



The Review of Religions

December 2005

Vol.100, Issue 12

Nearness to God

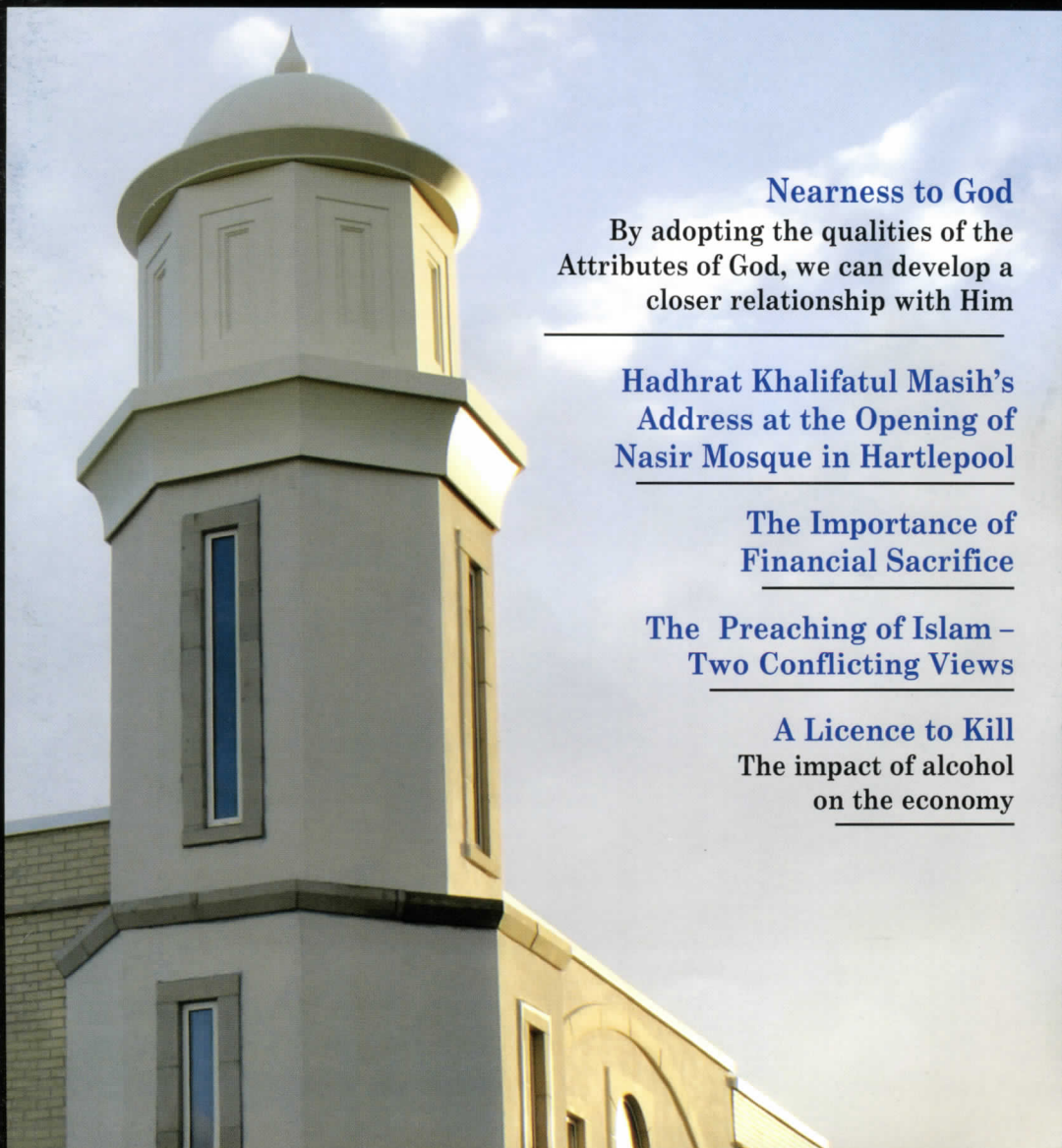
By adopting the qualities of the
Attributes of God, we can develop a
closer relationship with Him

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih's Address at the Opening of Nasir Mosque in Hartlepool

The Importance of Financial Sacrifice

The Preaching of Islam – Two Conflicting Views

A Licence to Kill The impact of alcohol on the economy





The Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) prophesied that the Promised Messiah^(as) would be raised near a white minaret, east of Damascus. This prophecy was fulfilled with the advent of the Promised Messiah^(as) from Qadian, India, a city directly east of Damascus.

The Promised Messiah^(as) (1835-1908)

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi was born to a noble family in Qadian, India. From an early age he had a keen interest in religion. He was also known for his honesty, friendliness and resolve. Over time his knowledge and understanding of religion and its application to society deepened.

Being a Muslim it was his firm belief that all religions were true at their source but with the passage of time had drifted away from their original teachings; he upheld the dignity of religion and demonstrated its relevance to everyone.

His earnest defence of religion was ultimately blessed when he started to receive direct revelation from Allah – a blessing that he received for the rest of his life.

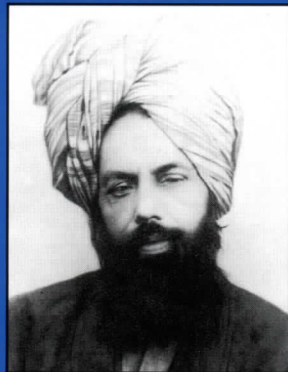
His mission was to revitalise the truth that all religions held within them and to revive the teachings of Islam. It was through this that he would bring mankind together and establish everlasting peace.

In 1889, under Divine Guidance, Hadhrat Ahmad founded the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community – a community that has since grown in its stature and strength and has remained active in conveying the message of Islam to the ends of the earth.

Hadhrat Ahmad^(as) had established himself as a respected writer and had written over 80 books. One of his greatest scholarly works was *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, prepared as a paper and read out at the *Conference of Great Religions* in 1896. He also wrote a fascinating treatise in 1899 entitled *Jesus in India*, a book that uncovered remarkable evidence of Jesus^(as) journey to India. He also initiated *The Review of Religions* in 1902, the longest running English magazine in defence of Islam and its values.

People joining his community reflected his success in conveying the truth of Islam. From 1889 until the time of his demise in 1908 tens of thousands of people accepted him. This blessing has continued and will continue through his *Khalifas* (successors).

Currently under the fifth successor, we are seeing that the tide of acceptance is worldwide and that the message of Prophet Ahmad has really reached the ends of the earth.



CONTENTS

December 2005, Vol.100, No.12

Editorial: The perfect example of the Holy Prophet ^(sa)	2	Fareed Ahmad - UK
Notes & Comments: A License to Kill?	3	
The impact of alcohol on the economy and why some moves to tackle associated problems exacerbate the situation.		Fareed Ahmad - UK
Nearness to God – Part 3	7	
How adopting the attributes of God improve a man spiritually and result in a closer bond between man and God.		Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad ^(sa) – Promised Messiah and Mahdi
Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V's address at the Opening of Nasir Mosque in Hartlepool	23	
A timely reminder that a mosque is a place for all worshippers of God and a source of social peace.		Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Khalifatul Masih V
The Importance of Financial Sacrifice	29	
Why sharing one's wealth with the have-nots discharges an important obligation man owes to other men.		Rashid Ahmad Cheedoo – Cornwall, UK
The Preaching of Islam: Two Conflicting Views	48	
An analysis of the accusation that Islam was spread by the sword.		Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad ^(ra) – Khalifatul Masih IV
Index of Articles published in The Review of Religions, 2005	59	

The Editorial Team wishes all its readers a very blessed, properous and healthy New Year

COVER PICTURE: Minaret of Hartlepool Mosque– BACK COVER: Mohammad Ali Mosque, Cairo

Basit Ahmad
Bockarie Tommy Kallon
Fareed Ahmad.
Fazal Ahmad
Fauzia Bajwa
Mansoor Saqi
Mahmood Hanif
Mansoor Hyder-Muneeb
Navida Shahid
Sarah Waseem
Saleem Ahmad Malik
Tanveer Khokhar

Chief Editor and Manager: Mansoor Ahmed Shah

Management Board:

Mr Munir-ud-din Shams (Chairman)
Mr Mansoor Shah (Secretary)
Mr Naseer Ahmad Qamar
Mr Mubarak Ahmad Zafar
Mr Mirza Fakhar Ahmad
Mr. Abdul Baqi Arshad

Special contributors:

Amatul-Hadi Ahmad
Farina Qureshi
Proofreaders:
Abdul Ghany Jahangeer
Khan and Shaukia Mir

Design and layout:

Tanveer Khokhar
Publisher:
Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah
Distribution:
Muhammad Hanif

All correspondence should be forwarded to the editor at:

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

© Islamic Publications, 2005
ISSN No: 0034-6721

EDITORIAL

Fareed Ahmad– UK

The object of all religions is to bring man closer to God. All prophets came with this same purpose and their lives were examples of how such nearness could be attained. Different qualities were found in different prophets but the perfect example was to be found in the prophet that delivered the perfect religion for mankind.

Islam is the perfect religion and it stands alone in making this claim. Allah states in the Qur'an that 'This day have I perfected your religion for you...and chosen for you Islam as religion' (Ch.5: V.4). It behoves a perfect religion that it should be accompanied by a perfect messenger and indeed this is exactly how Allah addressed prophet Muhammad^(sa). He describes him as 'O Perfect man!' (Ch.20:V.2) and further honours him by saying that 'Verily you have in him an excellent model' (Ch.33: V.22). He must therefore have set the best example and been the one that was closest and dearest to God.

In this month's issue of *The Review*

of Religions, one article examines the reality of how nearness to God is attained. It also relates the example of the Holy Prophet^(sa) as evidence of his message that such nearness was not just a flight of fancy but a reality and one for which one should strive. During his life Prophet Muhammad^(sa) attained such nearness to Allah that it was as if he became a reflection of the Divine. Allah was with him at every step of his mission so much so that when the people swore allegiance at the hand of Prophet Muhammad^(sa) the Qur'an tells us that they were in fact swearing allegiance to God and that 'it was God's hand that was above their hands' (Ch.48: V.11). Such was the honour bestowed upon Prophet Muhammad^(sa).

The Holy Prophet's^(sa) life passed through every trial and tribulation; yet he attained every success and victory. Throughout all this his perfect nobility remained untarnished. He stands unmatched as a blueprint to role model for all those who truly desire to be closer to God to follow.

Notes & Comments

A Licence to Kill?

With Christmas becoming a time to get drunk, the statistics relating to alcohol make sober reading. Costs related to the adverse effects of alcohol consumption for England and Wales alone are £20 billion¹ a year with 17 million working days being lost as a result of alcohol. Around 1.2 million crimes (i.e. half of all violent crimes) are alcohol-related and they place a huge burden on the services that are left to deal with the consequences – for example at peak times up to 70% of all accident and emergency admissions in England are linked to alcohol². The effects of alcohol on health are also chronic and widely known with alcohol causing 10% of all ill health and premature deaths in Europe, and 4% of the burden of disease worldwide.³

It is an addictive drug that often becomes a habit of a lifetime

especially when it is so deeply embedded in the liberal culture of modern societies. In the UK for example nearly 6% of consumer spending in 2000 was on alcohol – that's nearly £37 billion! Whilst this generates billions by way of duties collected from the sale of alcohol (£7.6 billion in the UK in 2003/04) this is clearly offset by the wider cost to the economy and society as a whole. There is also the lost opportunity cost – just imagine how many lives could be saved with £37 billion?

One would have thought that such statistics would shock governments into action to curb and ultimately eliminate this harmful drug from our social scene in much the same way that action is taken to prevent other drugs such as cocaine and heroin from taking hold in societies. Yet how wrong we would be!

In England and Wales the Licensing Act 2003 came into force in November this year and rather than being used as an opportunity to reduce the consumption of alcohol it has been used to do the opposite as it will allow licensed premises to sell alcohol 24 hours a day. The Act also seeks to influence consumers to be sensible and purchase and consume alcohol in quantities that will not result in disorder (overlooking the fact that it is the consumption of alcohol that diminishes the sense of responsibility in the first place!). The main argument for extending licensing hours is to prevent what is termed 'binge drinking' whereby young people consume vast amounts of alcohol before the current closing times, but if there is no closing time does this mean there will be no binge drinking? The evidence from other countries including Holland, Iceland, New Zealand and Australia all points to the fact that this is not the case. In fact it simply means that people drink for longer and cause problems throughout the night as they leave the bars at different times, with no reduction in the

overall level of alcohol-related violence⁴. Furthermore it is naïve to link binge drinking and drunkenness to just closing times as it is rooted in modern culture since social events are centred on alcohol. Increasing drinking hours simply serves to increase the consumption of alcohol over a longer period. The only real beneficiary is the drinks industry that stands to profit from the expansion of the alcohol-related night-time economy.

But is alcohol all-bad? It can have a beneficial use in medicines. In a social context it is often said that moderate amounts of alcohol can have positive effects and help prevent heart disease. However, current research published in *The Lancet*⁵ indicates that there is little, if any, benefit from drinking

It is worthy of note that Islam acknowledges the harm and benefit of alcohol but its concluding advice is clear-cut that alcohol is forbidden because its harm outweighs its benefits. The Qur'an states that:

They ask thee concerning wine

*and the game of hazard. Say:
“In both there is great sin and
also some advantages for men;
but their sin is greater than
their advantage.
(Ch.2: V.220)*

*O ye who believe! Intoxicants
and games of chance and idols
and divining arrows are only
an abomination of Satan’s
handiwork. So shun each one
of them that you may prosper.
Satan desires only to create
enmity and hatred among you
by means of intoxicants and
games of chance, and to keep
you back from the
remembrance of Allah and
from Prayer. But will you keep
back?
(Ch.5: Vs.91-92)*

The Qur’an strikes at the heart of the matter and states that alcohol does not result in prosperity (as the economic figures quoted above demonstrate), and is a cause of social discord as it creates enmity and hatred. The Qur’an also goes further than the social cost and notes the impact this has on the spiritual aspect of man – that alcohol takes man away from the

remembrance of God and from Prayer. The wider social impact is that man is distracted from employing his time and money for the benefit of his fellow beings. Man also loses out from the spiritual and social benefits he would derive from strengthening his bond with his Creator. It is also fascinating to note that despite the clear evidence of the harm of alcohol, the Qur’an ends with an almost prophetic remark by saying ‘But will you keep back?’

The answer from mankind at large so far seems to be a resounding ‘no’ and it continues to suffer the consequences as a result.

According to the New Testament, Jesus^(as) had wine, perhaps for medicinal purposes. However, the Holy Prophet^(sa) described alcohol as the mother of all evils. When the commandment from God Almighty came, the streets of Madinah ran with wine in sharp contrast to the prohibition era in America that gave way to bootlegging and other vices. We have come a long way from permissable alcohol levels for driving and almost everyone

admits that the limit should now be reduced to nil

In Britain, for now at least, the Government has chosen once again to ignore this guidance despite all the evidence supporting the Islamic viewpoint, and it has placed its trust in its own wisdom rather than the wisdom of God. It is as if having taken God out of the equation they have refused to give up the bottle to find the solution to their problems, whilst failing to see that it is the bottle itself that is the very problem they should be seeking to avoid.

It therefore may well be the case that the Licensing Act 2003 will go down in British history as an Act that resulted in more deaths

when it could and should have been used to save lives.

Fareed Ahmad – UK

References:

1. For the EU it is a staggering \$65 billion - \$195 billion at 1990 prices (source: 'Economic costs & Benefits' Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2003).
2. 'Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy', Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, March 2004 (UK)
3. Research published in The Lancet, quoted in BBC News on 2/4/2004, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4232703.stm>
4. 'Crime & Disorder: Binge Drinking and the Licensing Act 2003', Institute of Alcohol Studies, March 2005
5. Research published in The Lancet, quoted in BBC News on 2/12/2005, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4491314.stm>

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

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

Nearness to God – Part 3

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

God does not create another God like Himself, because His attribute of Unity and of being Peerless, which is eternal, prevents Him from doing so....

But He does create a sample of His Peerless Being by investing one of His creation, as a reflection, with His attributes which in reality belong to Him alone. There is an indication of this in the Holy Qur'an in the verse:

*Some of them He exalted by
degress of rank.*
(Ch.2: V.254)

Here by the possessor of high ranks is meant our Holy Prophet^(sa) on whom were bestowed the highest ranks which are the reflection of Divine attributes and he became a mirror reflecting God, thus manifesting in a perfect degree, the vicegerence of God for the perfection of which not only mankind but the whole universe was created. This is a very fine point and our opponents who are unaware of these fine points, and are not acquainted with these Divine mysteries, will wonder how out of millions of human beings only one person could

achieve the rank of perfect vicegerence of God, which is the reflection of Godhead.

This is not the place to enter into a detailed exposition of this matter, but we consider it necessary to point out, in order to make it clear to a seeker after truth, that it is Divine law which is in accord with His attribute of Unity that, Himself being One, in His manifestations of His attribute of creation, He pays regard to Unity. If we reflect deeply over what He has created, we would find that the whole of creation is so adjusted that it is like a straight line, one end of which is raised high and the other end of which is sunk low.... On the last point of the highest part is a man, who in his human capacity is above the whole of mankind, and at the lowest end would be the soul possessing a defective capacity which due to this extreme loss is close to senseless animals.

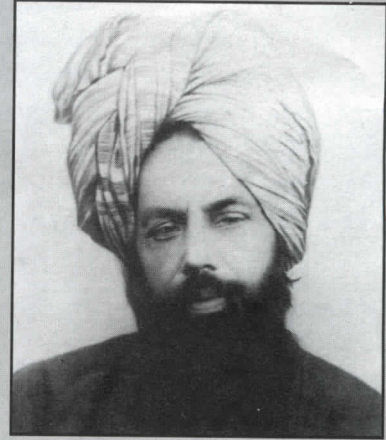
If we look at the material universe, we find this phenomenon further supported. God Almighty has perfected His creation by starting with the smallest particle and

carrying it to the largest body, the sun. In this material system, God has doubtless created in the sun so grand, beneficial, and blessed a body that there is no other body which is its equal at the highest end. Thus observing the highest and the lowest ends of this system, which are always present before our eyes, we can understand that the spiritual system which has also proceeded from Him, is arranged in the same manner. It also has the same high and low points. The works of God Almighty are similar and balanced. He is One and in the manifestation of His works, He loves Unity. Discord and confusion have no place in them. So dear and appropriate is His method that all His works follow a system and are adjusted to each other.

Finding a proof in every direction and having observed ourselves, we accept His law that all His works, spiritual as well as material, are not divergent and confused, but follow a wise system and are part of an arrangement which, beginning with the lowest, proceeds to the highest and that this uniform method is loved by

Him. Accepting this, we have to confess that as in the material system, beginning with a particle, God has carried His creation up to the great body, the sun, which combines in itself visible perfection, than which no material body is greater in the same way, there must be a spiritual sun, that is situated at the highest point of the spiritual elevation.

Now a research into the question as to who is the perfect man who has been made ‘the spiritual sun’ and what is his name, is not a matter which could be settled solely by the exercise of reason. Excepting God Almighty, who possesses this distinction and who can carry out by the exercise of reason alone this tremendous task, that keeping in mind billions upon billions of God Almighty’s creatures and comparing their spiritual powers and faculties, he should select and point out the greatest one of them? Doubtless then, no one can undertake this task upon the basis of reason alone. For such high and deep research, the proper means are revealed Books in which God Almighty, thousands of years in



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.

advance, has set out the particulars of that perfect man.

The person whose heart is guided by Allah and who believes in revelation and reflects on the

prophecies that are mentioned in the Bible, will be bound to confess that the perfect man who is the spiritual sun, by whom the highest point has been filled, and who is the last brick of the wall of Prophethood, is Muhammad, the chosen one^(sa).... The point of the highest exaltation of that good personified, who is situated at the highest point of the spiritual line, that is to say, Muhammad^(sa), the chosen one which had been determined for him by Divine decree, has been exhibited palpably in the world of manifestation. As God has said with reference to the high dignity of this great Prophet:

Some of them He exalted by degrees of rank.
(Ch.2:V.254)

By this exaltation in rank is meant the highest point of the spiritual line which has been bestowed upon the Holy Prophet^(sa) overtly and covertly. This benign being, who is good personified, is higher and more perfect than the three types of God's favourites and is called the perfect manifestation of Godhead.

The three types of nearness to the Divine are illustrated by three resemblances pondering on which the reality of the three grades of nearness can be appreciated. The first type of nearness is illustrated by its resemblance to the relationship between servant and master as God has said:

But those who believe are stronger in their love for Allah.
(Ch.2:V.166)

This means that the believers, in other words, obedient servants, love Allah above everything else.

As a sincere and faithful servant, by witnessing the continuous beneficence and many bounties and the personal qualities of his master, rises so high in his love and sincerity so much so that he acquires a similar temperament to and follows the same way as that of his master, on account of the personal love that is created in his heart, and he desires a fulfilment of his master's wishes as the master himself desires the same as the attitude of a faithful servant towards God Almighty, that is to say, progressing in his sincerity

and fidelity, he arrives at a stage where being lost wholly to his own self, he acquires the colour of his Noble Master....

The second type of nearness to God resembles the nearness between father and son as God Almighty says:

Celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers, or even more than that.

(Ch.2:V.201)

This means: Remember Allah the Glorious with such eagerness love as that which we remember your fathers.

It should be remembered that a master begins to resemble a father when love for him becomes extremely intense and love which is purified of all selfishness settles in the heart as if it were part of it. Then all the eagerness of love and the strong attachment to the beloved is felt as natural and so appropriate to one's nature and so much a part of it that it does not seem to have originated in any effort. As a son on thinking of his

father feels spiritual relationship with him, in the same way a believer feels this relationship; and as a son displays the features of his father and resembles him in his ways and manners, the same is the case with the believer.

The third type of nearness resembles a person's own reflection. As a person views his own reflection in a large clear mirror and beholds the whole of his form together with all his features reflected in the mirror; in the same way, in this third type of nearness all Divine attributes become reflected clearly in his being and this reflection is more complete and perfect than the resemblances which have been mentioned before. It is obvious that a person beholding his own reflection in a mirror finds it in exact accord with himself. That degree of resemblance cannot be acquired by anyone else through any device, nor can it be found in a son. This degree of nearness is achieved by one who is placed so equally between the two chords of Divinity and servitude, is so related to both as if he has become the very same and by removing his

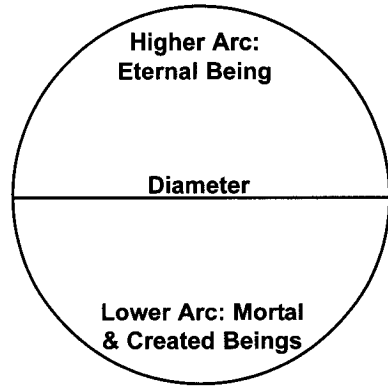
own self from between, serves like a mirror. That mirror being faced in two directions obtains the impress of the Divine by reflection from one direction and from the other direction it conveys all grace according to the capacity of different temperaments to those who are adjusted to it. This is indicated in the Word of God:

*Then he drew nearer to God;
then he came down to mankind
so that he became, as it were,
one chord to two bows or
closer still.*

(Ch.53:Vs.9-10)

This means that ascending high he arrived at the extreme point of nearness to God and between him and God there was left no veil, and then he descended towards mankind and between him and mankind there was no veil. As he was complete and perfect in his ascent and descent, his place becomes that of a chord between two bows. He approached the two chords of Divinity and servitude closer than can be imagined.

The two bows can be illustrated as under:



The line that divides a circle equally is a chord between two bows. This chord is suspended between the Benefactor and the beneficiary and resembles the centre of the circle which is the middle point of the chord. This point is the heart of the perfect man and is equally related to the bow of Divinity and servitude. This is the highest point of the lines that might be drawn from the centre to the circle. Although there are many other points in the chord between the two bows, yet with the exception of the point of the centre, other Prophets and Messengers and righteous persons can share in those points. The central point represents the perfection which the master of the chord possesses in a high and special and distinctive manner in

which no other person can be a sharer with him in the true sense, but by following and obedience one can become a sharer by way of reflection.

The name of this central point is the reality of Muhammad, which is the source of all verities in the world. In truth, the line of the chord has expanded from this central point and its spirituality is charged in the whole of the chord, the holy grace of which has been bestowed upon the whole chord. The first and highest manifestation of the world which the Sufis describe as the names of Allah, is this central point which in the idiom of men of God is called the personal point of Ahmad Mujtaba and Muhammad Mustafa and in the idiom of the philosophers, it is named primary reason. This point has the same relationship to the other points of the chord which the Grand Name of God has to the other names of God.

In short, the mirror that reflects the perfect man, and the fountainhead of all hidden verities, and the key to all certainties is this very point which is the ultimate cause of all

the mysteries of the beginning and the end and the reason for the creation of the low and the high. To visualise it is beyond the power of all reason and understanding. As all life receives grace from the life of God Almighty, and all beings have come into existence through His Being, and all determination is the result of His determination, in the same way, the point of Muhammad, by the command of God, affects all ranks and degrees according to their various capacities and temperaments.

As this point combines all Divine ranks by way of reflection and all of the universe in the same way, being the reflection of Divinity, it resembles Divine ranks as a reflection in the mirror resembles the original; and the basic Divine attributes, that is to say, life, knowledge, will, power, hearing, sight and speech with all their branches, are reflected in it in a complete and perfect manner. The central point which is suspended between God and His creation, that is to say, the personal point of our lord Muhammad^(sa), the chosen one cannot be confined merely to

the word of Allah as the title of Jesus^(as) has been so confined, inasmuch as, this Muhammadi point combines in itself as a reflection all the Divine ranks. That is why Jesus^(as) has been likened to a son on account of the deficiency from which he suffered; for the reality of Jesus^(as) is not a complete manifestation of Divine attributes, which is only one branch out of its many branches. As a contrast, the reality of Muhammad^(sa) is a complete and perfect manifestation of all Divine attributes. For this reason, the Holy Prophet^(sa) has been likened in heavenly Books to a reflection of God, the Glorious Who is in the place of father to the son. The imperfect nature of the teaching of Jesus^(as) and the perfection of Qur'anic teaching, as compared with all other revealed teachings, is also due to this, for incomplete grace is bestowed upon the incomplete and perfect grace is bestowed upon the perfect.

Of the resemblances to God on the part of the Holy Prophet^(sa) which are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, is the verse:

*Then he drew nearer to God;
then he came down to mankind
so that he became, as it were,
one chord to two bows or
closer still.*

(Ch.53:Vs.9-10)

That is to say: The Holy Prophet^(sa) on account of his nearness to God, is like the chord between two bows and even closer.

It is obvious that on the higher side of the chord is the bow of Divinity so that when the whole soul of Muhammad^(sa), on account of its intense nearness and clearness, advanced from the chord and approached even closer to the ocean of Divinity, it fell into that limitless ocean and his particle of humanness was lost in that ocean. This advance was nothing new or recent, but had been determined in eternity and it was worthy of being described in heavenly Books and revealed writings as the perfect manifestation by way of reflection of Divinity and a mirror which reflected God Himself. Another verse of the Holy Qur'an in which this resemblance has been clearly mentioned is:

Those who swear allegiance to thee swear allegiance to Allah; Allah's hand is above their hands.

(Ch.48:V.11)

People who swore allegiance to the Holy Prophet^(sa) did so by putting their hands between his hand. In this verse, God Almighty metaphorically referred to the Holy Prophet^(sa) as Himself and described his hand as His Own hand. This expression has been used concerning the Holy Prophet^(sa) on account of his extreme closeness to God. This is indicated also in the verse:

And you did not throw when you threw, but it was Allah Who threw.

(Ch.8:V.18)

The same indication is found in the verse:

Say: O my servants who have committed excesses against your souls, (i.e committed grave sins) despair not of the mercy of Allah. Allah will forgive all sins.

(Ch.39:V.54)

Now it is obvious that mankind are not the servants of the Holy Prophet^(sa) and indeed all Prophets and non-Prophets are the servants of God Almighty, but as the Holy Prophet^(sa) was closest to God, this idiom was employed in his case. In the same way, God Almighty has bestowed names upon the Holy Prophet^(sa) which are Divine attributes. The Holy Prophet^(sa) was named Muhammad, which means greatly praised. Great praise in reality belongs to God Almighty, but was bestowed upon the Holy Prophet^(sa) by way of reflection. In the same way, the Holy Prophet^(sa) has been named 'Light' in the Holy Qur'an, which illumines the world, the Mercy which safeguards the universe against decline, and 'Compassionate' and 'Merciful,' which are the names of God. In many places in the Holy Qur'an it has been indicated and also expressly mentioned that the Holy Prophet^(sa) is the perfect manifestation of the Divine and that his word is the word of God and his advent is the advent of God. In this context one of the verses of the Holy Qur'an is:

“ The purport of all this is that the grades of nearness to Allah are three and that the third one which is the perfect manifestation of Divinity and is a mirror reflecting God, pertains admittedly to our lord and master Muhammad^(sa), the chosen one whose rays illumine thousands of hearts and are cleansing numberless bosoms of inner darknesses and are leading them to eternal light. ”

Announce: Truth has come and falsehood has disappeared, falsehood is bound to perish.
(Ch.17:v.82)

In this verse by ‘Truth’ are meant God the Glorious, the Holy Qur’an and the Holy Prophet^(sa) and by falsehood are meant Satan and the satanic group and satanic teachings. Here God Almighty included the Holy Prophet^(sa) in His own name and the advent of the Holy Prophet^(sa) became the advent of God Almighty, the majestic advent in consequence of which Satan with all his hosts ran away and his teachings were brought into contempt and his forces suffered a great defeat.

On account of this perfect resemblance the Holy Qur’an mentions in Surah I-Imran that

God took a covenant from all the Prophets that it was incumbent upon them to believe in the greatness and majesty of the Holy Prophet^(sa) and to help in their propagation.

For this reason, beginning with Adam^(as) right down to Jesus^(as) all Prophets and Messengers confessed the great-ness and majesty of the Holy Prophet^(sa). Moses^(as), by announc-ing that: God came from Sinai and arose from Seir and shone forth from Mount Paran, which clearly shows that the manifestation of Divine Majesty reached its climax at Paran and the sun of righteousness shone in its full glory at Paran. The Torah tells us that Paran is a mountain of Makkah where Ismail, the ances-tor of the Holy Prophet^(sa) made his dwelling. This is

confirmed by geographical maps. Even our opponents know that no Prophet has been raised in Makkah except the Holy Prophet^(sa). Consider, therefore, how clearly has Moses^(as) borne witness that the sun of righteousness that would rise at Paran would shed the fiercest rays and that the progress of the light of truth would arrive at its climax in his blessed person....

The purport of all this is that the grades of nearness to Allah are three and that the third one which is the perfect manifestation of Divinity and is a mirror reflecting God, pertains admittedly to our lord and master Muhammad^(sa), the chosen one whose rays illumine thousands of hearts and are cleansing numberless bosoms of inner darknesses and are leading them to eternal light. It has been well said that:

*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 fortunate is the person who accepts Muhammad^(sa), the chosen one as his leader and the Holy Qur'an as his guide. *O Allah, bless our lord and master Muhammad and his people and his companions all of them. All praise is due to Allah Who has guided our hearts to His Own love and to the love of His Messenger and the love of His favourite servants.*

*When our moon cast a glance
of love at our heart,
Our dark heart was transmuted
into pure silver.*

*Every moment the all-
encompassing grace of my
Beloved continues to invite;
Although not of us continue to
bar the way.*

*Day or night, I lie like dust in
my Beloved's lane;
What other sign could there be
of our good fortune and
honour!*

(Surmah Chashm Arya, Ruhani
Khazain, Vol.2 pp.232-301
Footnote)

The Holy Qur'an has set this matter out in an excellent allegory, which we produce below and which is a fine piece of Qur'anic exegesis and is of crucial importance for the final understanding of the present discussion.

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a lustrous niche, wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star. It is lit from a blessed tree - an olive - neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would well nigh glow forth even though fire touched it not. Light upon light! Allah guides to this light whomsoever He will. And Allah sets forth parables to men, and Allah knows all things full well.

(Ch.24:V.36)

This means that: Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth, that is to say, every light that is visible in the heights or in the depths, whether in souls or in bodies, whether personal or acquired, whether overt or covert, whether

inner or external, is a bounty of His grace. This is an indication that the general grace of the Lord of the worlds encompasses everything and that nothing is without His grace. He is the source of all grace and the Cause of causes of all lights and the Fountainhead of all mercies. His Being is the support of the whole universe and is the refuge of all high and low. He brought everything out of the darkness of nothingness and bestowed upon it the robe of existence. There is no other being who exists in his own right and is eternal, or is not the recipient of His grace. The earth and heaven and mankind and animals and stones and trees and souls and bodies, all owe their existence to His grace.

This is general grace mentioned in the verse:

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth...

(Ch.24:V.36)

This grace encompasses everything like a circle. For being the beneficiary of this grace, there is no condition attached. As com-

pared with this there is a special grace which has conditions attached and which is bestowed only upon those individuals who have the ability and capacity to receive it, that is to say, on the perfect individuals who are Prophets, the best and highest of whom is Muhammad, the chosen one^(sa). As that grace is a fine verity, therefore, God Almighty, after mentioning the general grace, has described the special grace for the purpose of expounding the light of the Holy Prophet^(sa) in an allegory so that it should be easily understood.

The translation of the remaining part of the above verse is: That light is exemplified as if there were a lustrous niche by which is meant the breast of the Holy Prophet^(sa). In the niche, there is a lamp meaning Divine revelation. The lamp is contained in a crystal globe as bright as a glittering star, meaning the pure and holy heart of the Holy Prophet^(sa) which in its nature is free from all dirt and opaqueness, like a clear mirror and has no relationship except with God. That mirror is as bright as a glittering star, which shines in

heaven with great glory meaning that the heart of the Holy Prophet^(sa) is so clear and bright that its inner light is displayed on its outer surface flowing like water. That lamp is lit with the oil of a blessed tree, (which is an olive tree). By this is meant the being of the Holy Prophet^(sa) which is a collection of diverse types of blessings and the grace of which is not confined to any place or age or direction, but is everlastingly flowing and will never be cut off. The blessed tree is neither of the east nor of the west that is to say, the nature of the Holy Prophet^(sa) suffers neither from excess nor from deficiency and has been created in the best mould. The oil of the blessed tree by which the lamp of revelation is lit, means the fine bright reason of the Holy Prophet^(sa) together with the natural high moral qualities which are nourished by the clear fountain of his perfect reason.

The meaning of the lamp of revelation being lit up by the high moral qualities of the Holy Prophet^(sa) is that the grace of revelation descended upon them and they were the cause of the

descent of revelation. There is here also an indication that the grace of revelation was in accord with the nature of the Holy Prophet^(sa) the explanation of which is that revelation descends in accord with the nature of the Prophet to whom it is vouchsafed. For instance, the temperament of Moses^(as) was compounded of glory and wrath; so in accord with it the Torah was revealed in the framework of a majestic law. Jesus^(as) had a temperament which was meek and gentle and so the Gospel teaches meekness and gentleness. But the temperament of the Holy Prophet^(sa) was steady in the extreme. It was not gentle on all occasions nor was it wrathful on every occasion, but was a wise compound, which came into play according to the demands of the occasion. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an was also revealed in an appropriate and moderate mould which combines severity and kindness, awe and compassion, and hardness and softness.

In this verse, God Almighty has disclosed that the lamp of the revelation of the Qur'an has been lit from the oil of a blessed tree

which is neither of the east nor of the west, but is in accord with the moderate temperament of the Holy Prophet^(sa) which has neither the severity of the temperament of Moses^(as), nor the softness of the temperament of Jesus^(as) but is a compound of hardness and softness and of wrath and compassion and displays perfect moderation and is a combination of majesty and beauty. The high moral qualities of the Holy Prophet [peace and blessings of Allah be on him] are referred to in another place in the Holy Qur'an in the words:

*And thou dost surely possess
high moral excellences.
(Ch.68:V.5)*

This means that the Holy Prophet^(sa) was created with such perfection of high moral qualities as could not be exceeded. The word '*adheem*', which has been used in the verse, signifies in Arabic idiom, the highest perfection of the species. For instance, when it is said that a tree is '*adheem*', it means that it possesses all the length and breadth which it is possible for a

tree to possess. Some lexicologists have said that '*adheem* signifies greatness which is beyond conception.

By the word *Khulq*, when used in the Holy Qur'an, and also in other books of wisdom, is meant not merely good behaviour and kindness and gentleness. *Khalq* and *Khulq* are two distinct words which are used in juxtaposition to each other. *Khalq* means the physical body which God bestows on man whereby man is distinguishable from other animals. *Khulq* means the inner qualities by virtue of which the reality of humanness is distinguishable from the reality of animals. Thus, all the inner qualities which distinguish a man from animals are comprised in *Khulq*. As the tree of human nature is based on moderation and is free from excess or deficiency, which is found in the faculties of animals. Almighty Allah points to this by saying:

We have created man in the best of creative plans.
(Ch.95:V.5)

The word *Khulq*, when it is not accompanied by any pejorative qualification, always means high moral qualities. These high moral qualities comprise all the inner qualities which are found in man as clear reason, quick understanding, good memory, good remembrance, chastity, modesty, steadfastness, contentment, piety, high resolve, perseverance, justice, trust, generosity in its proper place, sacrifice in its proper place, benevolence in its proper place, beneficence in its proper place, bravery in its proper place, gentleness in its proper place, forbearance in its proper place, indignation in its proper place, courtesy in its proper place, respect in its proper place, compassion in its proper place, kindness in its proper place, mercy in its proper place, fear in its proper place, love in its proper place, love for God and withdrawal towards God, etc.

The oil would well-nigh glow forth even though no fire were to touch it (that is to say, the reason and all the high qualities of the Holy Prophet^(sa) were so perfect

and appropriate and delicate and bright, that they were ready to be lit up even before the receipt of revelation). Light upon light; that is to say, that many lights were combined in the blessed being of the Holy Prophet^(sa) and on those lights descended the heavenly light of Divine revelation and thereby the being of the Khatamul-Anbiya^(sa) became a combination of lights.

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 1, pp. 191-195, footnote 11)

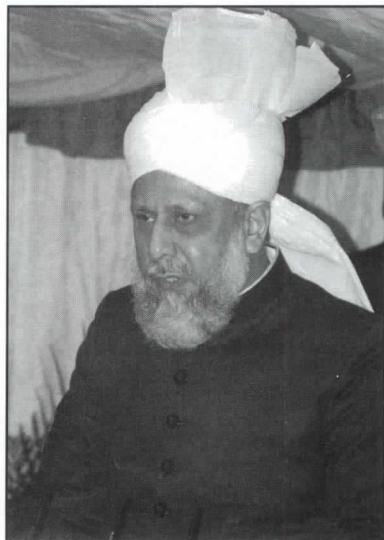
Address given at the opening of Nasir Mosque in Hartlepool, UK

by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad
delivered on Friday 11th November 2005

**Honourable Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Today, by the grace of God, we are inaugurating the Nasir Mosque, in a part of this country where it is the first Ahmadiyya Mosque in this region and this town. Those who are unfamiliar with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community and the true teachings of Islam may carry a fear in their hearts that the construction of this mosque, as perhaps seen by them, will destroy the peace and harmony of this region. This thought arises in the hearts of non-Muslims because, in the absence of any knowledge of the true teachings of Islam, they consider its teaching to be barbaric and promoting terrorism.



I am sorry to admit that there are two causes for this misconception. One is the bias of those who do not fulfil all the requirements of absolute justice and unleash a propaganda against Islam, and second, are the deeds of some so-called Muslims that cause such an image to crystallise in one's mind.

We need to understand the beauties of Islam from its fundamental book of law which, we Muslims believe, was revealed to the Holy Prophet(sa). In this short time, I cannot, of course, describe them in great detail, but I will try to clarify a few things.



Side view of Nasir Mosque in Hartlepool

Please rid your mind of any thought that Islam promotes any kind of violence, or teaches one to violate the rights of others, or that it promotes cruelty, terrorism or disorder in the land, or permits one to take the law in one's hands. Instead, Islam teaches love, affection, respect for the emotions and feelings of others, being kind and gentle towards other people, preserving equity and justice, and not to consider oneself above the law but to uphold and abide by the law at all times.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Verily, Allah requires you to abide by justice, and to treat others with grace, and give like the giving of kin to kin; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and transgression.

(Al-Nahl Ch.16:V.91)

Now, ladies and gentlemen, see what a beautiful teaching this is which requires one to deal fairly with everyone and not to be cruel or unkind to anyone but to

progress further from this, in that even if you have to abandon your own rights, you should continue to be just and do good unto others. Deal with others in equity and goodness as you deal with your own relatives, next of kin and as you deal with your own parents and children by overlooking their faults and errors. If you act in this way, then differences, disputes and causes of complaints amongst yourselves will end.

Then Islam forbids matters that harm morality such as indecency which takes you away from God Almighty. Stay away from things that destroy the moral fibre of society. If you usurp the rights of someone, or cause harm to someone, you will destroy social harmony. Disputes and conflicts will begin to emerge. You should always stay away from such evils.

Moreover, refrain from any matter that has the potential of causing a rebellion or can give birth to a revolt. Do not form a union that wants to confront the government. Do not commit acts that are in breach of the law. Always abide by the commandments of God

Almighty. Obey the laws of the land. Do not take the law into your own hands.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community has clarified this principle for us by stating:

‘Respond to the evil of your brother with good work and in exchange for him causing you hardship, grant him ease and, out of kindness and benevolence to him, be his helper.’

So this is the Islamic teaching that the Ahmadiyya community upholds.

Then, the teaching does not say: Deal with your fellow countrymen as if you are dealing with your blood relatives, but the teaching, in the words of the Holy Qur’an is:

‘...Let not a people’s enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice.’

(Al-Ma’idah Ch.5:V.9)

If you are at war with another people or engaged in a battle against them, even then remember that you must be just and fulfil the

requirements of justice. If you overcome them, do not be cruel to the people of your defeated enemy; having been victorious over them, do not deprive them of their rights. If any person amongst you transgresses or is cruel to a person belonging to your defeated enemy, then do not be one-sided in favour of your own person, but fulfil the requirements of absolute justice and grant the rights to the one who is true.

In view of this teaching, I am sure that, ladies and gentlemen, you will agree with me, that no one can say that Islam is a barbaric religion or that it advocates the disregard of the rights of others. After the kind of treatment that Islam teaches, there would most certainly be an atmosphere of love and affection.

Anyway, these are some of the misinterpretations and a part of the false propaganda against the commandments of Islam that have given Islam a bad name. This is why it is important that we should never think from the actions of a handful of individuals that they are representatives of Islam nor give

undue weight to the opinion of those who are biased against Islam.

Take Christianity, for instance, which advocates extreme kindness so much so that Christians are commanded '*whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*' (Matthew 5:39). Now, if someone does not act on this teaching, it does not mean that Christian teaching is bad.

To get back to what I was saying, in order to generate love, understanding and affection in the society and establish peace, it is most important to create an atmosphere of tolerance so that we may all derive the maximum benefit from the many bounties of this beautiful world of God Almighty. Wherever in the world people have come to know about the message of Ahmadiyyat, the local people have always stood with us.

For example, some time ago, we constructed a mosque in a German city. By and large, the local people expressed very favourable

comments. Of course, there were some biased people also. One day, someone from amongst these biased people tried to set fire to our mosque. There was a lot of damage as a result of this arson attack. The local population, which was predominantly or one should say entirely Christian, expressed great sorrow at this attack. In fact, it was one of them who raised the alarm about the fire. Even the priest of the local church came to express his sorrow. The church offered that it was ready to make good the loss suffered by the fire which amounted to almost one hundred thousand euros (€100,000). So these sentiments that were expressed by the local Christians and the Church were because they had come to know that Ahmadi Muslims are the ones who present the true picture of the teachings of Islam and act on its teachings. Their slogan of 'Love for All, Hatred for None' is not merely a cliché but they act on it also.

Ladies and gentlemen, those of you who are not Ahmadi but are attending this evening as our honoured guests, will see that this

Mosque in your town, is a symbol of peace, harmony and understanding and a beacon of light. This Mosque has been built by people who believe in that person who has conveyed the true message of Islam to them. Only those who worship the One God and who have nothing but kindness for the creation of God, irrespective of caste, colour or creed, will come to worship in this Mosque. The doors of this Mosque are open to all. I assure the people of this town that we believe in that prophet who, for the sake of creating love and peace, forgave his bitter enemies. This is why for the establishment of peace and generating love, only love and affection will spring forth from our hearts.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community whom we believe to be the Promised Messiah^(as) has taught us:

'In your gatherings, there should be neither anything foul nor ridicule and laughter. Walk on this earth while you are pure-hearted, pure-natured and pure-minded and remember that not every mischief is

worth confronting. This is why it is vital that you develop the habit of forgiveness and overlooking so as to pardon at most times and work with patience and wisdom. And do not attack anyone in any prohibited manner. Suppress your ego and emotions within and if you enter into a debate or a religious dialogue, use gentle words in a civilised manner. And if someone confronts you in a foolish way, just bid peace as farewell and leave such a gathering quickly. If you are harassed and abused and bad words are said against you, then watch out that you do not match insolence with insolence otherwise you will be just as bad as them. God Almighty desires that He should make you such a community that you are the role model of good works and honesty and integrity for the world.”

I hope that these words would have removed any doubts or fears in those who harboured any misgivings about this Mosque or our community.

May God Almighty enable each Ahmadi living here to become a good exemplar of Ahmadiyyat and true Islam. May each Ahmadi be the cause of removing any fears in the hearts of people.

I hope that this Mosque will become a symbol of mutual love and friendship and serve as a milestone amongst people of all faiths and that from here a message will spread of the love of God Who has unlimited love for His creation. May Allah cause the feelings of love and affection to increase in us.

Finally, I wish to thank all honourable guests who have manifested their love, affection and friendship by attending the inauguration of this Mosque today. May Allah grant you an excellent reward for it. Amin.

The Importance of **Financial Sacrifice**

Extract from a speech delivered in Galway at the 4th Annual Convention of Ahmadiyya Muslim Association Ireland, 2005

By Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry – Cornwall, UK

The subject of financial sacrifice is so important that in the Holy Qur'an Allah has repeatedly drawn our attention to it in many ways. Both the elements of sacrifice and the focus on giving out of one's wealth are paramount issues of importance as they are key factors in the promotion of a harmonious society – a society in which people are ever-willing to earn the pleasure of God and are ever mindful of their duty to each other – especially to those who are less well-off than themselves. It is only in such a society that true peace is established and man is given a taste of paradise.

We are the most fortunate of people as we have Islam – the perfect guidance from Allah. We also have a unique opportunity to accept the teachings of Islam and benefit from the noble examples of those who were taught and guided by our master Hadhrat Muhammad(sa)

himself. Who could have known more about Islam than the Messenger of Allah(sa). He lived Islam and his personal example made clear how we too can attain nearness to Allah. Look at the impact of his example on those around him. Look at how he transformed an ignorant society that was bent upon personal gain, that was determined to fight for the sake of pride and wealth, that was in a state of utter despair and godlessness – look at how that same society was revolutionised by Islam.

That same society became a beacon of light and hope not just for Arabia but for the whole world and even now their acts of virtue are resounding clarion calls for people the world over to forget the false pursuits of this world and to turn to Allah and serve His cause. They gave up everything – their friends, their families, their homes, and yes

their wealth for the sake of serving Allah. Could one have imagined that such a revolution would take place in such a short period? But it did – it did so because at each step of their journey, at each point of sacrifice Allah lifted the veils from their eyes and hearts and they became aware of the immense blessings of Allah and the bounty that he had bestowed upon them. This was not a bounty of worldly riches, it was not a bounty of palatial comforts or even a life of ease but it was the endless bounty of drawing ever near to the Almighty. Allah out of His mercy sent the greatest prophet, Muhammad(sa) to them and this was such a blessing that knew no equal. For he was the one who would elevate them from a life of turmoil and strife to a life of humanity and peace. That peace was so firmly established in their hearts that none could seize it from them.

We today are so fortunate that we have the example of these holy people before us and are witness to the blessings that Allah Almighty has bestowed upon them. And look at His blessings – blessings that have been showered upon everyone so that even those who deserved nought shared in this bounty so that they could not deny the favours of Allah and His promise of rewarding

those who strive for His cause. Look at how generous and magnanimous Allah is that his blessings extend beyond those who earned it to those generations who had no hand in reaping these blessings. Yet Allah's attribute of *Rahmaniyyat* (Graciousness) is ever-present and is a living example for us all.

Qur'anic Philosophy and Teachings

So what does Allah instruct believers with regards to sacrifice – and financial sacrifice in particular – and what has He promised in return? Well, it is such a beautiful teaching, such a wonderful opportunity for us all, rich or poor, to earn paradise that no room for doubt is left.

It is such an important topic in the Qur'an that right from the outset Allah solves the whole problem for us and removes the basis of greed. In Sura Fatiha Allah states:

*All praise belongs to Allah, Lord
of all the worlds.*
(Ch.1: V.2)

This verse is bursting with meaning and beauty and it sets out once and for all that all that is in the heavens

and the earth belongs to Allah. Man has no right of ownership on anything, he has not created a single atom so how can he behave as if he owned the whole world? It is Allah Who is the Creator, Who has bestowed His favours upon us and given us everything for our sustenance.

We are the trustees of this earth and whatever we have are but borrowed splendours from Allah and our benefit lies in us discharging our trusts dutifully and with wisdom. That wisdom is found in the Qur'an.

In the very next verse, Allah states His attributes that He is, *'The Gracious, The Merciful'* (Ch.1: V.3).

As mentioned before His quality of *Rahmaniyyat* i.e. graciousness is unending and without measure. The whole universe stands witness to this quality and all of which has been created to serve man. This quality of *Rahmaniyyat* is further explained in the Qur'an where Allah explains that He,

'...made the earth a bed for you, and the heaven a roof, and caused water to come down from the clouds and therewith

brought forth fruits for your sustenance...'
(Ch.2: V.22)

We could not have achieved anything without His Grace and yet we think twice before spending what He has given us for His cause. And even there the need to spend for His cause is not for His benefit – as it is established that He being Lord of all the worlds does not need anything from us – rather it is for our benefit.

The reward to be reaped is certainly worth striving for, for it is countless blessings both in this world and the world after. If we look at the example of the Muslims of Arabia then we can see that Arabia has been blessed so much that it stands unmatched in its spiritual progress, that was attained by the Companions of Prophet Muhammad^(sa), and the material blessings that we have witnessed in the last century. Of course the real goal is the spiritual progress and many who attained this cherished prize never attained any riches in this world but instead died in peace with the hope that Allah would be pleased with them. Indeed, their hearts were so pure that they cared little for material wealth, but Allah remained true to

His promise – so that others could see that Allah remained firm to His promise and that if He had proved that He could bless man in this world then what doubt is left that He will bless us in the world after as well? How can it be that having witnessed Allah's blessings on a scale that was unimaginable, we doubt His word? His word and His promises are set out in the Qur'an and are plain for all to see. If we truly believe in the Qur'an and count ourselves as recipients of its blessings then we should pay heed to its every instruction.

An Attribute of the Righteous

In the Qur'an Allah makes clear that financial sacrifice is an attribute of the righteous. This is set out so clearly in the second chapter that establishes the status of the Qur'an before making plain what actions serve to please Allah. Allah states:

This is a perfect Book; there is no doubt in it.

(Ch.2: V.3)

As mentioned earlier history bears witness to the fact that there is absolutely **no doubt** about Allah's word. What He promises certainly passes and it is this certainty that drives the seekers of the truth to

follow God's commandments. Since the advent of Islam these commandments are found in the Qur'an, which is described by Allah as:

... a guidance for the righteous.

(Ch.2: V.3)

But what are the qualities of the righteous? The righteous are those:

Who believe in the unseen and observe Prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.

(Ch.2: V.4)

Look at the beauty of Allah's words. He makes clear that the righteous act with firm faith. Their hearts have no doubt about Allah or the life to come. They are staunch believers in the unseen and the real blessings that they desire are linked to the next life. It is true that Allah rewards us in this world and the next but the motivation for their acts and sacrifices lie in the realm of the unseen – for it is there that they realise lies the ultimate reward, in comparison to which the gains of this life pale into insignificance.

In fact Allah further underlines the concept of sacrifice as a basis for righteousness when He says:

Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend out of that which you love.
(Ch.3: V.93)

For those who are attached to worldly riches, this verse is a clear instruction making plain that their path to progress is linked to their willingness to part with their wealth for the sake of Allah.

This is a characteristic of the righteous and when we look at the lives of prophets, their companions and more recently the life of the Promised Messiah^(as) and his companions and Khalifas, we see their complete conviction in God and the existence of the unseen. It is a crucial characteristic that drives them to make every sacrifice – big or small – because they have complete conviction that their reward lies with Allah.

The logic of the opening verses of the second chapter is infallible. In those verses Allah makes clear the path to progress. Those who set out in His cause with pure intention are being guided and within a few verses have the basics of faith and spiritual and social peace set out before them. It identifies faith (belief in the unseen) in God as a

basis for progress and then it specifies actions to improve one's spiritual and physical being as it says the righteous are those who observe Prayer and spend out of what God has provided for them.

It is interesting to note that the link between salat (prayer) and spending in the cause of Allah is so strong that Allah has mentioned them in the same verse not just once but 27 times. These are the keys to spiritual and therefore physical progress.

Furthermore, if we look carefully at the reference to financial sacrifice – Allah says those who '*spend out of what **We** have provided for them*'. This reinforces the concept set out in sura Fatiha that Allah alone is the owner and master of all. Everything we have – including our wealth – has been provided not only by Him but also has been provided specifically for us – i.e. for our benefit, not His. In other words Allah has said that man should make sacrifices, of which wealth is a key part, for the sake of Allah and out of His generosity Allah has also given us a share of wealth to enable us to make that sacrifice! What a Gracious and Merciful Lord He is, and yet when it comes to it there are some who still feel unable to take

that step and spend in His cause! These verses are serious points of reflection for us all.

Allah then states – still describing the attributes of the righteous,

And they who believe in that which has been revealed to thee, and that which was revealed before thee, and they have firm faith in what is yet to come.

(Ch.2: V.5)

These verses form the basis of religious and social belief as it requires us to believe in all prophets and learn from their examples and the sacrifices they had made. Allah certainly honoured them and will continue to reward those who follow in their footsteps.

The Qur'an then states:

It is they who follow the guidance of their Lord and it is they who shall prosper.

(Ch.2: V.6)

Thus the promise is made. Those who abide by the actions and beliefs set out above are told by Allah in no uncertain terms that they are the ones who shall prosper. In other words our spiritual and physical success is to be

determined by our ability to serve Allah, by our desire to serve Allah and our actions in serving Allah. Who among us would not want to be a recipient of such prosperity that Allah Himself has assured us? Or would we rather wish to be among those who received such clear guidance from their Lord but strayed away and instead of earning His pleasure earned His wrath?

Sacrifice requires actions not words

It is true that sacrifice is just that – it is not an easy option because it requires us to give up what we have. Yet it is not a concept that is altogether alien to any of us. We willingly and wantonly sacrifice many things but often for the wrong purpose. I am sure we can all recall an instance where we have spent money needlessly for the sake of a momentary gain.

The Holy Qur'an is a Book that understands human nature and sets out the truth. Even in this respect it acknowledges the effort needed to make sacrifices, yet all the time it reminds us that it is such sacrifice that earns us Allah's pleasure.

It also speaks in terms of actions and not just thoughts. The noble

example of the Holy Prophet(sa) is brimming full of sacrifices. And the lives of his holy Companions provide further examples that remain unmatched. In our Jama'at we have been blessed with the sacrifices of many holy people who gave willingly and without consideration for themselves and look how all these sacrifices have resulted in blessings being showered upon us and indeed humanity at large.

They have provided us with ample examples of the spirit that needs to be inculcated to be able to make sacrifices. It should be said that it is only by making sacrifices that man can develop the means and more importantly the ability to make bigger sacrifices. The reason is that with each sacrifice we diminish our ties with this world. We accept that Allah has provided us with this for the sake of winning His pleasure and we willingly loosen our link with the gains of this world for the sake of a much better and rewarding gain in the world after. With each small sacrifice we demonstrate that we accept the trivial nature of this world and have no desire to be caught up in the meaningless pursuit of its riches. Our efforts and thoughts become more focused on

the spiritual truth and rewards and we in fact see that such sacrifices are the only means of generating peace here as well – what a bargain! It is thus essential that we make the small sacrifices and encourage this habit in our children as well so that they appreciate its blessings and have the ability and strength to make any financial sacrifice for the sake of God.

This emphasis on belief being accompanied by action to earn Allah's pleasure is clearly stated in the Qur'an. For example Allah says,

...truly righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and spends his money for the love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask for charity, and for ransoming the captives; and whoso observes Prayer and pays the Zakat, and those who fulfil their promise when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and afflictions and the steadfast in time of war; it is these who have proved truthful and it is these who are God-fearing.
(Ch.2: V.189)

In English there is a saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating – here Allah is saying exactly that – that it is not enough to say we believe but man must demonstrate his belief with actions and it is only through those actions that he earns his reward and proves the truth of his belief. His proof is to himself and God alone and not to others around him. The spirit of financial sacrifice is not for the sake of social esteem but for the love of God. What a beautiful teaching this is – one that reaches out to us, to our hearts and guides us on to the path of God and makes clear that all this is done by those who yearn for the love of God.

It is they who truly accept that this world is not what counts. This is beautifully described in the Holy Qur'an which says:

The life of this world is made to appear attractive to those who disbelieve; and they scoff at those who believe. But those who fear God shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection; and Allah bestows His gifts on whomsoever he pleases without reckoning.

(Ch.2: V.213)

This presents us with the understanding of the disbelievers on what this life is about and how true it is. Look at the world not just at the time of the Holy Prophet(sa) but also now. People are chasing the offerings of this life yet it is those people who will have little reward in the hereafter.

A test of faith

The Qur'an also acknowledges that it is with patience, prayer and certainty of faith that such sacrifices are made, it says:

Do you enjoin others to do what is good and forget your own selves, while you read the Book? Will you not then understand? And seek help with patience and Prayer; and this is indeed hard except for the humble in spirit, who know for certain that they will meet their Lord, and that to Him will they return.

(Ch.2: Vs.45-47)

It is interesting that on the one hand the Qur'an acknowledges the difficulty man perceives in making sacrifices yet on the other makes plain the reward of such acts which would otherwise make one wonder why any one of us would hesitate to make such sacrifices. But this is not

without purpose. The reason why it seems hard is that it is one way of testing man. Life in the hereafter is based on our actions in this world and our ability to make sacrifices is a key part of this. Any sacrifice is a form of a test and how fortunate are those who pass this for the sake of God. In fact Allah makes clear that such a test is a part of a believer's life and his distinguishing feature is his ability to remain steadfast throughout all such trials and tribulations. This very issue is described in the Holy Qur'an where it says:

Do you think that you will enter Heaven while there has not come over you the condition of those who passed away before you? Poverty and afflictions befell them, and they were violently shaken until the Messenger and those who believed along with him said: 'When will come the help of Allah?' Yea, surely the help of Allah is nigh. (Ch.2: V.215)

Look at the examples of those who passed through such tribulations. In addition to the matchless life of the Holy Prophet(sa), his Companions offered so much that our actions are made to look like paltry offerings.

At the time of the battle of Tabuk the Holy Prophet(sa) made an appeal to enable the Muslims to prepare for battle. Muslims donated generously but none more so than the torchbearers of truth and spiritual honour. Hadhrat Umar(ra) gave half of everything he possessed without hesitation. Yet even this was not the pinnacle of financial sacrifice with which such Companions were blessed. They knew only one cause and that was to serve Allah and His Prophet(sa). In response to the same appeal Hadhrat Abu Bakr(ra) donated everything he had and look at his answer to the Holy Prophet(sa) who asked him, 'Abu Bakr! What have you left at home?' His answer humbles us even today, 1400 years on. He said 'Only the name of Allah and His Messenger'.

Look at their utter devotion for God. They had wealth that could have given them a life of ease yet they marched in the direction of hardship and sacrifice – unshakeable in their belief of God. They proved their truth time and time again and look how Allah honoured them and blessed them manifold. Indeed this is the promise in the Qur'an where God says:

Who is it that will lend Allah a

goodly loan that He may multiply it for him manifold? And Allah receives and enlarges, and to Him shall be your return.
(Ch.2:V.246)

Allah refers to such deeds as loans that He will multiply – thus ensuring man a victory in such works. Can we deny that Allah has not fulfilled His promise at each and every stage? The glory of Islam and the source of our success are assured in such binding words yet some feel unable to make that sacrifice. When we enter our homes we should have these words echoing in our hearts and the example of Hadhrat Abu Bakr^(ra) should be constantly in our minds – they gave everything they had, so how can it be that we, who have the benefit of seeing Allah's promise being fulfilled time and time again, should have the slightest hesitation in giving for His cause?

Without doubt it is all too easy to fall prey to the temptations of this world, but do we really need this to attain nearness to God? We spend money to live lives of comfort yet we are told that it is the opposite that is the path of righteousness.

The Holy Prophet^(sa) – the perfect exemplar – made it crystal clear that this life must not be the focus of our efforts. Hadhrat Umar^(ra) describes how the Holy Prophet^(sa) used to live. He says:

‘I went into a small room which was occupied by the Holy Founder of Islam. He was lying on a straw bedding so rough in nature that on the side he was leaning, I saw straw marks all over his body. I scanned the room and it was empty, there was nothing except for a small bucket for water and one or two odd things. I knew him to be the most beloved of God, a person who had reached the summit of humanity. This contrast so overwhelmed me with sorrow that I started to cry. The Holy Prophet turned to me and said, “Umar, what has ailed thee?” I said, “O Messenger of God, God loves you so much, you are the best ever created by Him, yet I see you in this state of extreme austerity. You don't have proper bedding, you don't have any articles to decorate your house, there is nothing.” The Holy Prophet smiled and said, “Umar, would you prefer worldly things of this life to what is in store for

us by God in the life to come?" Umar replied, "Surely the things to come will be better."

(The Seal of Prophets: His Personality and Character by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, p.30)

This is a stark contrast to our lives of luxury and yet we seek to attain nearness to Allah! We should reflect on the Holy Prophet's example and how Allah rewarded him. Our spirit to give should be charged with such devotion. Our spirit should be the same as that of the Holy Prophet^(sa). Our spirit should be that of Hadhrat Umar^(ra), of Hadhrat Abu Bakr^(ra). It should be that of Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Lateef^(ra) who willingly gave up a life of ease and honour for his belief in God and the truth of the Promised Messiah^(as) – he was prepared to respond to the call of the Messiah and make every sacrifice to prove the truth of his belief in Allah and His Messenger. He was derided and tortured yet he stood firm. He was struck with rock after rock as he was stoned to death for his belief yet nothing could break his resolve. He had found the source of peace and cared little for this world. We should remember his sacrifice so that when we are called to further the cause of Islam we are not counted as among

those who jest at God's promise but rather are those for whom no sacrifice is too big. Look how he was honoured by the Promised Messiah^(as), who said:

'See how Abdul Lateef, the pure and pious one, gave himself for the sake of God.

He surrendered his life with true submission and is lying under the stones.

This is what is known as the path of truth and purity; this is the ultimate aim of every man of true faith.

They live only for His sake and have no personal aims; they throw away their own lives in the path of the Lord.

They sever themselves from all worldly fame, honour and status; they surrender theirs and allow their crowns to be taken away from their heads for His sake.

Having relinquished their ego they approach Him through His remembrance and for the sake of the Beloved's Countenance they sacrifice their personal honours.

Even the mention of their names furnishes us with the opportunity of remembrance of God, causing one's faith regarding the truth of God to be enhanced and causing joy to our hearts.

If you are in the search of true faith, let this be your model, so shall it make the task of the seekers after truth very easy.' (*Tadhkiratush Shahadatain* p.59)

We are blessed that from among the Jama'at we have such noble examples that have furnished us with the spirit of sacrifice even in these latter days. They have kept alive the meaning of true faith and are the leading lights in how we should resolve to serve and offer whatever is asked of us. This is the spirit that we should have.

The Promised Messiah^(as) says:

'O ye my disciples! May God be always with you. May he Grant you to be prepared for the final journey as he had prepared the Companions of the Holy Prophet^(sa). Beware! This world is transient. Cursed is the life which concerns itself mainly

with material gains and most unfortunate is he who hankers after this world. If there be such a man among my followers, then he has joined us in vain, for he can be likened to a withered branch of a tree which cannot bear fruit.'

(*Tadhkiratush Shahadatain* p.60)

Who among us would wish to be counted as one who has ignored the warning of the Messiah and persists in holding this world dear? We should pay heed to the message of Islam that says with certainty that Allah alone is the provider of all.

Look at the example of Hadhrat Maulvi Hakim Nooruddeen Sahib^(ra) – he sacrificed his wealth for the sake of Islam – so much so that the Promised Messiah^(as) said that:

'Maulvi Hakim Nooruddeen Sahib is unique in his sincerity, love and spirit of sacrifice, in his courage and generosity, in spending for the sake of Allah and his support for Islam. I know many a rich person who spends a tiny portion of his abundant wealth in the way of Allah, but to give **all** of one's precious wealth to win the

pleasure of Allah and suffer hunger and thirst and completely deprive oneself of all its material benefits is a virtue that I have witnessed to perfection in Maulvi sahib alone.'

(*A Heavenly Sign* by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, p.76)

For our benefit Allah has explained that financial sacrifice can only ever benefit us and holy people like Hadhrat Hakim Nooruddeen Sahib^(ra) had certainly understood this message well. Allah says:

The similitude of those who spend their wealth for the cause of Allah is like the similitude of a grain of corn which grows seven ears, in each ear a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies it further for whomsoever He pleases: and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing.
(Ch.2: V.262)

Can man ever make such a promise for any such bargain in this life? Most certainly not. Allah has promised that if we give for His sake then He will multiply such sacrifices, the benefit of which will be not just for us but for others as well.

Sacrifice is not dependent on prosperity

The idea that if we give it will be our loss and we will end up worse off is completely rejected by this verse. Furthermore the Qur'an makes clear that such thoughts are the handiwork of Satan – they are one aspect of the evil whisperings that we are told of in the final chapter of the Qur'an which implores us to seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, '*...From the evil of the sneaking whisperer. Who whispers into the hearts of men...*' (Ch.114: Vs.5-6)

Such thoughts are Satanic temptations that lead us away from God and they arise when we consider offering wealth for the sake of God.

Allah says:

Satan threatens you with poverty and enjoins upon you what is foul...
(Ch.2: V.269)

but look how Allah responds to this, *...whereas Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and bounty. And Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing.*
(Ch.2:V.269)

We are therefore implored to disregard any such thoughts of poverty because they do not lead to our success. For our sacrifice Allah has promised forgiveness and bounty!

from their Lord, and Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they shall abide, and how good is the reward of those who work!'

(Ch.3: Vs.135,137)

In fact this also highlights another important aspect of life and that is that we have no knowledge of our future – we have no control over our financial success. We may think that investing in this or that project will result in our benefit. Or that saving for a house or a car will help us progress, but it is Allah Who is the true Master. It is He Who grants us the ability to earn, and we must always be ever ready to spend in His cause. Waiting to spend when we are well off is no way to success and is not mentioned at all in the Qur'an as a pre-condition for sacrifice. In fact the opposite has been stressed. Allah says:

You shall surely be tried in your possessions and in your persons... (Ch.3: V.187)

But such trials are a source of success for Allah also says:

Those who spend in prosperity and adversity.....it is these whose reward is forgiveness

Indeed in this world there are some who are better off than others but Allah makes no distinction between the two when it comes to sacrifice. We are urged to spend in prosperity and in adversity and each phase presents its own challenge. But for those whose hearts are turned towards God there is never a challenge but always an opportunity to earn Allah's reward. It is thus our hearts that lead us in this direction not our wealth. Allah gives the example of those who in effect blamed their lack of wealth as an excuse for not giving money for Allah's cause, the Holy Qur'an tells us about the disbelievers that:

And among them there are those who made a covenant with Allah, saying, "If He gives us of His bounty, we would most surely give alms and be of the virtuous." But when He gave them of His bounty, they became niggardly of it, and they turned away in aversion.'

(Ch.9: Vs.75-76)

So we must not fall into the trap of feeling that what Allah has given us is not enough and that if only we had more we would give. This is not the path of the righteous. It is in fact the other way round, that the righteous give and Allah rewards them manifold and the more they give the more they are rewarded. So we should be always willing to give money in the cause of Allah because it is not our money that reaches Him but our righteousness. So give without measure or hesitation so that you too can receive without measure.

Indeed the Holy Prophet^(sa) said

‘Spend, and do not count, lest Allah counts against you. Do not withhold your money, lest Allah withholds from you. Spend what you can.’
(*Bukhari, Muslim*)

The Qur’an relates the incident of the poor as a model of sacrifice so that all believers should strive to have the same spirit of sacrifice. It talks of those who had nothing to offer but themselves for the cause of Allah and they remain undaunted in offering their lives. They went to put themselves forward to fight to defend Islam, but there was no

mount available to enable them to fulfil their desire to serve. They returned ‘...*their eyes overflowing with tears, out of grief that they could not find what they might spend.*’ (Ch.9: V.92)

What striking spirits these poor people possessed – their only desire was to have the means to realise the offer of their service in the path of Allah. Yet it was not to be. They returned in grief at their inability to offer – how many of us have even an ounce of that spirit? Man is constantly tempted by this world but the truth is it offers nothing in return. We should follow these people who earned Allah’s reward because their hearts were set upon Him alone.

Sacrifice leads to God

All acts of charity and financial sacrifice are rewarded by Allah and so we must develop a habit to give. The Holy Prophet^(sa) taught us that:

‘If one gives in charity what equals one date-fruit from the honestly-earned money and Allah accepts only the honestly earned money – Allah takes it in His right (hand) and then enlarges its reward for that person (who has given it), as

anyone of you brings up his baby horse, so much so that it becomes as big as a mountain' (Bukhari)

This was the teaching for his people at the time in view of the devotion of the Arabs to worldly riches, but the world today still stands in need of this teaching. Now, as before, the world is in a mad race to amass wealth. People have forgotten that peace and prosperity can be attained by following Allah's guidance and have instead sought to devise their own means for physical progress with the false notion that they know best.

Just look at how people and nations in the east and west are in hot pursuit of the world's resources and consider if such efforts have given us any peace. Have they given us all a sense of equality, have they helped create a better world? The answer is a resounding no. Wars are being fought for the sake of wealth whilst hundreds of millions starve. Man is being tempted time and time again by the riches of this world and is led to believe that this is the only thing worth striving for, that it is the only thing worth sacrificing for. Yet history bears out the truth of the promises made by man and the

promises made by God. Those who followed God – created noble societies of peace and those who fell victim to their own egotistic and material desires created havoc for us all. Such materialistic societies are not the monopoly of any culture or religion but reflect the inner truth of mankind today.

Such a turn of events is also noted and prophesied in the Qur'an which dispels any doubt about the fruitlessness of the pursuits of this life at the expense of all else. Allah says:

Mutual rivalry in seeking worldly increase diverts you from God till you reach the graves. Nay! you will soon come to know. Nay again! you will soon come to know. Nay! were you to know certain knowledge. You will surely see Hell in this very life. Aye, you will surely see it with the eye of certainty. Then on that day you shall be called to account about the worldly favours.

(Ch.102: Vs.2-9)

We as members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at are blessed with guidance and opportunity to earn Allah's reward. We have been

blessed to earn our share of God's favours because he has promised that:

...Allah has exalted in rank those who strive with their wealth and their persons above those who sit still...

(Ch.4: V.96)

In other words it is those people who actively strive in the cause of Allah who will be abundantly blessed.

Sometimes the question is raised that where is the blessing of my sacrifice. If I have already given why has not God rewarded me? The fact is that such questions actually challenge the authority of Allah. Allah has made His promise and He will not break it – has He ever broken His promise in the past? Most certainly not – so it is not Allah but man who is weak and lacks certainty. As noted at the outset of this article the quality of the righteous is that they have certain faith – so we must ensure that our faith remains strong and we remain steadfast.

Sacrifice: an ongoing blessing

In every period of the Jama'at's history new opportunities for

financial sacrifice have arisen. We are witness to the benefits of those who have sacrificed before us – many who had no prospect of seeing the fruits of such acts in this world. Look for example at the sacrifice of the ladies of Qadian that led to the construction of the Fazl mosque in London – such a beautiful sacrifice for a place that has since been at the forefront of serving Allah. A sacrifice the blessings of which we are reaping now – who could have known that the seat of Khilafat was to be based in the same mosque? And we who have offered little in comparison are the recipients of these divine blessings – just ask any Ahmadi from any country how they would feel if Khilafat resided in their country and you would have a sense of the gratitude that we owe the Almighty.

Similarly the construction of any mosque is full of blessings for the Jama'at and for society and if we contribute to building a house of God here we are assured that God will build a house for us in the afterlife.

We have seen with our own eyes the bounties of God in rewarding our sacrifices – the blessings of Tahrik Jadid, the blessings of MTA, the

blessings of Humanity First, the blessings of Baitul Futuh, are but a few examples of how financial sacrifice rewards us as individuals, us as a Community and also how the blessings extend beyond our Jama'at to wider society.

The list is endless but the message and themes are exactly the same. With this in our minds we should act now and continue to give because this opportunity to earn God's pleasure will not last forever.

In one Hadith we are told that:

'I heard the Prophet saying, "O people! Give in charity as a time will come upon you when a person will wander about with his object of charity and will not find anybody to accept it, and one (who will be requested to take it) will say, "If you had brought it yesterday, I would have taken it, but today I am not in need of it."'"

(Bukhari Narrated Harith bin Wahhab)

By Allah's grace our beloved Huzur has reignited the spirit of sacrifice and drawn our attention to the blessed scheme that was initiated by the Promised Messiah^(as) himself. It

was initiated with the prayer for those who partook in this scheme would be those, 'who are pure of heart and who have in reality given precedence to Faith over the world and who have renounced the love of the world and submitted themselves to God and who have brought about in themselves a holy change and who have, like the disciples of the Holy Prophet set the example of Faithfulness and Truthfulness.' (*The Will* p.23)

What a prayer! What an opportunity to benefit from the prayer of the Promised Messiah^(as) – a prayer that he recited not just once, not twice but three times! How many opportunities do we have to benefit from such blessings where a prophet has invited us to be recipients of God's blessings?!

What more reason could we have to offer financial sacrifice? Let us act now so that we and generations after us can be blessed for this deed. For if we even now hastened towards the earth rather than towards the heavens we would be lost and destitute to the ignobility of this world, about whom the Qur'an says:

Say, 'Shall We tell you of those

who are the worst losers with regard to their deeds? Those whose labour is all lost in search after things pertaining to the life of this world, and they think that they are doing good works.' Those are they who disbelieve in the Signs of their Lord and in the meeting with Him. So their works are vain, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall give them no weight. That is their reward – Hell; because they disbelieved, and made a jest of my Signs and My Messengers.

(Ch.18: Vs.104-107)

running before them and on their right hands, and it will be said to them, 'Glad tidings for you this day! Gardens through which streams flow, wherein you will abide. That is the supreme triumph.'

(Ch.57: Vs.12-13)

May Allah enable us all to be worthy of such favours and to be at the forefront of offering every kind of financial sacrifice and to answer every call of our beloved Khalifa because that is the only path to righteousness and the only true path to God. Amin.

We must pray and strive to always be counted among those who always offered sacrifices in adversity and in prosperity because we held the love of Allah and the honour of Islam close to our hearts. How fortunate would we be if we could as a result of this be counted among those whose reward is promised by Allah, Who says:

Who is he who will lend Allah a goodly loan? So He will increase it manifold for him, and he will have a generous reward. And think of the day when thou wilt see the believing men and the believing women, their light

The Preaching of Islam

TWO CONFLICTING VIEWS

Part Two of the book Murder in the Name of Allah by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru), Khalifatul Masih IV. Reproduced in view of relevance of the current debates on Maulana Maududi's philosophy that force can be employed for the purpose of religion.

ONE

When every method of persuasion (over 13 years of preaching) had failed, the Prophet^(sa), took to the sword ... that sword removed evil and mischief, the impurities of the heart and the filth of the soul. The sword did something more. It removed their blindness – they could see the light of truth – and it also cured them of their arrogance; arrogance which prevents people from accepting the truthstiff necks and proud heads bowed with humility.

Maulana Abul Ala Maududi

Muhammad preached Islam with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other.

Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith

TWO

The critics are blind. They cannot see that the only sword Muhammad wielded was the sword of mercy, compassion, friendship and forgiveness – the sword that conquers enemies and purifies hearts. His sword was sharper than the sword of steel.

Gyanandra Dev Sharma Shastri

These are two conflicting views about the way in which the message of Islam was conveyed to the world. Critics, especially orientalists, claim that the wars the Prophet of Islam^(sa) fought were offensive wars and that people

were converted by force. According to objective historians however, this view is not upheld by the facts. The Prophet^(sa) did not use force to preach and all the battles he fought were defensive. The expansion of Islam was due to

the Prophet's^(sa) spiritual and moral power.

Nevertheless, the view that Islam was spread by force is, unfortunately, held by some Muslim leaders. They, like the orientalist, divide the life of the Prophet^(sa) into Makkan and Medinite periods. They maintain that at Makkah he was weak and powerless, hence that compromising and submissive attitude of peaceful co-existence. Then, having gained some power at Madinah he resorted to the sword, according to this school of thought.

Had he not done so there would have been no spiritual revolution in Arabia and Islam would not have spread. The late Maulana Abul Ala Maududi¹ was a leading proponent of this view. In his book, *Al-Jihad Fil Islam*, the Maulana says:

The Messenger of Allah^(sa) invited the Arabs to accept him for 13 years. He used every possible means of persuasion, gave them incontrovertible arguments and proofs, showed

them miracles and put before them his life as an example of piety and morality. In short, he used every possible means of communication, but his people refused to accept Islam.

It grieves my heart to quote the rest of this passage but it needs to be set out.

When every method of persuasion had failed, the Prophet^(sa) took to the sword.

That sword removed evil mischief, the impurities of evil and the filth of the soul. The sword did something more – it removed their blindness so that they could see the light of truth, and also cured them of their arrogance; arrogance which prevents people from accepting the truth, stiff necks and proud heads bowed with humility.

As in Arabia and other countries, Islam's expansion was so fast that within a century a quarter of the world accepted it. This conversion took place because the sword

of Islam tore away the veils which had covered men's hearts.²

The above statement is doubly unfortunate because it was made by a Muslim scholar who claimed to be *mizaj-shanasi-Rasul*, the one who found himself in complete harmony with the mind and heart of the Prophet^(sa), so much so that he acquires a measure of authority in explaining the true meanings of the words and deeds of the Prophet^(sa) – a claim which, if accepted, would give the claimant as much or more right to represent than the Holy Prophet^(sa) enjoyed vis-a-vis his understanding of the Word of God. This means that the Maulana's understanding is tragic beyond words – it has been made by a Muslim leader and repeats a baseless assertion of Islam's enemies. It is the biased orientalist who accused the Prophet^(sa) of converting people by force. The Maulana's phraseology appears to glorify Islam, but in reality it endorses the accusation of the European critics of Islam. R. Dozy said. 'Muhammad's generals preached Islam with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the

other.' Smith asserted that it was not the generals but the Prophet^(sa) himself who preached with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other'. George Sale wrote: 'When the followers of the Prophet increased in number he claimed that God had allowed him to attack the unbelievers so that idolatry be destroyed and true religion be established.'

The Revd. Dr C. G. Pfander, who was actively engaged in missionary work among Indian Muslims during the latter part of the nineteenth century, provoked great unrest by writing controversial tracts to expose, as he put it 'The false Prophet of Islam'. In one such tract he said:

1. For 13 years Muhammad preached his new religion in conciliatory terms and with great patience.
2. Now (in Madinah) he became *Al-Nabiyyussaif*, 'The sword-wielding Prophet', and since then Islam's strongest argument has been the sword.
3. If we study the behaviour of

Muhammad's^(sa) followers we notice that they thought it was not necessary for them to follow a religious and moral code. God demanded from them only one thing: that they should fight for God with swords, arrows, daggers and sabres to continue to kill.³

And after this introduction the Revd. Dr Pfander concluded 'You have to choose between Jesus, Word of God, and Hadhrat Muhammad, son of Abdullah; between one who devoted his life to acts of piety and one who dedicated his life to the sword.'⁴

Aloy Spranger, Henry Copey and many other critics of Islam followed the same line of attack on both Islam and the Prophet^(sa). Washington Irving went a step further; printed on the title page of one of his books is an imaginary painting of the Prophet^(sa) with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other.⁵

If one compares all that has been quoted above with the opening quotation of Maulana Maududi's *Al-jihad fil Islam*, one finds the

Prophet's^(sa) critics in agreement. Both the Maulana and the orientalist maintained that Islam had a violent nature. Yet, despite this belief, the Maulana believed in Islam while they rejected it. Apart from the wording, there is no difference between paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the quotation from Maulana Maududi above and the quotation from Dr Pfander above. But one shows the respect of a Muslim; the other, the sarcasm of a bitter critic.

The snide remarks of the orientalist about the Prophet of Islam^(sa) are as unsurprising as they are hurtful. They are sometimes made out of ignorance, but mostly out of malice. The hostility towards Islam colours the objectivity of even the most balanced historian. But most hurtful of all are the writings of Muslims who claim devoutly to follow the Prophet^(sa) yet present him, either through ignorance or arrogance, as a barbarian who wielded the sword to convert and conquer.

Maulana Maududi was not convinced of the inherent beauty of Islam or that it could conquer

hearts by its spiritual force alone, either in the past or present. He said:

Human relations and associations are so integrated that no state can have complete freedom of action within its own principles, unless those same principles are in force in a neighbouring country. Therefore, Muslim groups will not be content with the establishment of an Islamic state in one area alone. Depending on their resources, they should try to expand in all directions. On one hand, they will spread their ideology and on the other they will invite people of all nations to accept their creed, for salvation lies only in it. *If their Islamic state has power and resources it will fight and destroy non-Islamic governments and establish Islamic states in their place.*⁶

Maulana Maududi supports Sir William Muir's twisted views of the Prophet^(sa) and of Islam. In his biography of the Prophet^(sa), which he wrote to expose the false Prophet of Islam⁷ at the request of

Dr Pfander, Sir William Muir said: 'The sword of Mahomet, and the Coran are the most fatal enemies of civilisation, liberty and truth which the world has yet known.'⁸

The great Hindu leader, Gandhiji in his earlier days, must have been influenced by a distorted picture of Islam such as this when he said: 'Islam was born in an atmosphere of violence. At that time its determining force was the sword and even today it is the sword.' But Gandhiji was an observer of great insight and subsequently he corrected himself and wrote in *Young India*: 'The more I study the more I discover that the strength of Islam does not lie in the sword.'

Other Hindus – even Arya Samajists, who made an objective study of Islam – followed Gandhiji in his 'discovery'. Pandit Gyanandra Dev Sharma Shastri said:

Biased critics of Islam and especially those who want to provoke Hindu Muslim riots in the country say that Hadhrat Muhammad after acquiring power in Madinah could not

maintain his facade of mercy and kindness. There he used force and violence and became a murderous prophet to achieve his life-long aim of power, status and wealth. He fell short of his own ideal of patience, moderation and endurance. But this is the view of those observers who are prejudicial and partisan, who are narrow-minded and whose eyes are covered by a veil of ignorance. They see fire instead of light, ugliness instead of beauty and evil instead of good. They distort and present every good quality as a great vice. It reflects their own depravity.... The critics are blind. They cannot see that the only sword Muhammad wielded was the sword of mercy, compassion, friendship and forgiveness - the sword that conquers enemies and purifies their hearts. His sword was sharper than the sword of steel.⁹

No comment! One only wishes that Maulana Maududi, a follower of the Prophet Muhammad^(sa), had been as fair to the Prophet^(sa) as a follower of Krishna^(as) had been.

Non-Muslims who have studied the history of Islam have had to admit that the Prophet^(sa) was not only magnanimous and kind, but also a paragon of human virtues. Another Hindu, the editor of the *Sat Updaish*, wrote:

Some people say that Islam was preached by the sword, but we cannot agree with this view. What is forced on people is soon rejected. Had Islam been imposed on people through oppression, there would have been no Islam today. Why? Because the Prophet of Islam had spiritual power, he loved humanity and he was guided by the ideal of ultimate good.¹⁰

The anti-Muslim stance of the Arya Samaj movement is well known. Its founder, Swami Dayanand, was highly critical of Islam and its Prophet^(sa) and yet the following statement was made by a Hindu at a meeting sponsored by the Arya Samaj in Lahore. The editor of the *Vedic Magazine* and a former professor of Gurukul, Kangri Ram Dev, said:

Sitting in Medina, Muhammad

Sahib (peace be to him) held the Arabs spellbound, he filled them with spiritual strength; strength that makes devtas [gods] out of men ... it is incorrect to say that Islam spread with the force of the sword. It is a fact that the sword was never wielded to propagate Islam. If religion can be spread by force then let anyone try it today.¹¹

The last sentence of the above passage is a challenge no one would ever accept – not even Maulana Maududi. No sword can change a heart and turn belief into disbelief. There was a long chain of prophets before the Prophet of Islam^(sa) and it is an historical truth that every prophet was opposed by force. Every time a prophet taught the true religion he was opposed by the sword and yet true religion spread and the sword failed to cut it back. If all past prophets and their followers could stand against the sword's might, how is it possible that Muhammad^(sa) could have adopted a different approach and taken to the sword – the instrument of oppression, not truth? There is no greater injustice

than to accuse him of using force to change people's beliefs.

Another non-Muslim scholar, Dr D. W. Leitz, in rebutting this false charge, based his argument on the Qur'an itself. He said:

All these arguments, advanced to prove that the purpose of *jihad* was to spread Islam by force, are contradicted by the Qur'an. The Qur'an says that the purpose of *jihad* is to protect mosques, churches, synagogues and cloisters.¹²

After such a clear defence of the Prophet^(sa), let so-called Muslims who accuse him of wielding the sword answer this Qur'anic question. 'Will they not then ponder over the Qur'an, or is it that upon their hearts are locks of their own making? (Ch.47: V.25) Maulana Maududi, the author of the voluminous commentary on the Qur'an, *Tafhim-ul-Qur'an*, must have read this verse many times. Did it not occur to him that interpreting the Qur'an for political purposes might lead the commentator astray? The Maulana then says:

This was the policy which was adopted by the Prophet^(sa) and his rightly guided caliphs. Arabia, where the Muslim Party was first formed, was the first to be subdued. After this, the Prophet^(sa) sent invitations to all neighbouring countries, but did not wait to see whether these invitations were accepted. As soon as he acquired power, he started the conflict with the Roman Empire. Abu Bakr became the leader of the Party after the Prophet^(sa) and attacked both the Roman and Persian Empires and Umar finally won the war.¹³

This is virtually a declaration of war against all non-Muslim neighbouring states they are safe only as long as the Muslim state is weak. Had the above passage been written by a Marxist historian from the Communist Party, one would not have given it a second glance. But it is the considered opinion of a Muslim leader of Maulana Maududi's stature. As such, it is certainly far more insulting to the Prophet^(sa) than all that Muir, Pfander, Smith and other critics of Islam have written.

The above passage was translated from the Maulana's original Urdu. The words: 'Muslim Party' were used deliberately by Maududi. He was degrading the Muslim umma to the status of a political party. He was well aware of the difference between the two words, for in another book he said. 'The other word the Qur'an has used for 'party' is umma.'¹⁴ Having dubbed Muslims a political party, the Maulana either subconsciously or, more likely, deliberately, equates the Prophet^(sa) with a political party leader, assigning to him the morals of a politician. How else can one explain the following passage written by the Maulana?

After this the Prophet^(sa) sent invitations to all the neighbouring countries, but he did not wait to see whether these invitations were accepted or not. As soon as he acquired power he started the conflict with the Roman Empire.

It is amazing that a Muslim scholar could even by implication suggest that the Prophet was guilty of a Hitler-style invasion – *Naaudhu billah*.¹⁵ The Prophet^(sa)

was the Prince of Peace, not an invader. Maulana Maududi loved political power and, unfortunately, this colours his interpretation of Islamic history. But Islam does not need politics to prop it up. In Bengal, now Bangladesh, Muslims were an infinitesimal minority in the middle of the eighteenth century when the British took over the administration from the Mughals. By the time Bengal became independent in 1947 it had a Muslim majority. Muslims had no political control of the area nor was there any migration of Muslims from northern India during British rule. This increase in Bengal's Muslim population was owing to peaceful conversion by travelling sufis, the roving Muslim missionaries and the Imams of the village mosques.

Thomas Arnold's observation on the subject is significant. He said: 'Islam has gained its greatest and most lasting missionary triumphs in times and places in which its political power has been weakest¹⁶. Maulana Maududi probably never read the history of Islam in Bengal, Malaysia or

Indonesia. He was so enthralled by the Turko-Afghan and Mughal conquests that he never had time to note that the largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia, never had a Muslim conqueror - that there was no fighting nor any violence there. That was the case also in Malaysia.

The Prophet^(sa) was obviously innocent. He took up the sword only in self-defence and only when oppression became unbearable. Here is what an objective Sikh has to say on the subject:

In the beginning the Prophet's enemies made life difficult for him and his followers. So the Prophet asked his followers to leave their homes and migrate to Madinah. He preferred migration to fighting his own people, but when oppression went beyond the pale of tolerance he took up his sword in self-defence. Those who believe religion can be spread by force are fools who neither know the ways of religion nor the ways of the world. They are proud of this belief because

they are a long, long way away from the Truth.¹⁷

Who knows better: a Sikh journalist or the *mizaj shanasi nabuwwat*?¹⁸

References

- 1 Maulana Abul Ala Maududi the amir (head) of Jamaati Islami until his death, spent his early life in the former princely Indian state of Hyderabad. The young Maududi left school before completing his secondary education because of his father's death. For some time he worked as editor of the *Al-Jamiyat* of Delhi, the newspaper of the Jamiyat Ulamai Hind. In 1927 he resigned his editorship and, having worked so long with the Deoband *ulema*, he decided to devote himself to the study of theology. He was self-taught in theology, Arabic and English. Despite his 'great' learning, immense knowledge and forceful style of Urdu, which has all the ingredients of scholarship, his critics - especially *ulema* of the Deoband and Lucknow schools - say that his lack of training in theological discipline was his great weakness. In 1941 the Maulana founded the Jamaati Islami and assumed its leadership. He criticised the Jamayat Ulamai Hind for its composite nationalist theory which exposed Muslim India to the grave dangers of religio-cultural absorption into Hinduism, and at the same time he assailed Qaid-i-Azam's Muslim nationalism as no less dangerous than Congress nationalism. To him, it made no difference whether the irreligious Muslims of India survived in the form of Pakistan or not (*Musalman aur Maujudah Siyasi Kashmakash*, Pathankot, 1946, 6-7).
- 2 Al-Jihad fil Islam, 137-8.
- 3 Revd. Dr C. G. Pfander, *Mizanul Haq*, 648,499.
- 4 Revd. Dr C. G. Pfander, *Tatimma Mizanul Haq*.
- 5 Washington Irving, *Mahomet and His Successors*, 2 vols. (New York IL. G.P. Putman's Sons, 1868).
- 6 *Haqiqat-i-Jihad* (Lahore: Taj Company Ltd, 1964), 64; emphasis added.

- 7 For details of Dr Pfander's campaign against Islam, see '*The Mohommedan controversy*', *The Calcutta Review* (Calcutta, July-December 1845), vol. IV, 420.
- 8 Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet* (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1859), vol. L 111.
- 9 Translated from an Urdu speech by Pandit Shastri at a Gorakhpur (India) meeting, 1928, to commemorate the Prophet's^(sa) birth, see *Dunya ka Hadi Ghairon ki Nazar Main*, 57,6 1.
- 10 Sat Updaish, Lahore, 7 July 1915; see *Barguzida Rasul Ghairon Main Maqbul* 12,13.
- 11 Prof. Ram Dev, *The Prakash*, see *Barguzida Rasul Ghairon Main Maqbid*, 24.
- 12 Dr D.W. Leitz, *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, October 1886. Dr Leitz has referred to verses 40 and 41 of chapter 22 of the Qur'an, Al-Hajj. The verses say: 'Permission to fight is granted to those against whom war has been made because they have been wronged. Allah indeed has the power to help them. They are those who have been driven out of their homes only because they affirmed that our Lord is Allah. If Allah did not repel the aggression of some by the means of others, then surely cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques – wherein His name is honoured – would be destroyed?'
- 13 *Haqiqat-i-Jihad* op.cit, 65.
- 14 *Masala-i-Qaumiyat* (Pathanot: Maktaba Jamaati Islami, 1947), 105.
- 15 We seek the protection of Allah from this blasphemous use of language, which only Maulana Maududi could use.
- 16 W. Thomas Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: a History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*, 2nd ed. (London: Constable and Co. Ltd, 1913), 279- 80.
- 17 *Nawan Hindustan*, Delhi, 17 November 1947.
- 18 Literally, 'The knower of the psyche of the Prophet', or The observer of the Prophet's mind'.

Index of articles Published in 2005

January 2005

Notes and Comments

Loyalty to One's Nation – An Article of the Muslim Faith – Can Muslims, affected by the plight of their brethren in other parts of the world, be justified in combating soldiers from their own country, serving their own Government?

Waqar Ahmad Ahmed – UK

Allah the Exalted – Part 6

Orderliness in the universe compels us to admit that the Creator and Sustainer is Unique and Peerless, without associate or partner in godhead.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

A Message of Hope – Part 1

Text of an address delivered in Zurich, outlining the warnings of severe calamity which awaits man if he continues inebriated in his fancied power and the glad tidings that there is yet time to avert this provided man reforms himself.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Relationship between Muslims & Christians in Africa

The two religious communities must appreciate what values they have achieved in the area of inter-religious harmony, mutual respect and co-operation and hold fast unto it.

Maulvi Abdul Wahab Adam – Amir, Ghana

Christian-Muslim Dialogue and Criticism

Inter-faith dialogue must be based on recognising and respecting differences and not recycling the same attacks on the founders of religions.

Mansoor Ahmad Shah – UK

Search for Enlightened Moderation in Pakistan

An assessment of the factors preventing enlightened moderation in Pakistan and a rational plea to the Pakistani intelligentsia. Written in response to an article by Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf.

Dr Atif Mian – USA

Letters to the Editor

Response to Jonathan Miller's claims that 'Belief in God is an intellectual nonsense' that appeared in a British newspaper article.

Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry – UK

February 2005

God's Beauty and Beneficence – Part 7

God's attributes confer beneficence for mankind and attract man towards his Creator; the primary four attributes of God mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

A Message of Hope – (Part 2)

God sent a warner in this age and when the world ignored him, God made the truth of his claim manifest through earthquakes and reminders of the time of Noah that are no freak accidents of nature.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Concluding Address at the 2003 Jalsa Salana Qadian

The essential requirements for a peaceful society are love, affection and respect for human dignity. The innate beautiful teachings of Islam helped spread its message.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Jesus as 'Son of God'

The connotation of this title has been proved by many scholars to be not meaning the literal son of God but of Jesus's^(as) closeness to God.

Anwer Mahmood Khan – USA

The Need for Religious Harmony

Inter-religious peace and harmony are important objectives. International peace can only be established by restoring justice.

Meer Mobasher Ali – Bangladesh

Honey the Healer

Honey has many benefits and its healing qualities remain unmatched.

Dr. Manzurul A Sikder – USA

March 2005

Notes and Comments – Waves of Compassion.

The Tsunami disaster – Unprecedented relief aid illustrates the global generosity.

Fazal Ahmad – UK

The Will and Power of God – Part 8

A detailed analysis of the Attributes of God manifested through His Will and His Power.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Care of the Aged

The dilemma that the elderly face when abandoned by their families, and how Islam ensures that the elderly are afforded dignity.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Inquisition – Intellectual Terrorism

An examination of the Inquisition in Europe in the Middle Ages, the lasting effect of suppressing freedom of thought and the cruelty it inflicted.

Zakaria Virk – Canada

Promoting Peace – A Sikh Viewpoint;

A view on peace and harmony in society from a Sikh leader.

Hon. Judge Mr Mota Singh, QC – UK

Mythology or Religion?

When do religions get manipulated by humans to become more like mythology, and can we uncover true religion by examining mythology?

Fazal Ahmad – UK

Diseases of the Rich and Diseases of the Poor

An account of how too much science has created new diseases for the rich world, and too little has left the poor struggling to eat and fend off basic diseases.

Professor Abdus Salam

The Rationale Behind the Prohibition of Eating Pig Flesh

Why do Muslims and Jews not eat pork? An analysis of both the physical and spiritual reasons for abstaining from pork consumption.

Dr. Muzaffar Ahmad Malik – Guildford, UK

April 2005

Notes & Comments – Religious Artefacts Forced on Public?

Does the display of religious artefacts in government buildings contravene the US constitution?

Sarah Waseem – UK

Creation and the Words of God – Part 9

God is the source of all creation and everything is drawn towards God.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Promoting Peace

The only way to establish peace in the world is through the just treatment of one's fellow human beings.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Was Jesus^(as) the Son of David^(as)?

Qur'anic and Biblical evidence regarding the genealogy of Jesus^(as) proves that if he is to be traced from Joseph, his father, then the lineage to David^(as) is unclear. On the other hand, the lineage to Mary, traces him to Imran.

Iqbal Ahmad Najam

The Tomb of Jesus^(as) at Srinagar

A scholarly review of the facts concerning the crucifixion. Jesus^(as) could not have died on the cross and risen to heaven.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Care of the Seriously Ill and Dying

Islamic perspectives and testimonies on spiritual healing. God gave life and it is to Him Whom people should return at times of ill health.

Maulvi Abdul Wahab bin Adam – Ghana

Psychic Phenomena

The late author explains in detail psychic phenomena (the operation of natural laws) and their clear distinction from spiritual phenomena (Divine manifestation).

Bashir Ahmad Orchard

May 2005

Notes & Comments – A Man of Peace

A brief reflection on the life and impact of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

Fareed Ahmad – UK

Letter of Condolence: Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, to the Vatican

Copy of letter sent by the Head of the Ahmadiyya worldwide Muslim community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad to the Vatican following the passing away of Pope John Paul II.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Creation and Differences in Rank – Part 10

How the mercy of Allah reflects His superiority and underlines His status as Master of all.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Economic Injustice in the International Economic System

An analysis of the factors behind developing world debt and the need for a partnership in any solution to this injustice.

Maidah Ahmad – Canada

The Philosophy of Zakat – Part 1

Exploring the role and function of Zakat as a means of purifying one's wealth, helping to relieve the suffering of the poor and a basis for economic and spiritual advancement.

The Late Maulana Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad

Coexistence of Religion and Secularism

A look at how Islam responds to the challenge of secularism as a form of governance in the modern world.

Khalid Saifullah Khan – Australia

June 2005

Notes & Comments – Tobacco

Despite the Global Health Treaty on the effects of tobacco use in the West being implemented in 2005, 'developing countries' are now becoming successful targets of tobacco manufacturers who exploit their economic and social vulnerability.

Maidah Ahmad – Canada

Knowledge of God – Part 11

An insight into how God's knowledge is Perfect. The capacity for receiving divine revelation to seek an understanding of the Divine is and will always be open to man.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Raising the Standard of Worship

Being an Ahmadi Muslim is not enough; one should sincerely follow the teachings of Islam especially in worship.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Foundation stone Ceremony of the London

Mosque

Historical speech by the second Khalifa of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim community at the Foundation Stone Ceremony of the London's first mosque.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^(ra)

Glimpses into the Qur'anic Concept of the Environment - Part 1

How every aspect of the environment, including the animal and plant kingdom, affects not only our physical well-being but also our moral and spiritual condition – as revealed by the Holy Qur'an.

Maha Dabbous – UK

The Philosophy of Zakat – Part II

Zakat is taken from the well-to-do and given to the poor. It teaches sympathy of the highest order.

The Late Maulana Sheikh Ahmad

July 2005

Need for Purification – Part 12

Self-purification is required in order to find God. In turn, God would display sincere and unparalleled love for His true servant.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Purpose of Attending Annual Conventions

The overriding objective of attending Annual Conventions should be to improve religious knowledge and foster a relationship with Allah.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Muhammad^(sa) in the Bible

A concise review of Biblical prophecies regarding the advent of a great prophet which could only be attributed to the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa)

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir

Allah – Friend of the Believers

One who Allah Himself singles out as His friend can expect blessings and bounties. How to become a friend of Allah.

Hadayatullah Hubsch – Frankfurt, Germany

Glimpses into the Qur'anic Concept of the Environment - Part 2

Concluding part on how the surrounding conditions and circumstances affect human beings physically, morally and spiritually and the guidance provided by the Holy Qur'an on the matter.

Maha Dabbous – UK

Al-Azhar Receives an Ahmadiyya Delegation

An Ahmadi delegation holds a landmark audience with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Egypt.

Dr. Ibrahim Assad Odeh – Palestine

August 2005

Press Release: A statement by the Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community following the terrorist attack in London on 7th July 2005.

Notes & Comments – Revenge or Rebuild?

The aftermath of the terrible bombings in London; the

ten year old tragedy in Bosnia.

Tanveer Khokhar – UK

The True Nature of the 'Arsh Throne – Part 13

An address to the Lajna Imaillah (ladies organisation) in Tanzania that describes the crucial role that a mother plays in the early development of a child.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

The Reformer of Islam

A speech about the need for a reformer in Islam, and the author's personal experiences in having met the Promised Messiah^(as).

Muhammad Zafrulla Khan

Medical Aspects of the Crucifixion of Jesus^(as)

A thorough investigation into the medical aspects of Jesus^(as) crucifixion ordeal and his state after the trial.

Dr. H.U. Rahman

Intellect and Conscience of the Muslim World

The life and work of Professor Abdus Salam (Nobel laureate), the greatest Islamic scientist of the last century.

Dr. Yulduz N. Khaliulin – Moscow

September 2005

Refutation of the Christians' Faith in the Unity of God – Part 15

On the Unity of God and the need to abstain from associating partners with God: The domain of the Creator and the created are separate. Associating partners with God includes not only worship of any created thing but extends to such devotion to material means that the Provider of the means is forgotten.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Spiritual Progress to Achieve Closeness to Allah

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V draws attention to the importance of both progressing spiritually and doing good works: we should always be inclined towards improving our nearness to Allah.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

The Holy Prophet's^(sa) Kind Treatment of His Wives

The kind and equal treatment of the Holy Prophet^(sa) of his wives sets an excellent example for all married couples.

Bilal Atkinson – UK

Peace and Governance

The importance of recognising one's duties to one's fellow human beings provides a framework for leadership.

Maulvi A. Wahab Adam – Ghana

Report on the 39th Jalsa Salana UK

Some 25,000 people attended the Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK. A brief report of the proceedings of this Convention.

Laiq Ahmad Tahir – UK

October 2005

Notes & Comments: Belief in God – Religious and Scientific Study

Does the concept of intelligent design help bridge the gap between religion and science?

Sarah Waseem – UK

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

The Holy Prophet^(sa) is the most revered of prophets. When we follow him we get closer to Allah.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

The Rights We Owe to our Fellow Human Beings and the Administrative and Disciplinary Structure

Final address delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V on his visit to Uganda – Islam enjoins that man observe his rights to God and his rights to his fellow human beings.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

A Philosophical Concept of the Doctrine of Hell

Islam is unique among the major faiths in its explanation of hell as a place of remediation for all rather than eternal damnation.

The Review of Religions, 1908.

Caution to the Soviet Union

This meeting with guests from the former Soviet Union presents a profound insight into the consequences of the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

November 2005

Notes & Comments: With Moderates Like These

The so-called custodians of orthodox Islam in the UK leave much to be desired.

Waqar Ahmad Ahmedi – UK

Advent of the Holy Prophet^(sa) is Like the Coming of God

An explanation of why previous prophets prophesied the advent of the Holy Prophet^(sa) metaphorically as the coming of God. Also, a discourse on the Holy Prophet's^(sa) station of intercession.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Religions Drips With Blood

The history of religion is one of destruction and bloodshed but does true religion teach violence or has religion always been exploited by corrupt religious leaders with ulterior motives?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Blessings of Righteous Company

If the company we keep influences our behaviour, there are blessings to be gained from associating with righteous company.

Kalim Anwer – UK

A Glimpse into some of the Qualities of Khilafat-e-Rashida

A look at some of the qualities of the Successors to the Holy Prophet^(sa) who could not be corrupted despite the absolute religion and temporal powers they enjoyed.

Waleed Ahmad – Gillingham, UK

I Answer the Prayer of the Supplicant when he Prays to Me

A convert recounts his experience of the efficacy of prayers.

Harris Maguire – UK

December 2005

Notes & Comments: A Licence to Kill?

Reviewing the impact of alcohol on the economy and why moves to tackle associated problems may exacerbate the situation.

Fareed Ahmad – London, UK

Nearness to God

How adopting the qualities of the attributes of God result in a closer bond between man and God.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V's address at the Opening of Nasir Mosque in Hartlepool in November 2005.

A timely reminder that a mosque is a place for all

worshippers of God and a source of social peace.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

The Importance of Financial Sacrifice

Why giving up one's wealth puts man on a path to success and a path to God.

Rashid Ahmad Cheedoo – Cornwall, UK

The Preaching Of Islam: Two Conflicting Views

An analysis of and response to the accusation that Islam was spread by the sword.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Subscription

The Review of Religions

If you would like to order a copy of any issue published in 2004, please send £1.50 (or equivalent) providing us with your full name and address. Delivery will be on a first come, first served basis, and in the absence of a copy being available your money will be returned

-
- Are you a subscriber to The Review of Religions?
 - Have you renewed your subscription for the next year?

Why not sponsor a reader to The Review of Religions by subscribing for him/her and we will send the first edition on your behalf with your compliments

We hope you have enjoyed reading this edition of the magazine. The Review of Religions will continue to provide discussion on a wide range of subjects and welcomes any comments or suggestions from its readers.

To ensure that you regularly receive this monthly publication, please fill in your details below and we will put you on our mailing list.

The cost of one year's subscription is £15 Sterling or US \$30 for overseas readers (Please do not send cash). Payments by US residents should be by check payable to "AMI" (US dollars 30) and sent direct to 'The Review of Religions', Baitul Zafar, 86-71 PALO ALTO ST, HOLLISWOOD, NY 11423-1203 (USA). All other subscription payments should be made payable to the London Mosque and sent to the address below:

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



Please tick in box if
you wish to receive
The Review of Religions
2004 CD

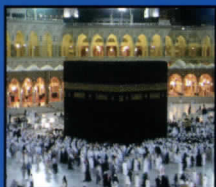
Please put me on the mailing list for the Review of Religions for 1 year. I enclose subscription payment of £15.00 or US \$30.00 (please see instructions above for US residents). OR if you wish to receive a CD of all the articles published in 2004, please tick the white box above and enclose payment of £5.00, please also add an appropriate sum for postage.

Name: _____

Address: _____

The Review of Religions 2004

January 2004



History of the Ka'aba

February 2004



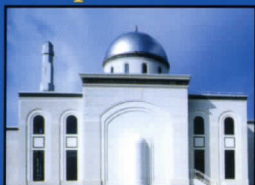
The need for Righteousness

March 2004



Service to Humanity –
A Religious Duty in Islam

April 2004



Divine Guidance –
Part 1

May 2004



Islam is a Peaceful
Religion

June 2004



Peace Symposium

July 2004



Economic Justice

August 2004



Divine Guidance - III

September 2004



The Essence of Islam – Prt II

October 2004



Distinctive Features
of Islam

November 2004



Universality of Islam

December 2004



Inaugural Address at the
Opening of Barakat
Mosque

Religious buildings, monuments and sites of the world

THE MUHAMMAD ALI MOSQUE – EGYPT

Designed by the Greek architect, Yussuf Bushnaq, the Muhammad Ali Mosque in the Citadel was completed in 1857 in the Ottoman style by Muhammad Ali Pasha, ruler of Egypt. Its views across Cairo has made this one of the most frequented mosques by tourists.

