 by the Muslims of Granada led by Don Hernando (Muhammad ibn Humeya) but it did not last long.

In 1570 a prohibition was put in place against having any Arabic book. This happened only three years after the capture of Granada when a wholesale literary holocaust took place in

1567 under Torquemada's auspices which had no parallel in Europe until 1933. Rumours were circulating that Muslims from North Africa planned to invade Spain and re-establish Muslim rule once again. Therefore, King Philip II decided to forbid them their dress, their baths and their language. The Inquisitional law of tale-bearing was still in force i.e. pitting children against their parents and wives against their husbands. Bishops proposed measures to appoint special Inquisitors, deport Muslims to Newfoundland, or castrate all males.

The process of deportation was not completed until 1615. One historian, Vacandard, has estimated that more than half a million Muslims and Jews were banished from Spain, about 1/16th of the total population. This measure greatly weakened Spain by depriving her of some of the most skillful, and industrious citizens. This in fact proved to be an economic disaster, which took hundred of years to overcome. In the years

that followed, there were isolated reports of mosques or organised Muslim groups that were put down.

Inquisition Elsewhere

The Inquisition was more benign in northern Europe: in England it was never instituted, and in Scandinavia it had no impact. In the rest of Europe, the Inquisition was used to suppress emerging Christian sects such as early Protestantism, French Illustration Erasmism and Illuminism. It also played some political role in France and Holland.

Conclusion

One wonders why Catholic officials did not raise their voices against such a cruel system. Why did the rulers of other European countries not condemn this pogrom or do something to prevent it? When the Nazis tried to annihilate the Jews in Germany, there was world-wide condemnation. The main author and executioner of the Spanish expulsion, Juan de Ribera, archbishop of Valencia, was beatified which is one degree

short of sainthood i.e. he was considered a model Christian. This crowning victory of a despotic state came about through partnership with the Church. It appears the king and the Pope collaborated to persecute Jews and Muslims. Did Jesus^(as) not admonish his followers:

‘The Son of man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.’
(Luke 9:56)

Spain was deprived of some of its most skilled artisans, its most industrious peasantry, and its keenest brains. This was in fact the worst kind of brain-drain. They destroyed all freedom of thought, and for many years the sky was livid with the flames of *Auto-da-fe*; burning people for thinking, for investigating, for expressing honest opinions. The net result was that a darkness of ignorance settled over Spain, pierced by no star and shone upon by no rising sun for hundreds of years. The finest system of irrigation established

by Muslims fell into disrepair, the terraced hillsides were allowed to lose their soil, the population dwindled to its former level, and what had once been the garden of Spain under the Muslims became a desert. The land in which the former inhabitants had tended every inch of ground was now so depopulated that a man might travel through it for a day’s journey without seeing more than a handful of half-ruined hovels.

We might hope that such behaviour could not be repeated today, but the Muslim world is currently trying to force orthodoxy on its populations, and although the measures are nowhere near as extreme of the Inquisition, the net result is to restrain thought and inquiry.

No religion or prophet has ever taught such behaviour, yet it is the evil excesses of man that allow him to treat his fellow man in such a cruel way. We may wish to look upon history with despair, and wonder why man behaved like this, but

unfortunately, history has a sad habit of repeating itself, and has no limitations of colour or faith.

Moorish Empire in Spain, Philadelphia in 1904.

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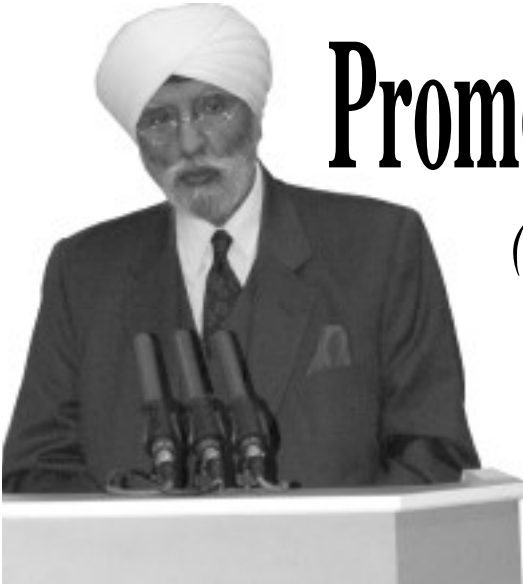
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Promoting Peace

(a Sikh viewpoint)

*An address by Hon. Judge
Mr. Mota Singh QC
delivered at a Peace Dinner
in Baitul Futuh, Morden on
19 January 2005*

World peace is a topic that has exercised the minds of a lot of political leaders the world over for years. It is an ideal that seems to have eluded them. The Second World War stands out in a war-stained twentieth century, not just for the unprecedented scale of the fighting – at least 50 million died as a result of it – but for the potential upheavals that it set in train.

Following the end of the war, the United Nations came into being as an organisation to maintain international peace and to foster

international co-operation in the resolution of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. It was formed in October 1945 when the major powers ratified a Charter that had been drawn up earlier. Most countries are now members of the UN.

I said the topic of world peace has exercised the minds of political leaders. Religious leaders have, by and large, either remained silent or been sidelined as inconsequential. Peace and salvation, you may think, go hand in hand. For centuries, even millennia, religions had seen

themselves as possessors of exclusive truths and of unique paths of salvation. In affirming its own faith, each denied the integrity of others. It is time to reach out to one another, with a determination to turn a history of alienation into a legacy of love.

In all religions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other world faiths, the voice of tolerance and moderation has become muted, even unsure of itself. Those who claim to represent religious authenticity have been those who, by and large, reject dialogue, accommodation and pluralism and speak instead of authority, exclusivity and the uncompromising fundamentals of faith. As a result, religion in the contemporary world has been again a source of 'conflict' rather than reconciliation.

In the field of science and technology, tremendous strides have been made, but scientific progress is precarious and conditional. If we are only learned without being cultured,

we become a danger to society. There is an observation of Aristotle which is akin to saying: 'Man, when perfected, is the best of animals but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all' since armed injustice is the more dangerous, and he is equipped at birth with arms meant to be used by intelligence and virtue, which he may use for the worst ends. Wherefore, if he has not virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals. We have seen countless examples of man's inhumanity to man. In the international sense, the crisis that confronts us is the gravest in the whole recorded history. We are armed with weapons of modern science and the techniques of modern psychology, without ourselves being redeemed from greed, selfishness and love of power. We have increased our power over nature but not over ourselves.

Of the many problems that now face the leaders of the world, none is of graver consequence than the problem of saving the

human race from extinction. Struggling as we are with the fateful horizons of an atomic age, the achievements of science have induced in our minds a mood of despair making us feel homeless, exiles caught in a blind machine. We are standing on the edge of an abyss or perhaps even sliding towards it. A former Prime Minister of England contemplated: 'We and all nations stand at this hour in human history before the portals of supreme catastrophe and measureless reward. Our faith is that in God's mercy, we shall choose aright, in which case the annihilating character of these agencies may bring unutterable security to the human mind. To choose aright requires the cultivation of the head and intelligence. Escape from decline and catastrophe depends not on scientific ideas and material forces, but on the perceptions and ideas of men and women on the moral judgements of the community. If we choose rightly, the achievements of science may lead to such a degree of material wealth and abundance of leisure as has never

been possible in human history. All this will be possible only if we achieve a revolution in the inner compulsions that control us.'

I pray we make the right choice that those charged with that duty, act responsibly and make the right choice.

about the
AUTHOR

Hon. Judge Singh was born in Nairobi, Kenya, where he practised as an Advocate in the Supreme Court of Kenya and also served as a Member of Parliament in Kenya. He was appointed as one of the first Asian Queen's Counsel in the UK. He is a practising Sikh and Vice President of the Family Service Unit of the World Sikh Council.

The Keynote address by the Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community will be featured in the April 2005 edition of *The Review of Religions*.

MYTHOLOGY

or RELIGION?

By Fazal Ahmad – UK

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

(Ch.16: V.37)

When does mythology become religion, and vice versa? The verse quoted above is in the Holy Qur’an, the religious text of Muslims, and gives a clear mandate to Muslims to travel the earth and study the religious development of all races on the planet. It commences by declaring that Messengers were sent to all peoples on the earth. In

conducting such a study, we should find evidence of Prophets and religious development in every tribe or race, and also clues of the subsequent punishment inflicted on those tribes where a Messenger had been rejected or mistreated.

Global vs Local Religion

Some global faiths are treated more seriously because they have a written Book or heritage, and a greater following and political power. On the other hand, some beliefs and faiths are relegated to the realms of mythology because their followers are largely in the developing world and their beliefs have been transmitted orally rather than in a written form. But is this a sensible basis upon which to determine which faiths are Divinely-guided and which are not? Certainly, the

Qur'anic verse quoted earlier is clear that religion was taught to every race, and in all parts of the world. So our study should start to uncover the evidence to support this claim.

Have Global Faiths lasted the test of time?

Let us take a look at a few examples. In Christianity, from an early time (within 300 years of the time of Jesus^(as)), a written account existed of the life and works of Jesus^(as). Christianity grew in political and global strength on the back of first the Roman Empire, and then the dominance of European colonial powers that were able to spread their message around the world. Even now, Christianity has the largest following worldwide.

Yet, if we look at the first four books of the New Testament (Bible) which are known as the Synoptic Gospels and cover the same set of events around the life and works of Jesus^(as), we find elementary differences between them. This is well-documented and is too broad a subject to

cover here, but the main point is that if four individuals had captured their own version of events and these had been transmitted orally to their own communities and eventually put to paper, then there would not be a surprise to find such differences. What is striking despite the differences, is the strength of the character and teachings of Jesus^(as) that still shine out of the Bible. Yet, if it were claimed that the Bible is the infallible truth from God and was Divinely revealed, then the inaccuracies have either evolved over time, or the claim to Divine revelation cannot be true. Even Christian commentators accept that the Bible has changed over the centuries, and more recent discoveries such as the Codex Sinaiticus in Egypt show that there are verses missing or added from copies of the Bible dating back to the 4th Century CE.

Hinduism has hundreds of millions of adherents. It has a folklore built up of characters around Krishna^(as) and others from a specific period of

antiquity based exclusively around the Indian culture. These traditions were captured in their holy book, the Bhagavad Gita. It is not easy to use this Book as a history manual and often the language used is symbolic rather than literal, yet the sense of the faith still emerges.

Judaism also has a religious Book in the shape of the Torah. Again, the Torah (or a version of the Torah) is claimed to be Divinely revealed to Moses^(as) exclusively for the 12 Hebrew tribes. Yet some of the events covered include the death of Moses^(as) which presumably not revealed to him in that state. Actually, the Torah also suffered a similar fate to the Bible in that it was transmitted orally and later put to paper following the Diaspora (dispersion of the Jews from the Middle East after the Babylonian and Roman con-quests of Palestine) at which point it was necessary to capture the text such that it would not be lost to later generations. Again, an in-depth study of the Old Testament (Torah) shows anom-alies in the

┌ The Aborigines, Native American Indians, Yoruba, Scandinavians, Incas and many others held and often still hold very strong beliefs about the Creator, man's status in the universe, life after death and cataclysmic events. Their teachings around a flood story will often resonate with versions of similar events in the global religions ┐ related to Noah^(as).

stories of the Prophets. So does this mean that the Torah is inaccurate and wrong, or that elements of the story have become distorted by man over time?

In each of these cases, it can be argued that Divine religion had become distorted in some aspects and it now seems more like mythology, whereas the main concepts still appear coherent. Jesus^(as) described himself as the true vine (John 15:1), or that his body was like bread (1 Corinthian 11:24), yet clearly that was not

physically the case. Krishna^(as) was described as having wings, yet again that was not physically the case. These were religious metaphors signifying traits such as protection which are exhibited by Prophets.

Can we uncover Divine Truth in Mythology?

In the opposite extreme are the various cultures around the world that hold a native or local religion. In the vast majority of these cases, it is hard to pinpoint a specific time or Prophet associated to their teachings. The Aborigines, native American Indians, Yoruba, Scandinavians, Incas and many others held and often still hold very strong beliefs about the Creator, man's status in the universe, life after death and cataclysmic events. Their teachings of a Flood story will often resonate with versions of similar events in the global religions related to Noah^(as). Yet these stories and beliefs are called *mythology* because they do not conform to our fundamentals of a traditional religion which are:

- A named and known Prophet sent to a specific race;
- A message for a specific time and people;
- A Book capturing a Divine message;
- An understanding of life after death and the status of the soul.

In the latter case, it could be legitimately argued that the tribal beliefs are the opposite to the 'global religions' in that there is no written form of the original faith, but in some cases, we can piece together a view of the original religion from the clues we have today in the form of oral traditions. Scholars such as Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell did a lot of pioneering research on this subject in their time. Other characteristics of Prophets are that they invariably came at a time of spiritual decline when they were needed to oppose popular myths and beliefs, and to move people towards true religion. This made

them unpopular among their own people. So we should look for similar traits in other candidate Prophets.

There is a grey area today between cults or local faiths that yield clues to their origins, or global faiths that have become distorted over time. Why are the man-made gods and goddesses of the Hindus today any different to the deities of the Greeks and Romans of two thousand years ago? They too had a sophisticated culture and excelled in arts and sciences just like us today.

There are other religions that fall into the grey area between religion and mythology. The Ancient Egyptians are such an example. They had a strong religious identity. Although it is not possible at this time to pinpoint a prophet or line of prophets, and there is no ancient Egyptian Bible, we do have a range of clues in the shape of temples, hieroglyphics and artefacts that provide 'evidence' of the beliefs of these ancient

people. Could their *Book of the Dead* be seen as their religious text? The text describes a scene similar to our understanding of the Day of Judgement. It would be arrogant to consider their beliefs to have been anything less than a religion for them at their time, any less than our own faiths represent to us in this age. Again, the version of Egyptian religion presented in that text was different to what was being practised hundreds of years later at the time of Moses^(as).

The Qur'an describes how some races that rejected God and the Messengers sent to them, were utterly destroyed. Even here, scientists and archaeologists are trying to unearth remains related to the people of Noah^(as), Sodom and Gomorrah, the tribe of Ad and numerous others.

A sobering thought is what men will make of our current beliefs in two thousand year's time. Would they plough through the rubble of London and New York and suggest that as these were two of the major population centres of

Our challenge is to search the books, traditions and temples of the ancients to uncover this lost treasure trove of religious knowledge. If we do this with an open mind, we will be guided to the truth and will be able to distinguish between the designs of mankind, and the Designs of God.

the world, they must also be the centres of global religion in the year 2005? I wonder if the evidence they will uncover can lead them to believe that:

- A message from heaven reached New York on September 11th, and thereafter, this became a sacred date in the world calendar.
- Some of the most worshipped local deities included a global female singer and a male sportsman who played football.
- The singer wrote poems for

her followers which they recited at mass worship sessions.

- Man regularly visited the angels Apollo and Soyuz.

This all sounds absurd, but consider the way archaeologists have to piece through fragments of evidence to discern the truth today, and you will see how plausible this could be for the archaeologists of the 23rd century if war destroyed much of the evidence of our modern culture. The only difference is that we now have such a volume of textual evidence, that it would be highly unlikely that they would not have some of this archive available to them.

Known and unknown Messengers

We cannot simply refer to the ‘known’ Prophets of the Bible and Qur’an and claim that they had exclusive rights over Divine origin, as the Qur’an itself explains:

And We sent some

Messengers whom We have already mentioned to thee and some Messengers whom We have not mentioned to thee...

(Ch.4: V.165)

And:

Verily, We have sent thee with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and as a Warner and there is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent. And if they treat thee (Muhammad) as a liar, those who were before them also treated their Prophets as liars. Their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, and with the Scriptures, and with the illuminating Book.

(Ch.35: V.25-26)

A literal reading of these verses would indicate that there are many Prophets that we do not know about in detail. There were many Judaeo-Christian Prophets in the line of Abraham^(as). There were thousands of Prophets sent to mankind, and of course, we only know of a handful of them.

The truth is that any truly Divinely guided Prophet or Book stands out. Despite inaccuracies in various texts today, the beliefs, morals and brave actions of great Prophets such as Abraham^(as), Noah^(as), Moses^(as), Jesus^(as), Krishna^(as) and Muhammad^(sa) stand as a living guidance for us today. The Qur'an is the only Book which claims to have retained its authenticity 100%. There is ample evidence suggesting that the text has been preserved through time. Followers of Islam can easily adopt the wisdom of other Prophets who all seem to have a consistent belief-system. There can only be one God, because if there were multiple deities, they would be competing with each other, and this would be evident in universal events. If there is only one God, He may easily send messages in different forms to his creatures across the world, but the root messages could never be inconsistent with each other.

While this is true for the great world faiths, it is equally true

that you can find Divine wisdom in the teachings of Prophets such as Confucius^(as), Zarathustra^(as), and equally in the actions of Job^(as), Salih^(as) and perhaps Socrates^(as). Similarly, a study of the beliefs of the various African tribes, Aborigines, Maoris, Native American Indians, Aztecs, Incas, Egyptians etc., will unearth fragments of morality, respect for family, understanding of creation and life after death. Their views may be surprisingly similar to our own even though the context may be different.

So in seeking to find these other Messengers that are not specifically named in the Qur'an, we should look for certain characteristics. These guides would have come not to appease their people, but to create a reformation. They would never malign other prophets. They would never deviate from the Unity of God. They would have faced hostility from their people, but also created a change amongst their followers. There are examples such as Akhenaton, the

Egyptian Pharaoh who went against the polytheism of his predecessors and asked his people to worship one God. The sparsity of information makes it harder to confirm whether his was a lone political mission to carve out his own status in Egypt, or whether he was a revolutionary Messenger striving to wipe away the mythology and polytheism that had come to pollute the religion of the Egyptians. There are several similar characters in tribes around the world.

Stages of Development

Not all races at various stages were sophisticated enough to receive an advanced religious message or to accept a Divine text. Even amongst the most widely accepted Prophets, there is a progression of religion. If Abraham^(as) had attempted to preach the details of Islam to a people that still worshipped animals and stars, it may have been too hard for them to comprehend.

Instead what we find is a spiritual journey. From the earliest

Messengers who tried to instill a belief in God and an understanding of His Nature, to those that preached a code of morality, to the final message of the Qur'an with all its subtlety and detail, there is a gradual development based upon our ability to comprehend God and His Law.

Other Prophets also acknowledged that their teachings fell into a line of spiritual progress, for example:

Confucianism:

I have transmitted what was taught to me without making up anything of my own. I have been faithful to and loved the Ancients.
(Analect 7.1)

Jains:

On the whole twenty-three Tirthankaras have appeared, the venerable *mahavira* being the last of the Tirthankaras.
(Kalpa Sutra 2)

Buddhism:

I have seen an ancient Path,

an ancient road traversed by the rightly enlightened ones of former times.

(Samyutta Nikaya ii.106)

Hinduism:

Whenever the Law declines and the purpose of life is forgotten, I manifest myself on earth. I am born in every age to protect the good, to destroy evil, and to re-establish the Law.

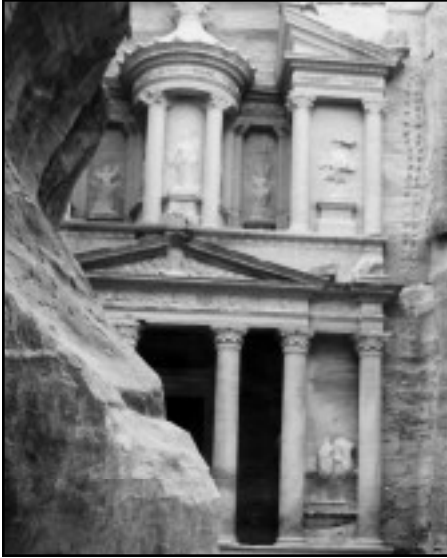
(Bhagavad Gita 4.7-8)

Christianity:

I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.
(John 16:12-13)

All of the above, taken from different parts of the world, alludes to a succession of Messengers and an evolution of message over a period of time.

Even looking at the remnants that history has left behind, there are so many unanswered questions. Was there a truly religious



element ever to the structures at Stonehenge, Giza, Pompeii, Teotihuacan, Angkor Wat or Petra? In some cases, such as Stonehenge and Teotihuacan, they may signify the start of a social upheaval, and so it is possible that an individual responsible for that upheaval was also Divinely Guided. Others, such as Pompeii and Petra, may be scenes of people that rejected a Messenger and were utterly destroyed.

Conclusion

We already have so many recognised Prophets mentioned

in the Bible and the Qur'an, so why search for others?

The Qur'an tells us to seek knowledge, and goes on to say:

And all of the important tidings of the Messengers, whereby We strengthen thy heart We relate unto thee.

(Ch.11: V.121)

So the accounts provided in the Qur'an cover the important tidings, but there will be others that repeatedly show the same events and outcomes for other similar tribes around the world. For the people of South America, Africa, Northern Europe or Australasia, it is not always easy to relate to stories of Prophets in the Middle East. When they learn of religious activity in their own parts of the world and among their own races, they start to grasp the messages in their own context. This would have been part of the purpose of sending so many Messengers to mankind around the globe.

Our challenge is to search the books, traditions and temples of

the ancients, analyse the information to uncover the truth, and uncover this lost treasure trove of religious knowledge. If we do this with an open mind, we will be guided to the truth, and will be able to distinguish between the designs of mankind, and the Designs of God.

In some cases, aspects of accepted Religion will be uncovered to be merely mythology and folklore which have weaved their way into an accepted faith, while in other cases, from out of the mists of mythology, we will uncover the gems of true Religion.

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

(Ch.16: V.37)

The evidence we have so far would not cover every people. Most of our information relates to the line of Prophets in the Middle East. So clearly more research is needed to better understand the development of religion in Europe, America, Africa, Australia, China and elsewhere. God did not neglect these people. So it is our duty to seek out their spiritual roots.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru) conducted wide-ranging research on this subject and inspired us to do greater research in this area. He repeatedly searched for the Adam in each race – the first man of each tribe able to comprehend Divine Revelation. His book *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth* is a lasting legacy that can inspire and guide us all to look deeper into other cultures, and to distinguish between mythology and divinely inspired religion.

Diseases & of the Rich Diseases of the Poor



The following is a paper by Professor Abdus Salam (above), the Nobel Laureate scientist which was first published in the 'Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' in 1963. It captures his zeal to exploit science for the good of all mankind rather than just the technologically advanced world.

Nine hundred years ago the great physician of Islam, Al Asuli, writing in distant Bokhara divided his pharmacopoeia into two parts: 'Diseases of the Rich' and 'Diseases of the Poor'. If Al Asuli were alive today and could write about the afflictions of mankind, I am sure he would again plan to divide his pharmacopoeia into the same two parts. Half his treatise would speak of the one affliction of rich humanity – the psychosis of nuclear annihilation. The other half would be concerned with the one affliction of the poor – their hunger and near-starvation. He might perhaps add that the two afflictions spring from a common cause – the excess of science in one case and the lack of science in the other.

At least so far as the problem of world poverty is concerned, none will question the thesis that with man's recent mastery of science and technology there is no physical reason left for the existence of hunger and want for any part of the human race. I wish not so much to preach the

virtues of a scientific organisation of society, but to provide a necessary objective perspective to the practical problems of science and development.

I have always been puzzled by how few people among the richer nations are really aware of the intensity of world poverty. Contrasting the two ills of Al Asuli, nuclear death and starvation, it is no doubt true that from Moscow or New York, the possibility of ultimate nuclear annihilation appears grimly near. But in Khartoum or Karachi the living death of daily hunger is nearer still. Fifty per cent of people in my country of Pakistan earn and live on eight cents a day. Seventy-five per cent live on less than fourteen cents. This fourteen cents includes the two daily meals, clothing, shelter, and any education. To us, the unresolved conflicts of the East and the West appear as distant wearying conflicts, inevitable luxuries of a state of physical well-being. For us, the nuclear problem is tragic only in that it leads to a criminal waste of the

earth's resources. For me personally, it is tragic for it claims the last ounces of the strength of some of the greatest sages of our age – sages like Bertrand Russell – who may otherwise have preached the immediate crusade against hunger and want.

But why are we poor? Mostly no doubt through our own follies. But let me humbly suggest that it may partly also be that we are financing some of the prosperity of the rich. Year after year, I have seen the cotton crop from my village in Pakistan fetch less and less money; year after year the imported fertilizer has cost more. My economist friends tell me the terms of trade are against us. Between 1955 and 1962, the commodity prices fell by seven per cent. In the same period the manufactured goods went up by ten per cent. Some courageous men have spoken against this. Paul Hoffman called it a 'subsidy, a contribution paid by the undeveloped countries to the industrialised world.' In 1957-1958 the underdeveloped world

received a total of \$2.4 billion in aid and lost \$2 billion in import capacity (through paying more for the manufactured goods it buys and getting less for what it sells), thus washing away nearly all the sums received in aid. I am sure that even a fully armed world with the largest possible stockpiles of armaments can forego further impoverishing the poor in this way. I am sure there are enough resources, technical and material, to cure the diseases of the poor even if the rich cannot agree to cure their own affliction.

But first let me make my premises clear. I am not referring to science as a way of life, only to the important roles of science and technology in raising living standards rather quickly. We must all realise that this is the science of an unglamorous variety. It consists largely of taking stock of a country's natural resources. It consists of the long process of acquiring some of the well-known technical skills. It consists of making an imaginative assess-

ment of which of the resources can be technically exploited most expeditiously, within the human and the material means at one's disposal.

Unfortunately, in most undeveloped countries there are few men who can make the right lists of priorities. This is not because they do not know the needs; it is more because what science and technology can achieve is only very vaguely comprehended. The greatest single long-range contribution individual scientists can make is in helping to create such men. There is fortunately more that can be accomplished sooner.

First and foremost there is the need, in P. M. S. Blackett's phrase, for a 'world super-market' in science and technology, a comprehensive display in one place of what science and technology can achieve in raising living standards and at what cost. One of the finest initiatives to do just this has come from the United Nations Conference on the Applications of Science and Technology held

at Geneva in February. The technical supermarket the conference unfolded will, I am sure, make rational assessment of priorities easier.

But the problem does not end with a conference. Even after one knows what one wants and what one can afford, for a very long time to come developing nations shall have to rely on importing technology. The chief suppliers are technical firms of consultants and contractors. It is at this crucial stage of counsel and advice that the technical knowledge and the idealism of the scientist can help.

I have nothing against technical firms as such. Some of them have done superb jobs, particularly when their tasks were clearly delineated in advance. But by the very nature of their specialisation, they are concerned with a narrow segment of development. And naturally enough, they do not possess the strongest of urges to help develop indigenous technical talent.

An example of an alternative possibility is one of the most valuable of scientific and technical ventures of recent times: the 1961 study of Pakistan's immense salinity and water-logging problem by a team of university scientists, agriculturalists, engineers, and hydrologists from the U.S. led by Roger Revelle. No consulting firm could ever have assembled such diverse talents; no commercial organisation could ever inspire the same degree of devotion.

I do not know what international mechanism there exists at present for assembling missions like these. I wonder if it is too much to hope that the February U.N. conference may be followed by the creation of a permanent U.N. agency on applications of science and technology. I am sure collective thinking could devise such an agency or some other means to channel the immense reservoir of idealism combined with technical competence which many groups of scientists possess.

Earlier I alluded to the immensely more important task of helping to develop first-rate men in the smaller countries themselves. The only one way to do this is to build up a true scientific tradition there. By locating international research programmes in the smaller countries, by awarding research contracts to their growing research centres, by visiting and by responding generously to their staffing requests, these incipient centres could be brought into the vigorous mainstream of science. This in the end will also bring economic salvation.

I have only very briefly touched on some of the ways scientists can help. To me, the greatest portent of hope is that men of science have begun to be interested in this problem in addition to nuclear disarmament.

**SOME SAYINGS OF THE
HOLY PROPHET OF ISLAM^(SA)
ON KNOWLEDGE**

Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet^(sa) said: For him who follows a path for seeking knowledge, Allah will ease the way to Paradise.

(Muslim)

Abu Umamah relates that the Holy Prophet^(sa) said: A learned one is as much above a worshipper as I am above the least of you; and he added: Allah, His angels and all those in the heavens and the earth even the ants in their heaps and the fish in the water call down blessings on those who instruct people in beneficial knowledge.

(Tirmidhi)

Abdullah Ibn Amir Ibn 'As relates that he heard the Holy Prophet^(sa) say: Allah will not roll up knowledge by withdrawing it from people but will put it out of reach through the death of divines with the result that when there are no divines, people will adopt ignorant ones as their leaders and will ask them for guidance and they will render their opinions without knowledge. They will be astray themselves and will lead others astray.

(Bukhari and Muslim)

The RATIONALE *behind the prohibition of eating pig flesh*

By Dr. Muzaffar Ahmad Malik – Guildford, UK

The prohibition of eating pig flesh is a topic that is, more often than not, taken for granted by Muslims, who obey the commandment without searching for a deeper understanding of the rationale that lies behind it. It is essential, however, for Muslims to acquire appropriate knowledge on this matter, in order to have a good understanding of the reasons for the prohibition to enable them to give a satisfactory explanation to others who may question them.

The Promised Messiah^(as) elaborated on the issue of not eating pork. This was followed by successive Khalifas who have also given explanations at different times; Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^(ru), in particular, discussed the topic on numerous occasions in simple language to make the explanation very clear. This article draws on

the discussion Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^(ru) presented on this topic.

At the outset, it should be noted that out of today's followers of the last three main religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), Jews and Muslims do not eat pork, while Christians do. The point to consider then, is not why Muslims and Jews avoid pork, but rather, why Christians eat pork when it was forbidden in the religion that came immediately before Christianity.

According to the Holy Bible, Jesus^(as) declared that he did not come to alter, but rather, to fulfil the teachings of Prophet Moses^(as). Referring to the Mosaic teachings, Jesus^(as) states in the Bible:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the

prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
(Matthew 5:17)

In light of this, it seems unreasonable to suppose that Jesus^(as) would have eaten swine, which was clearly forbidden in the Judaic teachings that he had come to revive. Moreover, there is no evidence in the New Testament to show that Jesus^(as) permitted anything that was prohibited by Moses^(as), neither does it show Jesus^(as) to have categorically stated that eating pork was allowed. It is ironic, then, that eating pig flesh was particularly promoted by Christians. The Holy Bible states:

And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.
(Leviticus 11:7-8)

Before entering the discussion on prohibition of pig meat, it is

important to briefly understand the fundamentals of the philosophy of prohibition. All Holy Books present Divine commandments that deliver a code of conduct for life, which defines morality for the benefit of mankind. Muslim belief holds that all Divine religions and their corresponding Books originated from a common source – the One God Almighty – with each successive teaching being an expansion of the former. According to the Holy Qur’an, God has categorically stated this last Book to be the final one in the chain of divine scriptures, and He has vowed to protect it until the end of time. By virtue of it being the last revealed Divine set of commandments with no further revisions or expansions to come, the Holy Qur’an is therefore comprehensive in setting out the moral code of conduct for life. The Qur’an touches on all essential issues of life, including which food one is allowed to eat.

The Qur’an contains a universal message regarding permissibility

and prohibition – that man is allowed things that are pure and good, and must abstain from things that are not. Referring to these ‘good things’, the Holy Qur’an states:

Say, ‘Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants, and the good things of His providing?’ Say, ‘They are for the believers in the present life and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection. ...’
(Ch.7: v.33)

And

Say, my Lord has only forbidden foul deeds, whether open or secret, and sin and wrongful transgression...
(Ch.7: v.34)

The same notion has been presented on numerous occasions in the Holy Qur’an with regard to food. For example, the Holy Qur’an reads:

O ye people! eat of what is

lawful and wholesome in the earth...

(Ch.2: v.169)

And again the Qur’an states, with reference to food:

They ask thee what is made lawful for them. Say, ‘All good things have been made lawful for you...’

(Ch.5: v.5)

Following this fundamental overarching rule of permissibility, the Holy Qur’an then proceeds to explain the things that are good and lawful. The first point is based on the basic principle of Islam – that God Almighty is the Source and Master of all that is in the heavens and on earth. In accordance with this belief, all actions of a follower, from planning to starting, implementing and finally finishing should begin in the name of Allah. This pronouncement has two advantages. First of all, it puts things into the correct perspective by constantly drawing attention to God Almighty as

the ultimate Proprietor. Secondly, it acts as a prayer invoking the blessings of Allah for the given action. This is also the foremost principle with regard to food. Therefore, in almost every verse of the Holy Qur'an where the topic of food prohibition is explained, it has been clearly stated that:

'Eat, then, of that over which the name of Allah has been pronounced...'
(Ch.6: v.119)

Yet again, the Holy Qur'an states:

And eat not of that on which the name of Allah has not been pronounced, for surely that is disobedience...
(Ch.6: v.122)

Understanding and accepting the fact that God Almighty is the Proprietor and Creator of the entire universe naturally leads to the acknowledgment that He has every right to forbid or allow, simply because He is the All-Knowing and the Most-Wise.

Now turning to the particular question of pig meat, it is seen that the Holy Qur'an lays specific commandments on prohibitions regarding some foods, so as to eliminate any confusion and clearly prescribe the limits. The Holy Qur'an explains:

He has made unlawful to you only that which dies of itself, and blood and the flesh of swine, and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked.
(Ch.2: v.174)

This is explained in even greater detail:

Forbidden to you is the flesh of an animal which dies of itself; and blood and the flesh of swine; and that on which is invoked the name of any other than Allah; and that which has been strangled; and that beaten to death; and that killed by a fall; and that which has been gored to death; and that of which a wild animal has eaten, except

that which you have properly slaughtered; and that which has been slaughtered at an altar (as an offering to idols)...This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion.'

(Ch.5: v.4)

Again, the Qur'an states:

Say, 'I find not in what has been revealed to me aught forbidden to an eater who desires to eat it, except it be that which dies of itself or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine – for all that is unclean – or what is profane, on which is invoked the name of other than Allah.'

(Ch 6: v.146)

A careful reflection of all of the above verses leads to the understanding that one aspect of the prohibition of certain meats relates to their physical qualities – that is, eating the flesh of animals that are diseased, beaten or already dead (from a cause

other than slaughtering for food), are forbidden.

In addition, however, a second aspect of the prohibition is seen to relate to a wider moral and spiritual context. For instance, not pronouncing the name of Allah can render an otherwise permitted food forbidden. As another example, an animal slaughtered as an offering to idols also renders the food unlawful, even if the animal is otherwise lawful to eat and all rules of slaughtering were adhered. In both examples, the reason for prohibition would not alter the physical composition of the food. The moral context, therefore, plays an important role in the prohibition of certain foods as this relates to the effect on the soul, and the mind-set of a person.

In matters of religion, it is this spiritual side of things that is emphasised, and not merely the physical aspect. This is clearly apparent in many instances where an act in itself is neither a sin nor a virtue, but is made one

of the two depending on the context in which it is carried out. For instance, from a religious perspective, a conjugal relationship between a man and a woman is a sin if it occurs outside the bounds of marriage, but the very same act is acceptable if it occurs within the confines of a marital bond.

Now, by applying these principles to the prohibition of pigmeat, we can explore the reasons for this commandment in the appropriate context. From the observation of people who eat pork, it is evident that the act does not cause them to contract a physical food borne illness from the meat. The meat might have been a greater physical health hazard in the past, but with good food controls and hygiene that are in place today, the incidence of illnesses from pig meat is similar to that of other meats. The physical quality of the meat could, therefore, not have been the ultimate reason for the prohibition. It is the deeper moral issues that surround the prohibition of pig flesh that need

to be highlighted and understood. In his discussion of the topic, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^(ru), explained that the basis of the prohibition lies in three characteristics that pigs are particularly known to possess, and that are considered immoral from the religious point of view. These are as follows:

1. Firstly, pigs have immoral sexual habits, in that if two male pigs are present together with only one female, both males will mate with the female, one after the other. This is contrary to what is observed in the rest of the animal kingdom, where two males would compete until one has been defeated, following which only the victor would mate with the female.
2. Secondly, pigs have a habit of being sodomist (homosexual) in order to satisfy their sexual desire. Although this habit is sometimes seen on and off in an adhoc manner in some other animals, pigs are the

most well-known for this practice.

(The above two points are indicative of the pig's promiscuous nature that is unmatched in the animal kingdom. Although in today's 'developed' world, both of these practices have become acceptable in some places, no religion has ever considered them to be moral or permissible.)

3. Thirdly, pigs, which are normally herbivores (plant-eating animals), show no hesitation in eating the flesh of their offspring when it dies, particularly its own piglet. In the rest of the animal kingdom, even carnivores (meat-eating animals) who eat the flesh of other animals will avoid eating their own kith.

All of the above three characteristics, whether sexual or related to dietary habits, are considered immoral. One trait these point to is insatiable greed,

which even in non-religious terms is not a liked attribute. The pig is so well known for this that the English proverb 'as greedy as a pig' has developed as a result of this recognition.

Islam and Judaism (as well as Christianity, or any other religion in its true original form) call for an open and strong protest against all of these characteristics. A powerful and visible symbolisation of this protest prohibits for consumption the meat of an animal noted foremost for possessing these immoral habits. The prohibition seen in Islam of not eating pork is, therefore, more in protest against the habits of the animal, rather than merely against the physical attributes of pig flesh.

Moreover, it is not being claimed that these habits of the pig are necessarily always transmitted to an individual who eats pig meat, nor is it being stated that these habits cannot be inculcated in an individual who does not consume swine flesh (they

obviously can be, as these habits are also observed in societies that do not eat pork – though perhaps to a lesser extent). At the same time, however, we cannot rule out the fact that there may be subtle effects on the human soul that arise from external experiences of an individual, including what he or she sees, hears, does, and even eats. In the spiritual realm, therefore, it would be safest to eat what is purest.

Finally, the two religions that are known to strongly adhere to the prohibition of pork are Judaism and Islam. It is interesting to note that they represent two of the last three major religions of the world. Moreover, both of these religions in particular stand out from almost all other religions of the world by holding a definitive, unambiguous and unyielding belief in One God Almighty. Any promotion of their belief would propagate the message of Unity of God Almighty. It would be no surprise then if Allah the All-Knowing, the Most-Wise,

promoted their uniqueness through the prohibition of pig meat.

In summary therefore, the reasons for which pork has been forbidden may fall into the following three main points:

1. In exercising God's right of proprietorship.
2. In open protest against such repugnant and immoral habits as the pig possesses, by boycotting its meat.
3. For protection from a possible inculcation of these habits into man.



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