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COVER/BACK PHOTOGRAPHS:
FRONT: Gate of mosque in St. Petersburg, Russia.
BACK: St. Paul's Cathedral in London.
(Photos from Shutterstock photo library)

And We have enjoined on man concerning his parents – his mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years – ‘Give thanks to Me and to thy parents. Unto Me is the final return.’
(The Holy Qur'an: Ch.31: V.15)

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EDITORIAL

Sarah Waseem– UK

On 8th October 2005 Pakistan was hit by a 7.6-magnitude earthquake that caused major devastation in the north of the country and in Kashmir. As we go to print, Pakistani authorities have said the number of people killed in the quake is more than 80,000. Millions have been made homeless and there are fears for the survivors. At least another 1,400 people died in Indian-administered Kashmir. Pakistan says the quake will cost it \$5bn in re-establishing the infrastructure. The quake injured 60,000 and made 3.3m homeless. The response of the international community has once again been woefully too little too late.

Many villages have vanished from the face of the earth and help has still not reached some inaccessible and remote areas.

One can speculate about a Divine hand behind this catastrophe but perhaps those afflicted by it are

in no mood to discover the cause of a disaster of this scale. One must sympathise with them now and provide them with all available assistance as soon as possible. But the frequency at which man is being shaken to wake up leads one to wonder about a common cause for such disasters. In his Friday sermon of October 14th Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V reminded us that natural disasters do not distinguish between the rich and poor. He stressed the need for man to return to his Creator through prayers and seeking Allah's refuge and *Istighfar* (pardon) and guidance for the peoples of Pakistan.

Following this natural disaster, all should endeavour to reform themselves, get rid of all suspicions and distrusts and pray to Allah intensely and with utmost humility so that He saves us from His chastisement.

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Almighty has set forth a fundamental principle which regulates His chastisement and His mercy, which is:

I will inflict my punishment on whom I will; but My mercy encompasses all things.

(Ch.7: V.157)

Divine displeasure can be averted if man abandons all forms of association of others with God, establishes true communion with Him, discards all vice and wrongdoing, becomes

diligent in performing all his obligations to God and to his fellow beings, and cultivates true sympathy for the whole of mankind.

Disasters serve as forcible reminders of man's two main duties in life – **Huq_q Al** (the rights of the creation) along with **Huq_q Allah** (the rights owed to Allah). In this month's *The Review of Religions* we have included an address by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V where he expands and discusses these obligations.

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*' which are words that a Muslim utters out of respect whenever he or she comes across that name.

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

Notes & Comments

Belief in God – Religious and Scientific Study

In the US, a group of families in the Dover Area school district are challenging the decision taken by the district that ninth-grade students are to hear a brief statement about intelligent design (ID) before biology classes on evolution. The eight families argue that the district policy violates the constitutional separation of church and state.

Intelligent design is a concept some scholars have advanced over the past 15 years that holds that Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection cannot fully explain the origin of life or the emergence of highly complex life forms. It implies that life on Earth was the product of an unidentified intelligent force.

Dover Area is believed to be the first school system in the nation

to require students to be exposed to the intelligent design concept under a policy adopted by a 6-3 vote in October 2004.

Critics say intelligent design (ID) is merely creationism – a literal reading of the Bible's story of creation – camouflaged in scientific language, and it does not belong in a science curriculum.

Proponents of ID argue that life is so complex it cannot have emerged without the guidance of an intelligent designer. Intelligent design (ID) states that the universe and its inhabitants could not have evolved by the 'blind chance' set forth in Darwinism. Its arguments are mostly concerned with what it considers to be gaps in the theory of evolution, and it

claims that these gaps scientifically prove the presence of an 'intelligent designer' in nature.

Unlike creationism, ID does not state that God is the intelligent designer. It only says that there is clear evidence in nature of intelligent design. The designer in ID could be God, but it could also be an extraterrestrial race or some other supernatural force. Also, ID does not draw its arguments directly from the Christian Bible.

The concerns in the Dover Area case highlight the way the whole debate over ID has become polarised. It seems that one must either subscribe to a view that evolution is a water-tight theory which is entirely sound, or go down a route that is unscientific and entirely irrational. This second path, that of the Creationists or those advocating ID, is usually attacked as being unscientific, as it is assumed that belief in a Creator is somehow against scientific enquiry and progress. Perhaps there is a fear that such thinking will lead to a literal

acceptance of Biblical scriptures. This polarisation has clouded some of the central features of the wider discussion of the roles of science and religion.

Islam takes the middle road. We are told in the Holy Qur'an to believe in 'the unseen' (Ch.2:V.4) and to 'believe in that which has been revealed to thee, and that which was revealed before thee,' and to have 'firm faith in what is yet to come' (Ch.2:V.5). Belief in the unseen does not imply a belief in that which is irrational.

The Holy Qur'an urges us to use scientific thinking to explore and investigate the world.

And He it is Who spread out the earth and made therein mountains and rivers. And of the fruits He has made them in pairs, male and female. He causes the night to cover the day. Therein, verily, are Signs for a people who reflect.
(Ch.13:V.4)

And He it is Who gives life

and causes death, and in His hands is the alternation of night and day. Will you not then understand?

(Ch.23:V.81)

The job of scientists however is not to prove the statements made in the Qur'an are correct. Islam postulates total belief in The Creator Who is Ever Present. Man is urged to look at the world and explore and through the use of science, to reflect on how The Creator made the world.

The second Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya community in Islam has written:

‘... Islam teaches that there can be no conflict between the Word of God and the Work of God, and thus resolves the supposed conflict between science and religion. It does not ask me to ignore the laws of nature and to believe in things which are contrary to them. On the contrary, it exhorts me to study the laws of nature and derive benefit from them. It

teaches me that as revelation comes from God and He also is the Creator of the universe, there can be no conflict between that which He does and that which He says. It invites me, therefore, in order to understand His revelation, to study His work, and in order to realise the significance of His work, to study His word, and thus satisfies my intellectual yearning.’

(Why I believe in Islam?)

Some scientists seem to feel the need to constantly justify religion and religious thought. In *The Story of God* Robert Winston poses the question that the need and desire for religious thinking may come from some kind of genetic programming in humans. He suggests that being religious may actually confer some survival benefit to human kind because religious beliefs lead to greater cohesion and the operation of moral codes.

‘Therefore in the long run – a shared religion appears to be

evolutionarily advantageous and natural selection might favour those groups with stronger religious beliefs'.
(*The Guardian* – 13.10.05)

prejudices, some members of the scientific community pursue dogmatism in their thinking that prevents any discussion of religion.

What this argument misses is that for the true believer, religion is much more than a code of life. Worship of God is an interactive dynamic. People who believe in God and pray to Him experience a communication with their Creator that is dynamic and vibrant. Believers have a real sense of the Presence of God in their lives. Those evolutionary biologists who have rejected an Independent Creator, struggle with the fact that people believe in Him. They have rejected God and then try to offer 'scientific theories' to explain why He is no longer needed or why some people choose to continue to believe in a Supreme Deity. Science has a tradition of looking in an unbiased manner at all the available evidence.

Sarah Waseem – UK

It would be a pity then if because of their own misconceptions or

The Exalted Status of the Holy Prophet^(sa) – Part 1

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.

That light of high degree that was bestowed on perfect man was not in angels, was not in stars, was not in the moon, was not in the sun, was not in the oceans and the rivers, was not in rubies, emeralds, sapphires, or pearls; in short, it was not in any earthly or heavenly object. It was only in perfect man whose highest and loftiest and most perfect example was our lord and master, the Chief of the Prophets, the Chief of all living ones, Muhammad^(sa). That light was bestowed on this man and, according to their

ranks, upon all those who bore the same colour to some degree.... This dignity was found in its highest and most perfect form in our lord and master and our guide, the immaculate Prophet, the righteous one, testified to by the righteous, Muhammad^(sa), the chosen one. (*Aina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 5, pp. 160-162*)

I always wonder how high was the status of this Arab Prophet, whose name was Muhammad,

(thousands of blessings and peace be upon him). One cannot reach the limit of his high status and it is not given to man to estimate correctly his spiritual effectiveness. It is a pity that his rank has not been recognised, as it should have been. He was the champion who restored to the world the Unity of God which had disappeared from the world; he loved God in the extreme and his soul melted out of sympathy for mankind. Therefore, God, Who knew the secret of his heart, exalted him above all the Prophets and all the first ones and the last ones and bestowed upon him in his lifetime all that he desired...

(Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.22, pp.118-119)

O all ye who dwell upon the earth, and O all human souls that are in the east or in the west, I announce to you emphatically that the true reality in the earth is Islam alone, and the True God is the God Who is described in the Qur'an, and the Prophet who has everlasting spiritual life and who is seated on the throne of glory

and holiness, is Muhammad, the chosen one^(sa). The proof of his spiritual life and holy majesty is that by following him and loving him we become recipients of the Holy Spirit and are favoured with the bounty of converse with God and witness heavenly signs.

(Tiryaq-ul-Qulub, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.15, P.141)

The man who in his being and his attributes and his actions and through his spiritual and holy faculties set an example of perfection, in knowledge and action and in sincerity and steadfastness, and was called the perfect man was Muhammad^(sa).... The man who was most perfect as man and as Prophet, and came with full blessings, and who through a spiritual revival and resurrection manifested the first judgement in the world and revived the dead world, that blessed Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, the leader of the righteous ones, the pride of the Prophets, was Muhammad, the chosen one^(sa). Our Lord, send down on that beloved Prophet that mercy and blessing that

Thou hast not sent down on anyone since the beginning of the world. Had that grand Prophet not appeared in the world then we would have no proof of the truth of lesser Prophets like Jonah^(as), Job^(as), Jesus^(as) son of Mary, Malachi^(as), John^(as), Zechariah^(as), etc. Though they were favourites and honoured and were beloved ones of Almighty God, they are under obligation to this Prophet that they were accepted in the world as true Prophets.

O Allah, send down Thy blessings on him and on his people and on his companions, all of them. Our last word is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.

(Ittimam-ul-Hujjah, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.8, p.308)

When we estimate justly, then out of the whole series of Prophets, we find one of high courage and alive and greatly dear to God, the Chief of the Prophets, the pride and the crown of the Messengers, whose name

is Muhammad Mustafa and Ahmad Mujtaba^(sa). By walking under his shadow for ten days one obtains that light which before him could not be obtained in a thousand years.... We have found every light by following the immaculate Prophet and whoever follows him will also find it and he will become so accepted of God that nothing will be impossible for him. The Living God, Who is hidden from people, will be his God; all false gods will be trodden under his feet. He will be blessed everywhere and Divine Power will be with him. Peace be on him who follows the guidance.

(Siraj-e-Munir, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.12, pp.82-83)

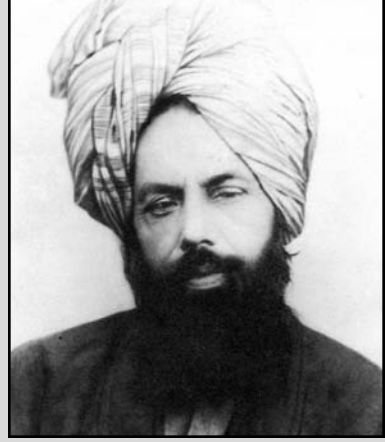
Now under heaven, there is only one Prophet^(sa) and only one Book. The Prophet is Muhammad, the chosen one^(sa) who is higher and more exalted than all Prophets and is the most perfect of Messengers and is the 'Khatam-ul-Anbiya', (Seal of the Prophets) and the best of men by following whom we find God Almighty and all the veils of darkness are lifted

and the signs of true salvation are witnessed in this very life. The Book is the Holy Qur'an, which comprises true and perfect guidance and effectiveness, through which knowledge and understanding of the Divine are obtained and the heart is purified of human weaknesses; and being delivered from ignorance, heedlessness and doubts, a person arrives at the stage of complete certainty.

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'ain, Vol.1, pp.557-558, sub-footnote 3)

There have been millions of pure-natured people in the world and there will be more in the future, but we have found the best of all of them and the highest man of God, whose name is Muhammad^(sa).

Allah and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! You also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutations of peace'.
(Ch.33:V.57)



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.

We shall leave aside any mention of the holy ones from among those people whose circumstances have not been described in detail in the Holy Qur'an. We shall express our view only with regard to the Prophets who are

mentioned in the Qur'an like Moses^(asa), David^(as), Jesus^(as) and other Prophets. We affirm it on oath, calling God to witness, that if the Holy Prophet^(sa) had not come into the world, and the Holy Qur'an had not been revealed, and we had not seen with our own eyes the blessings that we have witnessed, the truth of all past Prophets would have remained doubtful in our eyes.

No reality can be gathered from mere stories, for it is quite possible that they may not be true and it is also possible that the miracles that are attributed to these Prophets might be exaggerations, for no sign of them is visible today. We cannot even ascertain for certain from the Books revealed in the past that God truly exists, because we are not assured that God speaks to man. But through the advent of the Holy Prophet^(sa) all these stories became real. We now realise not merely as a statement, but as a matter of experience, what converse with the Divine means and how God's signs are manifested and how prayers are

answered. All this we have discovered by following the Holy Prophet^(sa) and what other people relate as stories we have witnessed it all. We have attached ourselves to a Prophet^(sa) who manifests God to us. [A poet has put it beautifully:

*Muhammad of Arabia, King of
both the worlds;
Whose threshold is
safeguarded by the Holy Spirit.*

*I cannot call him God, but I do
say;
To recognise him is to
recognise God.]*

How shall we express our gratitude to God who bestowed upon us the good fortune to follow the Prophet who is a sun for the souls of the righteous as there is a sun for the bodies. He appeared in a time of darkness and illumined the world with his light. He was neither tired nor fatigued till he purified all parts of Arabia from associating partners with God. He is the proof of his own truth for his light is present in every age and

true obedience to him purifies a person as the clear and transparent water of a river cleanses dirty linen. Who has come to us with a sincere heart and has not witnessed that light, and who has knocked honestly on that door for whom it has not been opened? But the pity is that most people prefer the lower life and do not desire that higher light should enter into them.

(Chasma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'ain, Vol.23, pp.301-303)

The Holy Prophet^(sa) was directed in the Holy Qur'an to supplicate:

O my Lord! Grant me perfect knowledge of Your greatness, Your ways and Your attributes. (Ch.20: V.115)

This means that the Holy Prophet^(sa) was directed to supplicate for perfect knowledge of God's greatness and understanding and attributes. At another place it is said:

So am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit. (Ch.6:V.164)

Reading these two verses together, we find that the Holy Prophet^(sa) became *the foremost of the Muslims* because he was the most learned in the knowledge of Divine understanding. For this reason, his Islam is the highest of all and he is the foremost of the Muslims. Another verse also indicates the vastness of his knowledge as is said:

And Allah has sent down to thee the Book and wisdom and has taught thee what thou knewest not, and great is Allah's grace on thee'.

(Ch.4:V.114)

This means that: God Almighty has taught the Holy Prophet^(sa) that which he could not have learnt by himself, and by His grace he was blessed more than anyone else.

That is to say, the Holy Prophet^(sa) surpassed everyone in his knowledge and understanding of the divine and God Almighty perfumed him with the fragrance of divine understanding more

than anyone else. Thus, God has appointed knowledge and understanding as the principal means of obtaining a true concept of Islam.

Though there are other means for obtaining such knowledge, like fasting, Prayer, supplication and carrying out all the Divine commandments, the number of which exceeds six hundred, yet the knowledge of the Greatness of God and of His Unity and of His attributes of Glory and Beauty is basic for everything. He who has a heedless heart and has no understanding of the Divine, cannot obtain the strength to observe the fast, perform Prayer, make supplication, or occupy himself with doing good. All righteous action is incited by understanding of the Divine and all the other means proceed from it and are its issue.

The beginning of this understanding is the reflection of God's *Rahmaniyyat* and is not the result of any action or any prayer, but is a gift of pure grace. He guides whom He wills and He

lets go astray whom He wills.

Then this understanding is fostered by righteous action and good faith, till it assumes the form of revelation and descending in the word of God, illumines the whole expanse of the bosom with the light which is called Islam.

At the stage of perfect understanding, Islam does not remain a mere phrase, but all its reality that we have described is achieved and the human soul prostrates itself humbly before Divine Unity. Thereupon, from both sides it is announced: Whatever is mine is thine. That is to say, the human soul cries out and confesses: Lord whatever is mine is Thine; and God also speaks and conveys the good news: O My servant, the heaven and earth etc. that are with Me are with thee also. This stage is indicated in the verse:

Say: O My servants who have committed excesses against your own selves despair not of the mercy of Allah, surely

Allah will forgive all sins.
(Ch.39:V.54)

In this verse instead of: *O servants of Allah*; the Holy Prophet^(sa) was commanded to say: *O My servants*. This verse was revealed in this form so that God Almighty might convey the good news of limitless mercies and might comfort those who are broken-hearted in consequence of their sins. Thus, Allah the Glorious desired to exhibit a sample of His mercies and to make it manifest to what extent He honours His faithful servant with special favours. By adopting the form: Say: *O My servants*; God in effect said: Look at My beloved Messenger and see at what high rank he has arrived through his perfect obedience to Me that now all that is Mine is his. He who desires salvation should become his servant. That is to say, he should obey him so perfectly as if he was his slave. Then whatever sins he might have committed would be forgiven him. The word ‘abd in Arabic idiom also means slave as it is said:

A believing slave is better than an idolater.
(Ch.2: V.222)

In the verse to which we have drawn attention, it is indicated that he who desires salvation should establish the relationship of a slave with this Prophet. That is to say, he should not step outside his commandment and should consider himself bound to his obedience as a slave is bound and he would then obtain salvation. One pities those dark-souled ones who bear such rancour towards the Holy Prophet^(sa) that they consider that names like Ghulam Nabi, Ghulam Rasul, Ghulam Mustafa, Ghulam Ahmad and Ghulam Muhammad, saviour of associating the Holy Prophet^(sa) with God, whereas the verse indicates that these names are a means of salvation. As ‘abd implies that a person so named should refrain from every kind of freedom and self-direction and should be completely obedient to his master, therefore, the seekers after truth have been urged that if they wish to attain salvation they

should adapt themselves to this condition. This verse has the same connotation as the verse:

Say, if you love Allah, follow me: then will Allah love you and forgive you your faults...
(Ch.3: V.32)

Perfect following demands that devotion and full obedience which is conveyed in the expression 'abd. The verse: *Say: O my servants*; means in effect: *Say: O my followers*, who are involved in sins, despair not of mercy of Allah; for Allah, through the blessing of your following me, will forgive all your sins. If the word servants in this verse is construed as meaning the servants of Allah, the meaning of the verse is perverted for it cannot be true that God Almighty would forgive all idol worshippers and disbelievers without their believing in and following the Holy Prophet(sa). Such an interpretation would be contrary to the express directions of the Holy Qur'an.

It should be remembered that the purport of the verse is that those who become the sincere servants of the Holy Prophet(sa) will be bestowed the light, the faith, the love and the passion which will deliver them from all that is beside Allah, and they will be freed from sins and will be bestowed a pure life in this world and they will be delivered from the narrow and dark graves of human passions. This is indicated by the Hadith:

That is, I am the resurrector at whose footsteps people will be raised up.

The Holy Qur'an is full of the idiom that the world had died and that God Almighty revived it through sending the Holy Prophet(sa) as is said:

Know that Allah revives the earth after its death...
(Ch.57:V.18)

In the same way, it is said with reference to the companions of the Holy Prophet(sa)

...whom he has strengthened with inspiration from Himself...

(Ch.58:V.23)

This means that God helped them with the Holy Spirit.

The help of the Holy Spirit is that it revives the hearts, delivers from spiritual death, bestows pure faculties, pure senses and pure knowledge, and carries a person to the station of nearness to God through certain knowledge and conclusive arguments.... This knowledge on which salvation depends cannot be obtained without that life which is bestowed through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Qur'an affirms it emphatically that that spiritual life is obtained only through following the Holy Prophet^(sa) and that all those who repudiate obedience to him are dead and do not possess that life. Spiritual life means the intellectual and active faculties which are brought to life by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Qur'an shows that the commandments of God to which

☞ The help of the Holy Spirit is that it revives the hearts, delivers from spiritual death, bestows pure faculties, pure senses and pure knowledge, and carries a person to the station of nearness to God through certain knowledge and conclusive arguments.... The Holy Qur'an affirms it emphatically that that spiritual life is obtained only through following the Holy Prophet^(sa) ☞

He desires man to conform are six hundred. In consonance with this the wings of Gabriel are also six hundred. Until the egg of humanness lies under the wings of Gabriel bearing these six hundred commandments, it cannot hatch the baby of being completely lost in Allah. The reality of man has the capacity of six hundred eggs. A person whose six hundred eggs are covered by the six hundred wings of the capacity of Gabriel is the perfect man whose spiritual birth

is perfect and whose life is perfect. If one looks with care one finds that the spiritual issue of the egg of humanness which by the blessing of the following of the Holy Prophet^(sa) were born to the Holy Spirit, are more perfect and complete than the spiritual children of all the other Prophets. This is indicated by the verse:

You are the best of people who have been created for the good of mankind.

(Ch.3:V.111)

(A'ina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.5, pp.186-197)

Revival of the Faith in Unity through the Holy Prophet^(sa)

The Holy Prophet^(sa) came into the world to bestow hearing on the deaf, who had continued in that condition for hundreds of years. Who is blind and who is deaf? The same one who does not accept the Unity of God and who does not accept this Prophet who revived the Unity of God on the earth; the same Prophet who

converted the wild ones into men and then converted them into men possessing true moral qualities, then dyed them in the Divine colour of those who establish their relationship with God; the same Prophet, the sun of righteousness, at whose feet thousands of those who had died of paganism and atheism and evil living were revived and came to life and a sample of the Judgement Day was exhibited. It was not mere talk like that of Jesus^(as). The Prophet who appeared in Makkah and dispelled the darkness of paganism and that of the worship of man, was the true light of the world, who found the world in darkness and bestowed such light upon it that he converted a dark night into day.

What was the world before his advent and what did it become after it? This is not a question that is difficult to answer. If we are faithful our conscience will tug at us to persuade us to believe that before that great personage the greatness of God had been forgotten by the people of every

It is my personal experience that to obey the Holy Prophet^(sa) with a sincere heart and to love him, ultimately makes a person beloved of God. God creates in his heart a burning for His Own love and such a one, withdrawing his heart from everything else, leans towards God and his affection and desire remain only for God Almighty.

country and it had been assigned to avatars, stones, stars, trees, animals, and mortal men, and despised creation was seated in the place of that Lord of Glory and Holiness. It is true that if these men and animals and trees and stars were in fact God, Jesus^(as) being one of them, then this Prophet was not needed, but if they were not God, the claim that our lord Muhammad^(sa) made on the hill of Makkah has a grand light attending upon it. What was that claim? It was that God, having found the world in the deep darkness of associating partners with God, had sent him to dispel that darkness. It was not only a claim, but that Messenger, accepted of God, fully established that claim.

If the superiority of any Prophet can be established by such works as proclaim true sympathy with mankind exceeding that of all other Prophets, then, O ye people, arise and bear witness that in this respect Muhammad^(sa) has no equal in the world.... Blind worshippers of creatures have not recognised that great Prophet^(sa) who set forth thousands of examples of true sympathy for mankind. I perceive, however, that the time has arrived when this Holy Messenger^(sa) would be recognised. If you wish you might record my statement that henceforth the worship of the dead will decline daily till it disappears altogether. Will man set himself up against God? Will a despised drop frustrate the designs of God? Will the projects of mortal man disgrace Divine

commandments? O ye who can hear, listen, and O ye who can reflect, consider and remember that truth will be proclaimed and he who is the true light will shine forth.

(Majmu'a Ishtiharat, Vol. 2, pp. 305-307)

It is my personal experience that to obey the Holy Prophet(sa) with a sincere heart and to love him, ultimately makes a person beloved of God. God creates in his heart a burning for His Own love and such a one, withdrawing his heart from everything else, leans towards God and his affection and desire remain only for God Almighty. Thereupon a special manifestation of Divine love falls upon him and, bestowing upon him the full colour of love and devotion, pulls him towards itself with great force. He then overcomes his passions and from every direction extraordinary works of God Almighty appear as signs in his support and to help him.

(Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.22, pp.67-68)

I have observed that by calling down blessings upon the Holy Prophet(sa), Divine grace in the shape of wonderful light proceeds in the direction of the Holy Prophet(sa) and is absorbed into his breast and then issuing therefrom numberless streams of it reach everyone deserving them according to his capacity. Certainly, no grace can reach anyone without the agency of the Holy Prophet(sa). Calling down blessings on the Holy Prophet(sa) brings into movement his throne from which these streams of light issue. He who desires to obtain the grace of God Almighty should invoke blessings on him persistently, so that divine grace might be moved.

(Al-Hakam, 28 Feb. 1903, p.7)

One night this humble one called down blessings on the Holy Prophet(sa) to such a degree that his heart and soul were filled with its fragrance. That night I saw in my dream that angels were carrying water skins full of light into my house and one of them said to me: These are the blessings that you invoked upon

Muhammad^(sa).

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.1, P.598, sub-footnote 3)

Bounties of Allah upon the Followers of the Holy Prophet^(sa)

We should not let a doubt enter our minds how a mere follower can partake of the names, attributes, and praises of that accepted Messenger^(sa). It is true that in reality even a Prophet cannot share equally in the holy excellences of the Holy Prophet^(sa). Indeed even all the angels cannot claim equality in that respect, let alone that anyone else should share in his excellences. But O seeker after truth, may God guide you aright, listen carefully to this. With the object that the blessings of that accepted Prophet^(sa) should be displayed forever and that the perfect rays of his light should confound and refute his opponents, God Almighty has made the following arrangement by His wisdom and mercy. Some individuals out of the followers of Muhammad^(sa) who obey him

with thorough humility and falling prostrate on the threshold of humbleness are completely lost to their ego, being found by God like a clear mirror, exhibit the blessings of the Holy Prophet^(sa) in their humble selves. Whatever praise is bestowed upon them by God and whatever signs and blessings are manifested by them, the true source of all their praise and the perfect fountainhead of all those blessings is the Holy Prophet^(sa). In reality and in their perfection, those praises are worthy only of him and he is their perfect exemplar, but as the follower of the way of the Holy Prophet^(sa) becomes through his perfect obedience like a reflection of the Holy Prophet^(sa), the divine lights which are focused on and manifested in the holy being of the Holy Prophet^(sa) are also manifested and reflected in his reflection, the appearance in the shadow of the whole form and manner of the reality is a matter that is not hidden from anyone. This shadow is not established in itself and no superiority is in reality present in it. All that

appears in it is a picture of the real one which is manifested in the reflection. Do not, therefore, consider it a loss that the inner lights of the Holy Prophet^(sa) reach those who are perfectly obedient to him out of his followers.

Two great matters result from this reflection of lights, which, like permanent grace, manifests itself in some members of the following of Muhammad^(sa). One is that the extreme perfection of the Holy Prophet^(sa) is thereby displayed; for a torch from which other torches can be lit and are ever lit, is better than a torch from which no other torch can be lit. Secondly, the perfection of the Muslims and their superiority over the followers of other religions is established by this permanent grace and the proof of the reality of the religion of Islam are furnished afresh and reliance is not had only upon the past. This is the manner in which the lights of the truth of the Holy Qur'an shine forth like the sun, and the proof of Islam is established conclusively as

against its opponents, and the disgrace, humiliation and frustration of the enemies of Islam is made manifest. They observe in Islam those blessings and light the like of which they cannot find in the ministers and pundits of their own religion. Consider this well, O true seeker, May Allah help you in your search....

How great is the station of the Khatam-ul-Anbiya^(sa) and how excellent is the bright effectiveness of this sun of righteousness that obedience to him makes someone a perfect believer and someone else a recogniser of God and bestows upon a third one the rank of a Sign of Allah and a Proof of Allah and bestows upon him Divine praise.

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.1, pp.268-271, sub-footnote 1)

Ever since the appearance in the world of the sun of righteousness in the blessed person of the Holy Prophet^(sa) up to this day, thousands of persons who possessed

the capacity and the ability, by following the Divine word and obeying the Holy Prophet(sa), have arrived at the high ranks that we have mentioned and continue to do so. God Almighty continuously bestowed upon them such favours, bounties, support and help that it is proved to those possessing clear sight that such people are Divine favourites, who are under the grand shadow of Divine bounty and are recipients of great grace. Observers can see clearly that these people are honoured with extraordinary favours and are distinguished by wonderful signs and perfumed with the fragrance of love and enjoy the pride of being accepted of God. The light of the All-Powerful so fills their companionship, and their attention, and their resolve, and their moral qualities, and their way of living, and their joy, and their anger, and their desire, and their dislike, and their movement and their rest, and their speech and their silence, and their outer and inner selves, as a clear and transparent glass receptacle is filled with excellent perfume.

By the grace of their companionship and their relationship and love, that is achieved which cannot be achieved by great effort. By establishing a relationship with them and thinking well of them, faith assumes a new complexion and strength is gained for the display of good morals. The tendency of the ego towards clamour and sinfulness begins to be restrained and contentment and sweetness are generated. According to one's capacity, the eagerness of faith surges up, and love and devotion are manifested, and delight in the remembrance of Allah increases. A person who keeps their company for a long time is compelled to confess that in the strength of their faith, in their moral qualities, their cutting off from the world, their attention towards God, their love of the Divine, their kindness towards God's creatures and in fidelity, acceptance of the will of God and steadfastness, they occupy such high rank as is not equalled in the world. Sane reason immediately discovers that the chains and shackles in which other people

are bound have been removed from their feet, and that the narrowness and constriction whereby the bosoms of other people are constricted and fatigued, have been removed from their bosoms. They are honoured by continuous converse with the Divine and they are accepted as a means of approach between the Divine and His eager servants for the purpose of gaining direction and guidance. Their brightness illumines other hearts.

As at the approach of spring vegetation bursts forth, in the same way, at the advent of such holy persons, natural lights surge inside pure souls and the heart of every fortunate one desires to bring into display, with full effort, its capacities, and is delivered from the veils of deep sleep, and is relieved of sinfulness, the stains of vice, and the darkness of ignorance and unawareness. Their blessed age has such a characteristic and there is such spreading of light in it that every believer and seeker after truth, according to the strength of his

faith, without any apparent cause, perceives in his soul an expansion and an eagerness for religion and an increase in and strengthening of resolve. Every sincere one receives the benefit of the delicate perfume which is bestowed upon them on account of their perfect obedience, according to the degree of his sincerity.

Those who are eternally unfortunate obtain no share of it, but continue to increase in their enmity, envy and ill-will, and finally fall into hell. This is indicated in the verse:

Allah has set a seal on their hearts.

(Ch.2:V.8)

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhahi Khaza'in, Vol. I pp. 529-532, sub-footnote 3)

The claim of our Holy Prophet^(sa) shines forth like the sun and it is a great proof of his eternal life that his grace flows eternally. Even in this age a person who obeys the Holy Prophet^(sa) is

raised from the dead and is bestowed a spiritual life not merely in imagination, but through the display of his righteous effectiveness and of heavenly help and blessings and extraordinary support of the Holy Spirit. He becomes a unique person from among all mankind, so much so that God Almighty talks to him, and discloses His special mysteries to him, and communicates His verities to him, and manifests the signs of His love and favour in him, and causes His help to descend upon him, and places His blessings in him, and makes him the mirror of His *Rububiyyat*. Wisdom flows from his tongue, and the fountains of fine points burst out of his heart. Hidden secrets are made manifest in him. God Almighty bestows a grand manifestation upon him and comes close to him. In the acceptance of his prayers, in the opening of the doors of understanding, in the disclosure of hidden mysteries and in the descent of blessings upon him, he ranks high and is supreme over all others.

Having been commissioned by God Almighty, this humble one dispatched several thousand registered letters to well-known opponents of Islam in Asia, Europe and America about these matters, so that they might be conclusively established. I invited them that if anyone claimed that spiritual life could be achieved by any other means, without following the *Khatam-ul-Anbiya'*^(sa) he should come forth in opposition to me, and that failing this he should come to me as a seeker after truth, in order to witness the blessings and signs that are bestowed on me; but no one turned in this direction with sincerity and in good faith and by their remaining aloof they proved that they are all floundering in darkness.

(A'ina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 5, pp. 221-221)

We know for certain that the greatest Prophet of God and His best beloved is Muhammad, the chosen one^(sa). The followers of other Prophets are in darkness having nothing with them except

“ The miracles of our Holy Prophet(sa) are not mere stories. By obeying the Holy Prophet(sa) we experience those signs ourselves and, through the blessings of observation and experience, we arrive at complete certainty. ”

old stories and tales. But the Muslims always receive fresh signs from God Almighty. Therefore, among Muslims there are found many persons of understanding, who believe in God with such certainty as if they beheld Him; but other people have not this certainty concerning God Almighty. Therefore, our soul bears witness that the true and right religion is Islam alone....

The miracles of our Holy Prophet(sa) are not mere stories. By obeying the Holy Prophet(sa) we experience those signs ourselves and, through the blessings of observation and experience, we arrive at complete certainty. How high is the status of that perfect and Holy Prophet(sa) whose Prophethood always furnishes fresh proof to seekers, and by the blessings of

witnessing continuous signs, we arrive at the stage where we see God Almighty with our own eyes, as it were. Thus, true religion is that and the true Prophet is he, the fresh spring of whose truth should always be witnessed. To rely upon mere stories which are subject to all kinds of exceptions does not commend itself to the wise. Hundreds of people have been deified in the world and they are believed in on the basis of hundreds of old tales, but the truth is that the true miracle worker is he the river of whose miracles never dries up. That person is our lord and master the Holy Prophet(sa).

In every age, God Almighty has raised someone to display the signs of that perfect and holy one. In this age, He has sent me with the title of Promised

Messiah. Signs are being shown from heaven and all sorts of extraordinary events are coming to pass. Every seeker after truth can come and stay with me and witness these signs, whether he is a Christian, a Jew or an Arya. All these are the blessings of our Holy Prophet^(sa).

*[Muhammad is the Imam and light of both the worlds;
He it is who illuminates time and space.*

*For fear of offending God, I dare not call him God, but, by God;
For mankind, the Holy Prophet is the sure guide to Him.]*

(Kitab-ul-Bariyyah, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.13, pp.155-157, footnote)

The proof of spiritual life is to be found in the blessed person of the Holy Prophet^(sa). Profitless is the life which has no beneficence and useless is the existence which has no grace. There are only two lives which are worthy

of praise. One is the life of the Ever-Living and Self-Existing God, Who is the Source of all beneficence; and second is the life which is beneficent and points to God. We can show that such was the life only of the Holy Prophet^(sa) to which heaven has borne witness in every age and does so today. He who does not lead a beneficent life is dead and not alive. I call God to witness that He has furnished to me proof of the everlasting life and full glory and perfection of our master Muhammad^(sa) to whom all obedience is due, and through following him and loving him I have seen heavenly signs descend upon me and I have found my heart filled with the light of certainty. I have witnessed so many signs that through their lights I have beheld my God.

(Tiryaaq-ul-Qulub, Ruhani Khaza'in Vol 15, pp139-140)

Just as at some stages, the Holy Prophet^(sa) appears in the extreme of humility, to the same degree he seems to be aided and illumined by the support and

light of the Holy Spirit, as he has demonstrated in action and conduct. The circle of his lights and blessings is so vast and extended that its sample and reflection is visible eternally. The Divine grace and bounty that is descending in this age is obtained only through following and obeying him. I say truly that no one can be held to be righteous and the winner of the pleasure of God Almighty, nor can he be the recipient of the bounties, and blessings, and understandings, and verities and visions which are bestowed at the highest degree of the purity of the soul, till he is completely lost in his obedience to the Holy Prophet^(sa). This is affirmed in the Word of God as it is said:

Say, If you love Allah, follow me: then will Allah love you'
(Ch.3:V.32)

I am the practical and living proof of this Divine promise. You will recognise me through the signs of those who are loved by God Almighty and are His friends which are set out in the

Holy Qur'an.
(*Malfuzat, Vol.1, pp.203-204*)

The necessary consequence of following in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet^(sa) the essentials of which are his love, and respect and obedience, is that a person becomes the beloved of God and his sins are forgiven, and if he has swallowed the poison of sin, that poison is rendered harmless through the antidote of love and obedience. As a person can get rid of a disease by the use of medicine, in the same way, a sinner can be purified of sin and a light dispels darkness and an antidote destroys the effect of poison and fire consumes, in the same way true obedience and love prove their effect. As fire consumes in an instant, the eager doing of good for the manifestation of God's glory acts like fire in consuming the fuel of sin.

When a person believes sincerely in the Holy Prophet^(sa) and accepting his greatness, follows him with eagerness and love and obedience, so much so that through perfect obedience, he

arrives at the stage of non-existence, he, on account of this close relationship with him, also partakes of the Divine light which descends upon the Holy Prophet^(sa). Then as light and darkness are opposed to each other, his inner darkness begins to be dispelled till no part of it remains inside him and, being strengthened by light, good of the highest type proceeds from him and the light of the love of God shines forth through all his limbs. His inner darkness is wholly dispelled and he enjoys light intellectually as well as in conduct and by the combination of these lights, the darkness of sin departs from his heart.

It is obvious that light and darkness cannot subsist together, and thus the light of faith and the darkness of sin can also not subsist at one place. If such a person has not been guilty of any sin, his power to commit sin is suppressed altogether and he becomes eager to do good as Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it look beautiful to your hearts, and He has made disbelief, wickedness and disobedience hateful to you.

(Ch.49:V.8)

(Review of Religions—Urdu, Vol. I, No. 5, pp. 194, 1951)

The rank of being loved and accepted by God and of becoming His friend, the signs of which have been briefly set out, cannot be achieved without obedience to the Holy Prophet^(sa). It is not possible for a Christian, or an Arya, or a Jew, to show the signs and proofs of his acceptance by God in opposition to a true follower of the Holy Prophet^(sa). There is a clear way of determining this. No opponent, Christian or other, of a righteous Muslim who is a true follower of the Holy Prophet^(sa), can stand up and claim that he will exhibit the same type of signs which appear from heaven in support of the Muslim, or will display similar hidden mysteries as are displayed by him, or

similar Divine help through acceptance of prayer, which might be manifested by him, or natural occurrences of the same type which might appear in his honour, or a prophecy of Divine favours or a prophecy warning an enemy of his of his dire end. None of them will come out to oppose a true follower of the Holy Prophet^(sa) in this manner, inasmuch as their hearts bear witness that they are liars and that they have no relationship with the True God Who is the Helper of the righteous and Friend of the faithful.

(Tasdiq-un-Nabi, pp.45-46 or Maktubat-e-Ahmadiyya, Vol.3, pp.78, 79)

To believe in God's Messenger is a condition precedent to believing in the Unity of God. One cannot be separated from the other. A person who claims to believe in the Unity of God without following the Holy Prophet^(sa), possesses only a dry bone which has no marrow and is holding a dark lamp which gives no light. Anyone who thinks that a person who believes in God as

One without associate and does not believe in the Holy Prophet^(sa) will yet achieve salvation, has a leprous heart and is blind and has no notion of what Unity of God means. Satan is better than him in his profession in the Unity of God, inasmuch as Satan, though he is disobedient, nevertheless believes that God is present, and such a person has no faith in God.

(Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.22, p.122)

The RIGHTS we OWE to our FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS *and the administrative and disciplinary structure*

Concluding address delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V, Head of with worldwide Ahmadiyya Community, in Jinja at the 20th Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Uganda. (The Review of Religions has published this address at its exclusive responsibility).

Yesterday I reminded you that the days of the Jalsa Salana (Annual Convention) should be spent in prayers and the remembrance of Allah. Keep Allah in your mind and heart at all times. Pay attention to the worship of the One Allah so that you obtain the pleasure of Allah. The purpose of creation is the worship of Allah and to acquire the pleasure of Allah. So, I hope that most of you would have tried to do just that. May Allah cause the good works and the worship of those who spent these days both in their mind and by their action to increase in their morals and grant them a high spiritual status. May you cross new frontiers in attaining the nearness

of Allah. May high moral values also begin to be revealed through your worship because it is just not possible that you should engage in the worship of Allah for His sake and in creating a reformation within yourselves, while your spiritual status should not move higher and that you should not pay attention to recognising and respecting the rights of others and leaving behind your evil ways.

Today, I will talk about the rights of fellow human beings i.e. Huq_q Al 'Ibaad and also about Nizam-e-Jama'at (the administrative discipline within the community).

Allah has placed great emphasis in the Holy Qur'an on **Huq_q Al 'Ibaad** (the rights of the creation) along with **Huq_q Allah** (the rights owed to Allah). The Promised Messiah^(as) has said that, 'the main commandments of the Holy Qur'an are only two: (1) is the Unity of God and love and obedience to the Almighty Creator Who possesses the greatest attributes, and (2) kindness towards one's brothers and mankind.'

Then in order to keep his community pressed to good works, the Promised Messiah^(as) advises:

'My entire Jama'at that is present here or at their places of residence, should pay heed to this last will that having entered this movement, those who maintain a relationship of belief in and discipleship with me, should know that its purpose is that they should attain high standards in good conduct, good fortune and happiness and righteousness. Intrigue, mischief, and evil

conduct should not come anywhere near them. They should adhere to the five daily prayers at their appointed times. They should not tell lies. They should not harm anyone with their tongues. They should not be guilty of any wickedness. No thought of any mischief, unkindness, discord, or disorder should ever enter their hearts... Kindness to all men should be their principle and they should fear their Lord. They should protect their tongues, and hands and their motives from all filthy causes of violence and breach of trust. Impose the discipline of maintaining the five daily prayers on yourselves with great rigidity. Refrain from cruelty, oppression, cheating and deceit, and bribery, and do not cause loss to the rights of others nor resort to injustice. Do not sit in any bad company... It should be that you do not intend to cause or convey any harm or loss to any religion, or to any man belonging to any nation

or group. Be a faithful advisor and counsellor to everyone... Get the habit of forgiveness and overlooking with tolerance, and work with patience and gentleness. Do not attack anyone in any inappropriate way and keep a check on your passions. If anyone deals with you in a barbaric manner, say *Salam* (Peace) and walk away from such a gathering.... It should be that your hearts should be clear of deceit, your hands free of cruelty, and your eyes kept apart from all impurities and, apart from honesty and kindness to the creation, there should be nothing else within you.'

Now just see what a beautiful image of Islam the Promised Messiah^(as) has drawn for us. Indeed only he can go to such depths who has been bestowed special guidance from God Almighty. Therefore, we are fortunate that Allah has enabled us to believe in the Imam of the Age and the Promised Messiah^(as). But, as I have said many times, to be happy only

because you have believed in the Imam and have listened to his words will serve us no purpose unless we make this teaching of his a part of our lives.

You will not be able to establish the Unity of God within you and beyond you and in your future generation until the love of Allah, above all other loves, has been created in your hearts and until your lives are resigned to the total obedience to Allah. Obedience cannot be complete until we act on all His commandments, carry out all good works and abandon all the evil ways. The passion for obedience should not be merely because of a fear of Allah but in the same manner that a lover listens to his beloved. When this state of affairs is created, then it can be said that the people who act in this manner can try to establish the Unity of God, can worship the One God, can hate *shirk* or associating partners with Allah. They give no importance to anything above the commandments of Allah. In accordance with the teachings of Allah and

due to their love of and obedience to Allah, they mould their personal desires and feelings. They adorn their good works and abandon bad ways.

Thus, each Ahmadi should spend his life in this manner. Only then would your works be called good and only then, with the grace of Allah, would He turn towards us. This is the condition when it can be said that someone treads the path of righteousness. As I said the obedience to and love of God is that instead of becoming a slave of one's personal desires, one should obey His commandments. Obviously, God has not given separate commands to each man or to each Muslim. Instead, Allah has mentioned these com-mandments in the Holy Qur'an which is the Final Book of *Shariah* (Law) and that was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa). These com-mandments run up to several thousands. All these commandments cannot be mentioned here. I will, however, mention a few.

For example, to establish the

Nizam-e-Jama'at or we may call it the administrative and disciplinary structure of the Jama'at, and ensure that the Unity of God is established in our minds and the society, Allah commands that we should unite and join like the links in a chain. In connection with establishing the Nizam Jama'at, Allah requires that we should be obedient to it and only then would we be worthy of being called the ones who are obedient to Allah and His Messenger as is stated in the Holy Qur'an when:

O ye who believe! obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority over you. And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most commendable in the end.

(Ch.4:V.60)

See what a wonderful formula has been given to keep the nation and the Jama'at together that in

order to establish the Unity of God, and maintain peace and tranquillity in society, it is necessary that you should obey Allah and His Messenger or whoever is your Amir or those in authority over you.

There are obvious clear commandments, such as those relating to Prayers, fasting, and other acts of worship, etc. Then, there are evils such as alcohol, adultery and eating pork. An Ahmadi should refrain from all these evils. But if there is a non-Islamic society, and in the unlikely event there is a command from such an authority on such a prohibition, then one does not have to obey that order of such a government. However, there are many other national laws. There are laws on promoting good works and stopping evils. Complete obedience to all such laws is obligatory for a Muslim. An Ahmadi Muslim should be very particular in this obedience because there is a *Nizam-e-Jama'at* established in their community. They are not without

a leader. They are better trained than others in abiding by the law. By joining this *Nizam-e-Jama'at*, they are more experienced in obedience to authority because amongst them there are office bearers, an Amir and a Khalifa of the time.

Sometimes, some people raise the question that such and such an office bearer or Amir of the Jama'at acted incorrectly or made an error and whether or not such and such a decision of his was in accordance with Allah and His Messenger, or not? These people should also keep the Holy Qur'an before them in that if a clear lawful order is not being violated then obedience requires that such matters should be accepted so that we become obedient to Allah and His Messenger. But if they observe that something is done that is against the teachings of Islam and against the dignity of the Jama'at, then the attention of the Amir should be drawn towards it and they should write to the Khalifa of the time. Then whatever decision comes from

the Khalifa of the time, and most certainly there will be no decision from the *Nizam-e-Jama'at* or the Khalifa of the time that is contrary to or against *shariah*, then it is each Ahmadi's duty to show full obedience to such a decision. Otherwise, because of the command quoted from the Holy Qur'an earlier, he would be going beyond the obedience owed to Allah and His Messenger. A unique feature of every Ahmadi has been that he abides by the rules and regulations. So, you should also abide by the *Nizam-e-Jama'at* and obey in full the national laws. This is what you are commanded to do.

The Holy Prophet^(sa) has said that you must obey irrespective of poverty and abundance, whether in happiness or sorrow, or when rights are being violated or there is biased treatment. In short, in every condition, it is incumbent on you to hear and obey the orders of the ruler at that time. Now see to what extent we have been reminded of obedience. Even if your rights are being

violated, or not enough weight is being attached to your stand as opposed to someone else's, or your mitigating circumstances are being ignored, even then it is your duty to obey your office bearers under the Jama'at's administrative system, or officers under the system of your country.

The Holy Prophet^(sa) has also said in another Hadith that apart from you being ordered to commit an obvious sin, it is your duty to obey your officers. Therefore, this is the command of the Messenger and Allah has said that it is just as incumbent on you to obey the Prophet as it is to obey My commands. Thus, an Ahmadi should evaluate his life and see whether he is obedient to this high level to the administration of the Jama'at, and if he is not, then his claim of love and obedience to Allah would be hollow.

Then Allah says that by disobeying His commands, you would not only be earning His displeasure and wasting your works but you would also suffer

Allah has equated lies to *shirk* and has shown that liars are in a way associating partners with Allah. Instead of faith in Allah, they have greater faith in their trickery and deceit...Some traders misrepresent and smooth talk or try to sell using a slippery language although the command is that whatever you sell, tell its good and bad points and do not hide the truth.

in this world, as He says:

And obey Allah and His Messenger and dispute not with one another, lest you falter and your power depart from you. And be steadfast; surely, Allah is with the steadfast.

(Ch.8:V.47)

So power lies in standing united within the Jama'at and being tied to Khilafat. And as stated in the Hadith, the Holy Prophet^(sa) said that even if your rights are being violated, even then you have to obey. Therefore, in order to lend strength to the Jama'at in all circumstances, and in obedience to the commands of Allah and His Messenger, a believer should be steadfast and patient. In the same way, one should not take one's

differences on national matters to such an extent that other nations derive benefit from such a difference and as a result the national rating and reputation of your country is threatened. If you stand united, it will hold the key to your national progress.

Therefore, an Ahmadi should always think and spend his life in this manner. Remember, such consideration can only arise in you when you think like this on everyday bread and butter issues and your heart cries out each time you cause the smallest injury to someone, and when you abandon all kinds of evils, big and small, from within you.

Then there is another important point about the telling of lies.

The Promised Messiah^(as) has urged us not to tell a lie. Now a lie is the root cause of all evils. One lie leads to another lie. Therefore, each Ahmadi should have the habit of always speaking the truth and giving true evidence. Allah has equated lies to *shirk* and has shown that liars are in a way associating partners with Allah. Instead of faith in Allah, they have greater faith in their trickery and deceit and the giving of false evidence so that they may escape from punishment for some crime or gain more from their lies. Some traders misrepresent and smooth talk or try to sell using a slippery language although the command is that whatever you sell, tell its good and bad points and do not hide the truth.

So with one lie, you remove yourself from the obedience of Allah and His Messenger because Allah says about His obedient servants :

...who bear not false witness...
(Ch.25:V.73)

To tell lies about someone, spread false rumours, to bear false witness are all things that take one away from Allah and remove one from the obedience of Allah.

This is why when once a man asked the Holy Prophet^(sa) that he had many evils within him but he could not leave all of them and requested that the Holy Prophet^(sa) should tell him one that he could leave first of all, the Holy Prophet^(sa) told this man to stop telling lies. Now, this is such a wise directive that on the face of it, it appears to be very small but its effects are very far-reaching. When the Holy Prophet^(sa) said this, the man said that this was a minor matter and he promised that he would never tell a lie again. That man left. But his second nature was always inclined towards never doing any good work, and his mind was always thinking of evil ways. Even in today's society we come across many who are hardened criminals and who have no sense of guilt.

Anyway, getting back to this man I was talking about just now,

when he left the assembly, an evil thought crossed his mind. At the same time, he recalled the promise that he had made to the Holy Prophet^(sa) that he was not going to tell a lie. What would happen if he got caught? Therefore, he abandoned the idea of that evil. Because he was a thief, when darkness fell, he planned to rob somewhere but at the same time he thought that if he got caught, then according to his promise he would have to speak the truth and he would be punished. So he gave up the idea of committing a robbery. Then he thought one day to commit adultery but the fear of being found out and not telling a lie stopped him from this evil also. Continuing in this way, he became pure from all evils.

If man therefore pledges to never tell a lie, he can be purified from any other evils. For instance, you work in an office but out of laziness you are not working, and invent a story and present an excuse that because of such and such a cause, you could not do the work, then this would be

classified as a lie. There are many examples like this. If you ponder, you will begin to see them. Sometimes, some people tell lies in order to win cases in courts. By telling a lie, they are also violating the rights of others. Sometimes, the lawyer tells his client that there is only one way to win this case and that is to tell a lie and then appeals after appeals is lodged and they continue to fabricate lies. By not telling a lie, one can get rid of many evils. On the other hand, a liar gets implicated in many evils. One lie gives birth to many lies. Every Ahmadi, therefore, should save himself from this evil.

Once a case was brought against the Promised Messiah^(as) that he sent the manuscript of his book by parcel post to the press. The rules of the Post Office did not permit any letter to be included in book post but the Promised Messiah^(as) had included an envelope containing a separate letter that he had written. The owner of the press, who used to print books as a business,

received this parcel from the Promised Messiah^(as). Because the owner was already an opponent of the Promised Messiah^(as), the owner saw an opportunity to report to the Post Office that he had received the book post that included a separate letter and as this was against the laws, the Promised Messiah^(as) should be punished. The Post Office filed a case against the Promised Messiah^(as). The lawyers told the Promised Messiah^(as) many times that he should say that he had not put the envelope in the parcel but that the opponent had done so to defame him. As a result of this statement, the case would be dismissed because there were no witnesses. The Promised Messiah^(as) would have none of this and said that he was not going to tell a lie and even if he had to face a punishment so be it. He could be fined or imprisoned. Anyhow, when the case went to court, the Promised Messiah^(as) said that he had put the envelope in the packet but that he thought that his letter was on the same subject that was the subject of

his book that he had sent for publication. He had no intention to cause any loss to the government. Representing the Post Office was an English officer who presented many arguments saying: 'No, not in this way but in such and such a way. This is what the law states, etc.' But having heard the Promised Messiah^(as), the judge said to the Promised Messiah^(as) that what you say is right and I therefore set you free with honour.

If man has a sincere relationship with Allah, and his intentions are good, then truth always succeeds and God manifests His Succour and Help. But if one depends on lies, then remember that you will keep getting deeper and deeper into evil ways. Therefore, always remain away from lies. May Allah protect all Ahmadis from it.

Then another major evil with which one man can cause harm to another is to use his tongue in a bad way or to abuse anyone or to hurt someone's feelings by using indecent and foul language

against someone. Allah advises a believer: You should never say anything that can hurt other people but always say only that which is good. In fact say good things alone, as Allah says:

...speak to men kindly...
(Ch.2:V.84)

This command is designed to establish and promote good works in society. Everyone should respect the feelings and sentiments of others. Now just reflect for a while that when such a beautiful society is established in which everyone takes care of the feelings of others, then even the husband and wife would be happy in their homes. The neighbours would be happy with each other because no one would utter anything bad about other persons. Whenever they speak, they would address each other conscious of the feelings of others. The officer and the subordinate or junior would be happy with each other. The master and the servant would be happy with each other. And

within the Jama'at you would, of course, be taking even greater care of each other. If you see something unpleasant in someone, then in order to draw his attention towards it, you would gently address him separately and with feelings of kindness draw his attention to it. Because of your kindness, the other person would listen and accept what you said. Many disputes and evils would end as a result. A healthy society would begin to emerge in which there would be nothing apart from love and feelings of brotherhood.

Then the Promised Messiah^(as) has said that an Ahmadi should cause no wickedness. Each Ahmadi man or woman should save himself or herself from doing any kind of evil. Every Ahmadi should keep the fear of God in his heart and as a result this would remove evil thoughts from his mind. Even if such a thought crosses his mind, he banishes it and seeks the forgiveness of the Lord. A time will come when your mind will be free of all evil thoughts. As

the minds rid themselves of such thoughts, the relationship between man and woman that Allah has caused in its lawful form to manifest itself as husband and wife, will grow stronger. Your home will begin to display an example of paradise on earth where the husband, wife and children are all trying to offer every sacrifice in order to fulfil the rights that they owe to each other.

Allah says that the relationship between man and wife should begin after marriage. If a man or woman does not act according to this principle, then he or she disobeys the commandment of Allah. When you transgress the limits prescribed by Allah, then you would fall within the grasp of Allah and no intercession would be accepted from any quarter under the Laws of Allah. There is one law for all.

Now see how not following this commandment, has resulted in the outbreak of HIV and AIDS. Each Ahmadi would have to engage in a Jihad against this

disease and strive against it to protect themselves and their future generations because, due to the error of the parents, this disease can be transferred to the next generation. Plead with your people, saying: Why have you become an enemy of your own lives and of that of your descendants?

So the work of an Ahmadi is very wide. Where he has to think of himself, he has also to think of his people, and think of all mankind. When you enter a Jihad against evil in this manner and will expend your energies in promoting good works, only then can it be said that the interest of humanity rages in your hearts. When you have such feelings of love for others in your hearts, you would be able to save yourselves from all kinds of cruelty and gloom. You would never use improper means to extract your rights. You would never try to violate the rights of anyone. If you have more than one wife, you would give each wife her equal rights.

Another evil is to cause loss to someone by your deception or deceit. If you work in an office and are the custodian of its cash, or if you work in a firm and its owner gives you some sum on trust, then never ever use anyone's finance fraudulently nor cause anyone any loss by misappropriating it.

Then those in authority in government offices sometimes demand money to do something for someone and this is what is called bribery. This is a serious ill for the developing world countries or what were known as the Third World countries. Even when inter-governmental deals are done, hands are being greased with bribery and goods are overpriced or inferior goods are obtained for full prices. In short, there are many things such as this. So, an Ahmadi, who has an obligation to clean the society, will have to first clean himself from such evils. I hope that generally Ahmadis do not have such evils but if there is even a trace amongst anyone, then he should seriously

consider that by entering the *bai'at* (pledge of allegiance) of the Promised Messiah^(as), he has pledged that he would cause good and wholesome changes within himself.

Then another evil that the Promised Messiah^(as) has mentioned is unfair bias or one-sidedness. Sometimes, some people try to hide the crimes of their near ones and stand up in support of these near ones. In order to save them from the long arms of the law and punishment for the crime, they even give false statements in courts. Then those who work in offices sometimes give unfair preference to a tribesman or close relative and sometimes carry tales to their officer about a man from another tribe. They are guilty of two offences: one is the unfair preference and the second is to cause harm to a decent man through some officer.

Then the Promised Messiah^(as) has given a very important advice and if people of all religions and all nations begin to

For a true and firm Muslim, loyalty to one's country is an integral part of his faith. An Ahmadi should be more loyal than anyone else to his country. This love also requires that one should tell to the others that the secret for the betterment and progress of our country is that we should stand united in our efforts for the progress of the country and remove the differences amongst us.

act, peace can be established in the world. He has said do not intend to cause any harm or loss to any man belonging to any religion, nation or group. If all religions pledge amongst themselves that that they will not cause any harm to any believer of another faith, then peace can be restored in the world. Religion is the choice of every person's heart. Therefore, everyone has the right to proceed according to his own

conscience. Then if tribes and nations understand it well that they should not cause harm to each other, conflicts between nations would cease. Tribal wars would come to a halt. If every tribe acts within the law of the land, then such wars that cause so much loss to the nation, can never take place. The nation would begin to march forward on the path of progress. Each Ahmadi should work towards national progress in the same spirit that an Ahmadi has out of the love and loyalty for his nation. For a true and firm Muslim, loyalty to one's country is an integral part of his faith. An Ahmadi should be more loyal than anyone else to his country. This love also requires that one should tell to the others that the secret for the betterment and progress of our country is that we should stand united in our efforts for the progress of the country and remove the differences amongst us.

As the Promised Messiah^(as) has instructed we should become a true counsellor for everyone. So

when you will advise your people with this anguish in your heart, saying: A long time has passed with us seeing the different state of affairs of our country, of each other's anguish and grief, of not working diligently, of not establishing high standards of honesty, and unnecessary rage, fury and passion have given us and our descendants nothing else apart from poverty. This is why it is imperative for us to bring an end to all evils and acquire all good works in order to push our country into the front line of developed nations because this rise and decline and this war and peace will not permit the country to make any progress. Therefore, if every Ahmadi resolves to try and explain this to our people, then most certainly God Almighty will bless this. Allah enable you to do that.

May Allah enable you to become excellent exemplars of Islamic teachings by making pure and wholesome changes within yourselves and by bowing in the

presence of the Almighty Allah, and may Allah enable you to become the true servants of Allah. And every Ahmadi, man and woman, young and old, should go away from here having made the resolve: We are going to make these good and pious changes within ourselves. And with the help and succour of Allah, Insha Allah (God willing) whereas we have to prepare and adorn the spiritual condition of our future generations and our own, we also have to publish and propagate these good works and raise the dignity of and respect for our nation. May Allah enable you to achieve this. May Allah convey you safely to your homes and may the blessings of this Jalsa always remain a part of your lives.

Huzur concluded his address with silent prayers.

A Philosophical Explanation of the Doctrine of Hell

(From The Review of Religions, 1908)

The belief in the continuity of the existence of the human soul is a universal belief, and one so deeply rooted in the very nature of man that the most powerful forces of materialism have not yet affected it in the least. Whether the deep-rootedness of this belief in human nature is due to its innateness or whether, as an atheist or agnostic would argue, it clings to the mind with the ordinary tenacity of old associations, it is an undeniable fact that belief in life after death has not lost any ground even in this civilised and materialist age; and it is equally true that the progress of science and the application of scientific principles to all branches of learning is in favour of, rather than against, the truth of such a belief.

Starting on the basis, then, that

there is a life after death for every human being, the first question of vital importance in connection with this belief is the state of the soul in that after-life. That every religion has preached that the righteous will be rewarded for their good deeds and the wicked punished for evil deeds is an undeniable fact, but even philosophically considered the question affords a similar solution. We see that often a man reaps even in this life the good or bad consequences of his good or evil deeds and that except in rare cases he himself is responsible for the happiness or misery that is his lot in this life. If a life after death has been ordained for the human soul, it could not have been meant but for its progress, its advancement to higher and higher stages. Without this the doctrine of a life after death becomes horrible. Even in this

short space of life we find the soul progressing and advancing step by step from lower to higher stages. Could an everlasting life have then been designed for the unending torments of hell? The very idea makes one shrink and turn back in horror. Such a doctrine deals a death-blow to the justice and mercy of God. No intelligent being could have made man and preserved his soul for such an end.

Most religions have fallen into a grievous error on this point, and it is only the teaching of Islam that we find conformable to reason and in consonance with Divine justice, love and mercy. There are many that talk of the love and mercy of God, as if God were only the God of a particular people, but His love and mercy are considered not to touch any one who is outside the circle of believers in a particular set of doctrines. To such a person, God cannot be said to be even Just, as He punishes his evils or unbelief of a few years with everlasting woes and torments. And though a tendency is witnessed in certain

quarters to soften this horrible idea, the sublime truth that the human soul is ever progressing and attaining to higher and higher goals of spiritual progress and union with God which the Holy Qur'an alone has taught has not yet been recognised.

Even the opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an gives us clearly to understand that Almighty God made man not for consigning him to everlasting torments but to make him attain to higher and higher conditions of existence and to deal with him most mercifully. It reads thus:

'All praise is due to God Who is the Lord or Nourisher of all the worlds, Who is the Most Merciful (the Ar. Word **Rahman** used here indicating the showing of mercy by God to His creatures without their having done anything to deserve it), the Most Compassionate (the Ar. Word **Rahim** indicating that whenever a person implores His mercy or does anything to deserve it, He forthwith

‘ ... Mankind is addresses in these words and accordingly as those in paradise shall make perpetual advancement, those in hell will not be suffering fruitless torments. On the other hand the torments of hell will be the means of purging them of the evil effects of their deeds done in this life. This is the only philosophical explanation of hell, and this explanation has been given by no other book but the Holy Qur’an.

shows mercy), the Lord of the Day of Judgement’

The four attributes of the Divine Being mentioned in these opening verses of the Holy Qur’an are the basis of all His other attributes. It will be seen that all these four attributes speak of the unbounded mercy of God shown to His creatures in all the worlds *i.e.* in this world as well as the next. There are numerous other verses in the Holy Qur’an which speak of the great Mercy of God to His creatures and leave no doubt that man has not been created for being subjected to torments. But everlasting torment inflicted upon a person without any good following therefrom, as torment in hell is generally interpreted to be, is

opposed to the Divine attribute of mercy as the Holy Qur’an depicts it.

It is true that the Holy Qur’an mentions hell as the abode of the evil-doers and even depicts its horrors, but it must be borne in mind that according to the Holy Qur’an both heaven and hell are places for the perpetual advancement of man to higher and higher stages. The Holy Qur’an says on one occasion:

That you shall assuredly pass on from one stage to another.
(Ch.84 V.19)

The whole mankind is addressed in these words and accordingly as those in paradise shall make perpetual advancement, those in

hell will not be suffering fruitless torments. On the other hand the torments of hell will be the means of purging them of the evil effects of their deeds done in this life. This is the only philosophical explanation of hell, and this explanation has been given by no other book but the Holy Qur'an. It is the Qur'an only which teaches that heaven and hell grow out of a man, that a heavenly or hellish life begins in this world and that the spiritual fruit of good or evil deeds done in this life assume a manifest form in the next. The fire of hell is no other than the fire of sins:

Nay, he shall surely be cast into Al-Hutamah (the crushing punishment.) And what should make you know what the Hutamah is? It is Allah's kindled fire which will leap at hearts. It will be enclosed against them.

(Ch. 104:V.5-9)

The origins of the fire of hell is therefore in the sins which a man commits in this life and it is thus with his own hands and in this

very life that he prepares a hell in which he will find himself in the next.

The Holy Qur'an, as I have already said does not teach that those in hell shall suffer everlasting torments and this is an important consideration which conclusively settles the question that hell is meant for the advancement of man and for his purification. There is no doubt that the abiding of evil doers in hell is mentioned in some verses of the Holy Qur'an to be for *abad* which sometimes means prospective eternity but *abad* also signifies a long time. Hence we have a phrase which means 'This was a long time ago' (see Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*) but there are numerous passages in the Holy Qur'an showing that those in hell shall ultimately be taken out.

Thus in Ch.6:V.129 we read

God said, Verily the fire is your abode to dwell therein unless thy Lord will it otherwise, verily thy Lord is

Wise and All-Knowing.

On another occasion, those in hell are spoken of as *staying therein for ages* (Ch.78:V.24)

The original word is (Arabic) **Ahqab** which is the plural of (Arabic) **huqub** meaning a year or years or seventy or eighty years or a long time (see Lane's Lexicon). The statement that evil-doers will abide in hell only for a limited number of years shows clearly that according to the Holy Qur'an the torments of hell are not everlasting, for infinite time cannot be measured by a finite number of years. Again in Ch.101:V.10, the hell is called a 'mother' of those who shall go into it.

The use of this word is I think the clearest evidence as to the true nature of hell as described in the Holy Qur'an. What is meant is that as a child is brought up by the mother, so those in hell will be brought up in that place for a new life, the life of perpetual advancement in paradise.

It is true that the Holy Qur'an speaks of hell as a place of torment or tortures but these torments, according to the Holy Book, are remedial. Just as a patient has to devour bitter medicines and undergo operations and amputations which are most painful but which are undoubtedly the only steps which can restore him to health so also it is with the torments of hell which are not only the natural consequences of the poisons of sins but are at the same time the most necessary steps to undo the effect of the poison and to breathe into a person a new life in which he must go on making unending progress. Thus hell is a manifestation of the mercy of God though of a different kind from heaven. One is a place for restoring health to those who have destroyed it by their own actions in this life, whilst the other is a place for the advancement of those who enter into the other life with their spiritual faculties unvitiated. In fact, so clear is the teaching of the Holy Qur'an on this point that none but a most superficial

reader could overlook it. Again and again the Holy Qur'an speaks of the workers of iniquity as blind, deaf, dumb, dead, meaning of course they themselves have wasted their spiritual faculties and accordingly before they can make any spiritual advancement in the attainment of the highest goal of the human soul, the union with God, they must be subjected to the operations which should restore the action of those faculties. In clearer words still the Holy Qur'an tells us that 'those who are blind in this life shall find themselves blind in the next which means that as they did not make use of the opportunities which were given them in this life to use their spiritual faculties, they will find themselves devoid of these faculties in the next, and will palpably feel the pain and anguish which is the necessary result of their loss and which they are unable to feel in this life on account of their engrossment in the things of this world. But the mercy of God will soon take them by the hand and they will, after passing through all the

stages through which it is necessary to pass to regain the use of the lost faculties, attain the real object of their lives. They will be purged of all uncleanness, for this is necessary to attain to a perfect union with the Divine Being which is the source of all purity.

There are many sayings of the Holy Prophet^(sa) and his companions which clearly show the truth of what I have said above. In the Holy Qur'an it is written that 'Almighty God has made it obligatory upon Himself to show mercy to His creatures' and there is a tradition of the Holy Prophet^(as) according to which Divine Mercy is not displayed only in this world as we find it so abundantly manifested, but far greater mercy will be displayed in the next, and the fact is that if this had not been the case the showing of mercy in this life would have been futile.

The tradition to which I have here referred to says 'The Holy Prophet^(sa), said that 'God displayed only one hundredth part

of His mercy in this world and it is only this hundredth part whose manifestation is witnessed in all the creatures of this world, and that the next ninety-nine parts of His mercy will be displayed in the next life.’

According to this saying the love and mercy of God of which we witness countless manifestations in this life and in which is included not only the mercy of God which He shows to His creatures, but also the mercy and love which is displayed in His unlimited creation is only a hundredth part of the Divine Mercy and perfect manifestation of His love and mercy will be witnessed only in the next life.

There is another tradition which is met with in the most reliable collections of Traditions according to which God will ultimately take all those out of fire who have done nothing to deserve deliverance therefrom. The concluding portion of this tradition runs thus: ‘Then will God say “The angels and the prophets and the faithful have all in their turn

interceded for the sinners, and now there remains none to intercede for them except the Most Merciful of all merciful beings. So He will take out a handful from the Fire and bring out a people who never worked any good.”’

According to this tradition all those who did any good deed in this life, however slight it may be and however preponderating the evil they did, will be taken out of the Fire upon the intercession of angels and the prophets and the faithful, and there will remain a people in it who never did any deed of goodness. These will be taken out of the Fire only through the mercy of the Most Merciful. It should not be thought that a handful is too small a thing or that even after taking it out there might still be many dwellers in hell, for a handful of God could not leave out anybody. In the Holy Qur’an it is said that ‘the whole earth is a mere handful of God on the Day of Judgement’. It is also clear that since according to the tradition the people who are thus taken out are not taken out

because of any good that might have served in them as a seed for a growth of immortal life, but only because the Most Merciful will desire to show the full manifestation of his trans-cendent mercy, therefore it could not be in consonance with Divine Mercy that one part should be chosen for its manifestation while the other part should have been left without any mercy being shown to them.

There are many other traditions from which it appears that ultimately even those will be taken out of hell who never did any good deed, while there are certain sayings of the Holy Prophet^(sa) and his companions according to which hell would ultimately be emptied of all those who are in it. Some of the traditions are met with in the *Kanzul Ummal* and the following two would be sufficient for our purpose:

‘Verily a day would come over hell when it will be like a field of corn that has dried up after flourishing for a while’ (*vol.vii page 245*)

‘Verily a day would come over hell when there shall not be a single human being in it.’ (*vol.vii page 245*)

There is a saying of Umar on record (vide *Tafsir Fathul Bayan*, the *Fath ul Bari*, *Durr-i-Manthur* and the *Hadil Arwah* of *Ibn-i-Qayyum*) which runs thus:

‘Even if the dwellers in hell may be numberless as the sand of the desert, surely a day would come when they would be taken out of it.’

A saying of *Ibn-i-Masud* is reported in connection with the comment upon a verse of the Holy Qur’an which has already been quoted according to which a time would come upon hell when there shall not be a single person in it and this will be after they have dwelt therein for *ahqab* (years – referring to the verse containing the italicised word as quoted already).

There are many other sayings to the same effect, but I think the quotations already given will

suffice to show the reader that Islam rejects the doctrine of everlasting torments in Hell.

But even when all this has been said, there remains an important question which has no doubt troubled many a mind. Does not the Holy Qur'an, like the scriptures of other religions promise salvation and paradise to those who believe in it, and does it not consign to hell all those who do not believe in it? In other words does it not unduly narrow the sphere of salvation by limiting it at first to those who express a belief in it, and unduly widen it by extending it to all believers whether they have actually done anything to deserve it or not?

In order to answer these questions we would first explain the attitude of Islam to other religions and then show what is meant by salvation. These two considerations would show the reader the Qur'anic attitude towards the 'unsaved'. Of all religions of the world Islam is pre-eminently the one religion

which assumes a most tolerant attitude towards other religions and a most respectful one towards the founders of religions and the great leaders of humanity. Its teachings on this point may be briefly summarised as follows:

The one and chief object of the creation of man is that he should attain a perfect union with God and to make him attain this object, Almighty God has been raising prophets in all countries and all ages who pointed out the right way to their followers. But after a certain time the teachings of the prophets were neglected or perverted by their followers and other prophets were raised to again point out the right way. According to this teaching whenever a prophet is raised by Almighty God, true salvation can only be obtained by following him because it is through him that Almighty God is pleased to reveal Himself at that time. Islam does not, therefore arbitrarily narrow the sphere of salvation by making it attainable by believers in a particular book, but it bases it on the sound principle that the

way to salvation is pointed out by every prophet of God and that it is by following that way that salvation can be attained.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) was raised at a time when corruptions and errors had found their way into the systems founded by all the previous prophets and hence it is through him only that salvation which is another name for union with God can be attained. Those who do not attain to this union in this world, which is a preparatory world for the next, must pass through another stage, which is represented in Islam, as the punishment of hell.

This is the explanation which the Holy Qur'an gives as to the necessity of hell in the after-life and this is the reason why all those who do not follow the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) are spoken of as having their abode there.

As regards the second question, whether all those who have accepted Islam will be saved unconditionally, it must be

emphatically stated that the Holy Qur'an does not teach any such doctrine. It says clearly that only belief in God or the Holy Prophet^(sa) or the Holy Qur'an would not avail any person unless he does the righteous deeds which the Holy Qur'an states to be necessary for attainment to union with God. Right belief is according to the Holy Qur'an the seed which if properly nourished by righteous deeds will bring fruit, but faith alone is not sufficient to make man attain to union with God. Such union, on the other hand is considered a very hard task and it is expressly said that there are very few who attain to such a union in this life.

A CAUTION TO THE *Soviet Union*

Hadhrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IV^(ra) met some Russian guests in the Mahmud Hall, London on 14 November 1990 and addressing them, said:

My dear distinguished guests, I consider it a singular pleasure and am extremely grateful to you for providing me this opportunity to meet you tonight here in this hall. Russia has always been a country of interest, not only for me but for many generations of Ahmadis.

In 1905 the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community received a revelation from God that a very dangerous situation is going to develop in Russia. If the Tsar existed at that time he would be in a very precarious state. The picture painted by him and published in Urdu poems and prose was a very dark picture. It stated that God had shown him great turbulences and trepidations in the whole of the world. He said that, 'Although I

am told and shown in visions that something like huge earthquakes are taking place, the things which are shown to me suggest that the calamity could be a war, or could be anything else. But I am shown this in the form of huge global earthquakes.'

He saw in visions fireballs from the skies falling on cities and destroying them although the aeroplane was not invented in America at that time. In 1905 the Wright brothers were still experimenting with their first model of an aeroplane and the news had not yet been published, even in American papers.

The Promised Messiah^(as) also wrote that God had shown him that his community would spread in Russia like grains of sand. So

in view of these and many other revelations of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya community, all Ahmadis felt especially close to Russia and friendly towards Russia because they thought and knew and believed in fact that the future of Ahmadiyya was destined to be deeply linked to Russia.

Now I will come to a different world of today. You know what happened only a little while ago when the Berlin Wall came tumbling down and Gorbachev ushered in a completely new era not only to Russia but to the entire world.

I have to say so many things to you, but I know that time is precious for you. I don't want to keep you for very long here so I'll be very short now in delivering a message to you.

Things in Russia have moved too fast for even the Russians to realise what is happening to them. And to rediscover their identity will take some time. For many decades Russian propa-

gandists have been telling the world that countries are not built on the concept of nations but on the concept of ideologies.

So forget about the nationhood and think in terms of ideologies binding various nations into one country. Almost 100 nations of Soviet Russia revolved around this central concept of communist philosophy. The moment it was withdrawn, they were destined to fall apart and a peripheral force was to develop to throw them apart. Nothing could hold them together because the central pivot of ideology was suddenly withdrawn. So that is why everybody was thinking what has happened to us? What is our direction? What is the orientation? Where shall we go from here? Is Gorbachev to be blamed for that or to be praised for what has happened? Even that question is not yet resolved.

But I assure you that there was no alternative for Gorbachev. He had no choice. The economy had already collapsed to a level from where the whole system was

about to crumble down if not by its own accord then through their wisdom. They had not chosen to reject this system and think of other possibilities for the future of Soviet Russia. The choice for him was bloody revolutions here and there; riots of hungry Russians; or acceptance of defeat and to beat a retreat with the least possible loss. I think he chose the latter option.

Now I will come to a completely different subject. I know I have said very little on the problem which is rather complicated and would have to be explained in great detail but because of the shortage of time I want to say something else now.

This relates mainly to religion. Russian people have been kept away from religion for a very long time. Two generations have passed since and three generations of a practically godless society has left Russia in a state of vacuum as far as religion is concerned. From the economic point of view, again you have been led into a vacuum.

Capitalism was rejected and left behind. The socialist philosophy has failed. What next?

So the question is, will you return to the point in history where the revolution took you away from the rest of the world into a completely different age and sever your ties with the rest of the world? Will you return to that point? Or will you advance further? If so, in what direction? Will you choose to advance and not to look back?

What I am afraid for you is this, and it deeply worries me, that if you do not return to your past, the past will come to you. The same capitalism you rejected and wisely so at the time, wisely in a different sense, will now come to you, saying: “‘Look here, we were the answer to your problem. Why did you turn your back to us?’”

The same Christianity of some hundred years ago which you left behind about 70, or 80 years ago would be presented to you in the same form stating: ‘We still hold

good. We are still surviving. Your religious requirements need us!’

So the same Christianity of the past ages would be presented to you in new silver platters.

And the same will happen with the orthodox Islam from which Russian Muslim states had practically walked away. Only some memories of Islam were left in the form of monuments like mosques or very old people who still went to the mosques; otherwise only the name was left. That Islam of the past will come again and will be presented to you: ‘This is what you left behind. Come, and start your journey once again.’

But I assure you in all sincerity that that capitalism will still have the same dangers that it held 70, or 80 years ago. It is not an answer for you. That Christianity, the version which existed then and which still exists in some forms, is no answer for your religious requirements. That orthodox Islam, which preaches

that the sword should be used for delivering messages; that coercion must go with faith, that Islam is not going to serve you any good purpose.

In the name of Islam people will come to you only to excite you; to excite not only your fancies but to boil your blood against the other Russian countries and states in the name of Islam. It will tell you to take to the sword in the name of God and start the so-called ‘holy war’ against the rest of the Soviet states. And this they will tell you is Islam and the only way for you to win back your past lost glories.

But the new generations of Russia do not know much about what is Islam. They will be astounded and wonderstruck to hear different voices in the name of Islam coaxing them to take the sword in the holy name and fight. Against what? For what reason? Why?

They will tell them that, ‘to regain your lost national glory, religion must be exploited or be

permitted to exploit you.’ That is the only logical answer they can present to you.

But then the other questions will arise which will be very difficult for you to answer or to understand. An Islam from Iran will be introduced into Russia, particularly in Azerbaijan and such states. And it will tell them that Islam is Shi’ism. And another Islam from Saudi Arabia will come and tell you this is not Islam. It is all falsehood. This is Islam which we carry in our hands. Then a further version of Islam from Libya and Syria would be introduced to you followed by yet another from Pakistan through Afghanistan which will be smuggled into Russia. What is this nonsense?

Does God play such games?
This is the question.

Then when you become intimate with these so-called messages of Islam and try to find out what Islam is – they will tell you fantastic stories in which you will not be able to believe. Seventy years of rational

thinking, godless thinking has taken so much away from you of course, but it has also left some benefits behind. That is true unbiased, natural, logical thinking. And this Islam and that Christianity, which will be presented to you, would no longer appear to be logical and rational so that you can not only believe but also understand the philosophy of these things.

Similarly the capitalism which is shining so beautifully at you, seen from Russian territories, so pretty, so attractive, so wonderful with all this Western civilisation, when you begin to see it from close quarters then you will realise that it has all the ugliness which once turned you away from it. And it has not reformed. There is misery all around here. There is lack of satisfaction. There is lack of peace and a rise in crime – more so where the society is richer. There is more madness in America than anywhere else in the world; more AIDs, and more threats to human health. Is this the capitalism which you will return to, or will

come again to you? Will you accept that?

So in the end, this is a vast problem and it has so many facets which have to be discussed in rather greater depth and length but I have just given you a taste of what I am thinking. I have just attempted to make you share some of my concerns for you and my worries. The answers to all these questions cannot be discussed here. But some of the answers you will find in the literature to be presented to each of you from the Ahmadiyya Community. But the problem is much wider and deeper than a small packet of literature to answer all the questions raised.

In the end I would like you to understand that as the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community I offer my most sincere services with a completely unselfish attitude and intention to help you in understanding things and to help you in looking for a new future in a direction which so far has not dawned upon you. So as far as my services are concerned

and those of my community, we will remain at your service. Those of you who are interested to continue this communication will always find us ready and willing to help and serve.

I will end with a last note – consider it a warning or admonishment or whatever you may call it – it is very sincere advice. Do not take hasty decisions. You are not in a position, and I repeat, you are not in a position to take hasty decisions at this juncture of your history because the light and atmosphere are changing. If you walk during broad daylight into your room, however well it may be lit, it takes you some time to begin to see what is where and to see in detail what is in that room. When you change from one area to another it takes your eyes some time to readjust to the same surroundings, even in the same light.

A huge and big change has occurred. So do not permit yourself to take hasty decisions. Watch very carefully and slowly,

and study all the various messages and people and gestures which will be shown in your direction, in a friendly manner of course. The force will also come in the guise of friends, I assure you.

Take your time and decide slowly, without hasty actions and hasty decisions. Only then will you ultimately be led to a new future for your destiny as the Russian people. But if you permit yourself to be carried away by the heat of moment, then I assure you, you will be led into huge chaos. I also fear civil wars here and there. The falling apart of a great empire does not occur in quiet, peaceful ways. Even if a building collapses it creates huge noises and turmoil. So you are one of the biggest powers on earth which is now breaking apart. If you do not move wisely and cautiously great harm will come to you.

I assure you, as far as the Ahmadiyya Community is concerned, we are always at your disposal and to begin with we

have started a campaign of producing literature we believe you need today. We are trying to distribute it to all the corners of Russia. And also I have told the entire community in the world to continuously pray for you. I know it may not mean anything to you – some of you, I mean. Those who have forgotten their touch with God may consider it as just nothing, a lip service. But it is not a lip service; it is a service of the heart. We pray from our heart and we know that God listens to prayers. So Insha Allah (God willing) we will continue to pray for you and hope that when I come to visit Russia again in the near future I will be able to meet all of you again. And hope that whenever you come here again you call on us, and find time with us.

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