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Sarah Waseem, London – UK

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Chief Editor and Manager: Mansoor Ahmed Shah

Management Board:

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Special contributors:

Amatul-Hadi Ahmad
Farina Qureshi

Proofreaders:

Abdul Ghany Jahangeer
Khan and Shaukia Mir

Design and layout:

Tanveer Khokhar

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The Review of Religions
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EDITORIAL

Sarah Waseem– UK

Prophets of God demonstrate through their messages and personal example how God wants us to live our lives. The most excellent of these models was the Holy Prophet^(saw) of Islam. His qualities of truthfulness and beneficence to his fellow men were known and appreciated by those around him even before his claim to prophethood.

In his Jalsa address in Fiji this year, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V said: ‘He [the Holy Prophet^(saw)] established high examples in honouring the rights and obligations that man owes to Allah and the rights that are due to other human beings.’ The standard of his worship are an example for those who wish to attain nearness to Allah and want that their end should be good.’

When we ignore the commandments of God, and guidance given to us, society opens itself up to dangers. Bilal Atkinsons discusses some of these in his article ‘Dangers of the age and safeguarding of Islamic values’. He explains how Islam provides clear directions as to how to avoid those evils which ultimately destroy a society.

However, it is the way of man that whenever prophets are sent to him with guidance, his initial stance is to disbelieve and ridicule. This has hap-

pened to all prophets. Those of the established faiths believe that their way of life is the truth and do all they can to discredit new ideas.

‘After the Hijrah, the Quraish of Makkah joined forces with these Jews to stop the progress of Islam. The hypocrites were already there, starting work as fifth columnists’ (*Murder in the Name of Allah*).

Such individuals tried to create dissention among the believers. Sadly this continues today albeit in a different form. Muslims themselves are guilty of misunderstanding the message of the Holy Prophet^(saw) and create disunity by fighting one another in the name of Islam and try to demonstrate that they are the true believers. They fail to appreciate that the real message of Islam is to worship God and then declare that ‘Muhammad^(saw) is the prophet of God’.

Hadhrot Khalifatul Masih IV^(ru) warns us that ‘...people who reject prophets of God and men of peace stand disunited and bereft of the blessings of the peace they sought to disturb. They breed violence and terrorism’ (*Murder in the Name of Islam*) The truth of these words is evident in the world today.

ESSENCE OF ISLAM:

Poems in Remembrance of the Holy Prophet^(saw) —

Part 10

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^(saw) 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.

Fire of Devotion to the Beauty of Muhammads^(saw) – (Persian Poem)

*I am ready to offer my heart and soul
For the beauty of Muhammad^(sa);
My body is merely the dust of the lane
Treaded by the progeny of
Muhammad^(sa).*

*I have seen with my heart's eye
And heard with perceptive ears;
The trumpet of the beauty of
Muhammad^(sa)
Echoes everywhere.*

*This ever-flowing water which I
distribute
Freely among God's creatures;
Is but a drop from the ocean*

Of the excellences of Muhammad^(saw)

*The fire that burns within me
Is the fire of the love of
Muhammad^(saw);
The water that I possess
Is from the sweet and pure water of
Muhammad^(sa).*

(Majmu-ah-Ishtiharat, Vol.1, p.97)

Manifestation of the Eternal God – (Persian Poem)

*Except the Lord of Mercy,
Who can ever comprehend the lofty
station of Ahmad^(saw).
He effaced himself to such an extent
As if the letter 'M' had fallen away*

from the name 'Ahmad^(saw)'

*So lost was he in the Beloved Lord,
That because of his extreme love
His person became the very
similitude Of the Gracious Lord.*

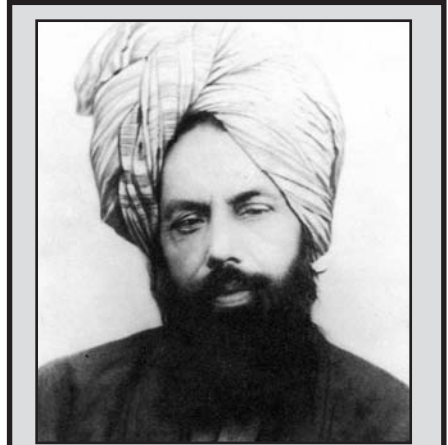
*From his holy countenance
Emanates the fragrance of the True
Beloved;
His divinely inspired person and its
attributes
Became the very mirror of the Eternal
Lord.*

*Even if I am accused of heresy and
disbelief,
I cannot help saying:
There is no loftier Divine Throne
Than the heart of the Holy Prophet –
Ahmad^(saw)*

*God be thanked
That despite opposition on the part of
the worldly-wise
I would court a thousand and one
troubles
For the sake of that Spring of Grace.*

*By the grace of God
And by His bounties
I am an enemy of the Pharaoh and
his hordes,
Because I love this Moses of mine-the
Holy Prophet^(saw).*

*The unique and exalted station
Of the Holy Prophet^(saw) as revealed*



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.

*to me
(was so passing strange) that
I can't help proclaiming it aloud
If only I could find
One eager heart along the path.*

*This alone is my wish, my prayer, and
my firm resolve.*

*That may my heart and soul be
sacrificed
In the sacred path of love
For the Holy Prophet
Muhammad^(saw).
(Taudih-e-Maram, Ruhani Khaz'ain,
Vol.3, pp.62-63)*

**The Status of Ahmad^(saw) – (Persian
Poem)**

*My heart is aflame praising the Holy
Prophet; Who has no peer in
excellence.*

*Who loves the Eternal Friend with all
his heart,
And whose soul is in communion with
the Beloved.*

*He who is the recipient of divine
favours,
And has been brought up like a child
in the lap of God.*

*He is an ocean of virtue and piety,
And is a unique pearl in all its
splendour.*

*In generosity and beneficence, he is
like the spring rain;
His bounties and favours are like
those of the sun.*

*He is ever merciful and is the sign of
divine mercy;
He is gracious and is the
manifestation of divine grace.*

*His countenance is so blessed that
one glimpse of it
Transforms an ugly face into a
beautiful one.*

*Like a star, his enlightened soul has
lit up
Countless hearts which were full of
darkness.*

*He is so blessed that his coming
Signifies the mercy of the Lord of all
the worlds.*

*He is Ahmad of the latter days, it is
for his light
That human hearts became brighter
than the sun.*

*He is more beautiful than all the
progeny of Adam;
He is purer than the purest pearl.*

*From his lips issues forth the fountain
of wisdom;
His heart overflows with the water of
Kauthar – the heavenly stream.*

*For the sake of God, he repudiated
all else;
On land and sea there is none like
him.*

*God has granted him the lamp
Which is forever immune from any
danger or windstorm.*

Champion warrior of the Lord God;

Wearing his dagger with great dignity.

*His arrow has demonstrated its
swiftness in every field;
His sword has displayed its skill
everywhere.*

*He proved the helplessness of idols to
the world;
He plainly showed the power of the
One, All-Powerful God.*

*Lest the idols, their makers, and
worshippers
Should remain ignorant of the power
of God.*

*He loves truth, straightforwardness
and uprightness;
He is the enemy of falsehood and evil.*

*He is the master, yet he is a servant to
the helpless;
He is the king, yet he is like a servitor
to the weak.*

*The compassion that the world
received from him,
None has ever experienced even from
a mother.*

*He is intoxicated with the wine of the
Beloved's love;
For His sake, he is so prostrate and
humble.
His light reached out to every people,
And lit up every country.*

*For everyone with insight, he is the
sign of the Gracious
God;
He is the proof of God for all who
have eyes to see.*

*Out of compassion, he is the help of
the helpless;
With his loving kindness, he shares
the grief of the grief-stricken.*

*His countenance exceeds the sun and
the moon in beauty;
The dust of his threshold is more
fragrant than musk and ambergris.*

*How can the sun and the moon be
like him?
In his heart shine hundreds of suns of
divine light.*

*A single look at the beautiful one
Is better than eternal life.*

*I who am so well aware of his beauty,
Will give my very life, while others
offer their hearts.*

*Remembrance of his countenance
Sends me into transports of ecstasy;
I am in a state of perpetual
intoxication,
Having drank from his goblet.*

*I would keep on flying towards his
lane forever;
Had I but the wings.*

*Of what use are to me the two lips
and the sweet basil,
When I have fallen in love with that
beautiful face.
His beauty pulls at the strings of my
heart;
The powerful one drags me along
with great force.*

*I found him to be the light of the
eyes;
And in its impact, his love is like the
bright sun.*

*Resplendent became the face that did
not turn away from him.
He found the remedy, who held on to
his threshold.*

*Everyone who dares enter the ocean
of faith without him,
Misses his port at the very outset.*

*He is unlettered, yet peerless in
knowledge and wisdom;
Can there be brighter testimony than
this?*

*God granted him that elixir of
knowledge and understanding;
Before whose dazzling light, every
star paled into insignificance.*

*Through him the all human potentials
Were fully actualised.*

*Every excellence is culminated in his
holy person;*

*Without doubt the reign of all
Prophets ended with his commg.*

*He is the sun for all time and space;
He is the guide of all-the black and
the brown.*

*The meeting point of the ocean of
knowledge and recognition of Allah;
Combining in him the attributes of
the sun and the shade.*

*My eyes searched all around but did
not find
A fountain fairer than his faith.*

*For seekers, there is no guide except
him;
For pilgrims, there is no leader other
than him.*

*His is the exalted station whose
intensity of light
Would scorch the wings of the Holy
Spirit.*

*Almighty Allah has granted him the
Law and Faith,
Which is forever immutable.*

*First he shone upon the land of the
Arabs
To cleanse it of all evil.*

*Then the light of faith and holy law
Covered the world like the sky.*

He gave to the people the elixir of life

*And rescued them from the jaws of
the dragon.*

*The monarchs of the time were
wonder-struck,
As were the sages dumbfounded.*

*No one could equal his knowledge or
power;
He has humbled the pride of the
arrogant.*

*What need has he that anyone should
glorify him;
To praise him is an honour for the
one who praises.*

*He resides in the beautiful garden of
purity and grandeur;
Far above the imagination of those
who praise him.*

*O Allah, convey our greetings to him
And to his brotherhood of Prophets.*

*We are the humble servants of all the
Prophets;
We lie like dust on their threshold.*

*May our life be sacrificed for the
Prophet,
Who showed the way to the True God*

*O my Lord, by the host of the
Prophets,
Whom You sent with Your abundant
grace;*

*Grant me wisdom, as You have
granted me a yearning heart;
Grant me the wine, as You have
granted me the goblet.
O my Lord God, for the sake of Your
chosen one,
Whom You supported at every step;*

*Hold my hand with compassion and
generosity;
Be my Friend and Helper in all my
affairs.*

*My reliance is on Your power even
though
I am like dust, or even humbler still.
(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani
Khazain, Vol.1, pp.17-23)*

*Can I ever succeed in adequately
praising the exalted leader;
Whom the heaven and earth and both
the worlds cannot praise enough?*

*The station of nearness that he has
achieved with the Eternal Beloved
Is beyond the ken of all those who
have ever attained nearness to God.*

*None in this world can even dream of
The favours with which the eternal
beloved continues to visit him.*

*He is the leader of the elect of God
and king of the company of lovers;
His soul has traversed every stage of
union with the Beloved.*

*That blessed one who is the
manifestation of divine signs,
Came as a mercy from the Nourisher
of all the worlds.*

*His is the exalted and unique station
in the divine court;
Which is beyond the reach of the elect
and the great.*

*He is Ahmad of the latter days,
Who is the source of honour for those
who came before;
For those of the latter days he is the
leader,
Haven of refuge, security and
strength.*

*His distinguished threshold is the ark
of protection
For the whole creation;
No one on the Day of Judgement will
attain salvation,
But through his intercession.*

*He surpasses all and every kind of
excellence;
The heavens are a mere speck of dust
compared to his great resolve.*

*He manifests the light which had
been hidden since eternity;
He is the source and exordium of
sunrise, which was hidden since
eternity.*

The chief of the heavenly

*congregation and a proof of God on
earth;
A great and powerful sign of the
existence of the Creator.*

*Every vein and particle of his being is
the abode of the Eternal Beloved;
His every breath and particle is
imbued with the beauty of the Friend.*

*The beauty of his countenance far
exceeds a hundred suns and moons;
The dust of his threshold is superior
to a hundred pieces of musk for
Tataristan.*

*He is beyond human reason, thought,
and imagination;
How can thought dare reach out to
that limitless ocean!*

*His soul is the first to proclaim:
'Bala' – 'Yes, indeed!'
He is the Adam of faith in the Unity
of God;
Even before the creation of Adam,
He had communion with the Beloved.*

*It is embedded in his nature to lay
down his life
For God's creatures;
He is ever ready to sacrifice himself
for the downtrodden;
And he is the help of the helpless.*

*At the time when the world was filled
With idolatry and polytheism;
No heart wept blood*

But the heart of that sovereign.

*No one was aware of the evil of
polytheism
And the filth of idols;
Ahmad's soul alone was cognizant of
it: His heart was lost in Divine love.*

*Who knows and who is aware
Of the cries of the intercessor
Which arose for the sake of mankind
In the silence of the cave.*

*I cannot fathom the pain,
The agony, and the distress,
Which brought him to the cave,
So troubled and full of anguish.*

*He was afraid neither of the dark,
Nor of loneliness;
He did not fear death,
Nor was he scared of scorpions or
snakes.*

*He deeply loved his people,
He was devoted to mankind and the
world;
He cared little about his bodily
comfort,
Nor about his personal needs.*

*He raised cries of pain
For the good of mankind;
Day and night he was preoccupied
In supplication to God.*

*His humility and prayers
Caused a great commotion*

*In the heavens:
The angels too were moved to tears*

*At last, because of his humility,
His prayers and supplications,
The Lord turned with compassion
To the dark and gloomy world.*

*The world was rocked
By a great storm of sin;
In every land people became blind
and deaf
Because of sin and polytheism.*

*In the time of Noah,
The world was filled with every
mischief;
No heart was free
From darkness and dust.*

*The devils had ruled
Over every body and soul;
Then the All-Powerful Lord appeared
in glory
To the soul of Muhammad.*

*His grace encompasses alike
The black and the white;
He it is who sacrificed his life
For the sake of mankind.*

*O Prophet of Allah!
You alone are the sun of the path of
righteousness;
No pious or righteous one, without
you
Can find his way to the right path.*

*O Prophet of Allah!
Your lips are the life-sustaining
fountain;
You alone are the guide
To the path of the True Lord.*

*There is the one who seeks to hear
your sayings
From Tom, Dick and Harry;
There is another who doesn't have to
wait:
He hears directly from your own lips.*

*He indeed is alive, who drinks from
your fountain;
Wise is he who follows you.*

*The ultimate point of knowledge for
those who know,
Is the knowledge of your face;
For the truthful, steadfastness and
loyalty to you
Is the height of truth.*

*Without you no one can ever attain
The wealth of true knowledge;
Even if he dies in the exercise
Of unlimited devotion and worship.*

*To bank on one's own efforts
Without the love of your countenance,
Is to be naive
For he who is unaware of your face,
Can never see the face of virtue.*

*Each moment a new light is attained
Through the love of your
countenance,*

*Which the seeker cannot attain
In a whole lifetime.*

*Of the wonders of the universe,
Whatever is beautiful and sublime;
I clearly behold in you.
No time is better than the time
Spent in your love;
Nor is any pastime more pleasant
Than that devoted to your praise.*

*Since I am cognizant of your
unlimited virtues,
I am eager to sacrifice my life for
you;
Whereas others are content with their
services.*

*Everyone supplicates for himself
In his prayers, but;
O my garden of eternal spring!
I supplicate only for your progeny.*

*O Prophet of Allah!
I am lost in love with every particle
Of your holy person;
Were I to have a hundred thousand
lives,
I would bequeath them all
To be sacrificed in your path.*

*What is the truth about submission to
you,
And love for your countenance?
It is a panacea for every heart,
An elixir for every lacerated soul.*

How worthless is the heart,

*That does not bleed for you!
How useless is the life,
That is not sacrifice for you!*

*Because of your love,
My heart does not fear death;
Look at my steadfastness:
I am walking to the scaffold
With a smile!*

*O mercy of God!
We have come to you seeking your
mercy;
Like us, there are hundreds of
thousands of hopefuls
Waiting at your threshold.*

*O Prophet of Allah! I offer my being
For your lovely countenance;
This head of mine, lying heavy on my
shoulder,
Is but an offering in your service.*

*Ever since I have been allowed
To witness the light of the Holy
Prophet^(saw);
His love, like a spring,
Has been gushing forth from my
heart!*

*The fire of devotion
Emanates from my breath like
lightening;
O weak hearted companions!
Move away from my proximity*

*Ever since I saw his countenance in a
vision,*

*My heart is in ecstasy;
My very being, my body, and my soul,
Are but an offering at the altar
Of his body and his countenance.*

*I see hundreds of thousands of
Josephs
In the dimple of his chin;
I see countless Messiahs
Being born by his breath.*

*He is the sovereign of the seven
continents;
He is the sun of the East and the
West;
He is king of both the worlds;
He is a haven for the humble.*

*Successful is the heart,
Which treads faithfully in his path;
Lucky is the head,
That is sacrificed for that warrior.*

*O Prophet of Allah!
The world is dark with disbelief and
idol worship;
It is time you revealed your face
Which is bright like the sun.*

*O my beloved! I see the light of God
Reflected in your countenance;
I see the heart of a wise person
Intoxicated with your love.*

*Lovers and the enlightened
Recognise your station;
But the eyes of the bat
Cannot see the bright midday sun.*

*Everyone in this world has a beloved,
but;
O beloved of rosy countenance!
I am devoted only to you.*

*Out of the entire world,
I have fallen in love with your lovely
face;
I have forsaken my own self for you.*

*What is life?
To be sacrificed it in your path;
What is freedom?
To be like a prey in your captivity.*

*As long as I live,
Your love will always dwell in my
heart;
As long as blood flows in my heart,
It will always be sustained by my love
for you.*

*O Messenger of Allah!
My ties with you are very strong
indeed;
I have been devoted to you
Ever since I was a suckling infant.*

*At every step I have taken towards
Allah,
I have seen you as an invisible helper,
A supporter and a guide.*

*In both the worlds,
So strong is my affiliation to you:
You have nourished me
Like a baby in your lap.*

*Recall the time when you revealed
Your countenance to me in a vision;
Recall the time when you visited me
With great longing and eagerness.*

*Call to mind the kindness and favours
That you showered upon me;
Call to mind the glad tidings
You conveyed to me from the Lord.*

*Recall the time, when in full
wakefulness, You granted me a
glimpse
Of the loveliness of the charming face
And the beauty which is the envy of
Spring.
(A'ina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani
Khazain, Vol.5, pp.23-28)*

**Muhammad(saw) is the Proof of
Himself (Persian Poem)**

*There is a wonderful light in the
person of Muhammad(saw);
There is a wonderful ruby in the mine
of Muhammad(saw).*

*The heart is cleansed of all darkness
When it joins the lovers
of Muhammad(saw).*

*Alas for the hearts of those unworthy
ones;
Whom turn their backs upon the
hospitality of Muhammad(saw).*

*I know not of anyone in both the
world;*

*Who has a station equal to
Muhammad^(saw).*

*God is utterly displeased with the
person;
Who bears a grudge against
Muhammad^(saw).*

*God Himself bums that worthless
worm;
Which is among the enemies of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*If you wish to be delivered from the
stupor of the lower self;
Come and join the ranks of the lovers
of Muhammad^(saw).*

*If you desire that God should praise
you;
Become a true admirer of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*If you desire a proof of his
truthfulness, become his
lover:
Muhammad^(saw) himself is the proof of
Muhammad^(saw).
My body craves to be sacrificed for
the dust of Muhammad's^(saw) feet;
My heart is ever eager to die for
Muhammad^(saw).
By the tresses of the Prophet of God!
I would die for the illumined
countenance of Muhammad^(saw).*

*Cut me to pieces or bum me to death,
I will not turn away from the court of*

Muhammad^(saw).

*For the sake of faith, I fear no one in
the world:*

*For I am coloured after the faith of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*How easy it becomes to renounce the
world,*

*When remembering the beauty and
Muhammad^(saw)!*

*Every particle of my being has been
sacrificed in his path;
I have witnessed the latent beauty of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*I know not the name of any other
teacher;*

*I have studied at the school of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*I have nothing to do with any other
beloved;*

*I am a prey to the loving ways of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*I only crave a single glance;
I need nothing but the garden of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*Search not for my anguished heart in
my bosom;*

*I have surrendered it to the lap of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*I am the merriest among the birds of
Paradise;*

That have built their nests in the

garden of Muhammad^(saw).

*You have illumined my heart and soul
with love;*

*My life is an offering to you, O
Muhammad^(saw)!*

*Were I to sacrifice my life for him a
hundred times;*

*Alas! it would not be worthy of the
high station of Muhammad^(saw).*

*So awe-inspiring is the station
granted to this champion;*

*No one can even dare to compete
with Muhammad^(saw).*

*Beware, O foolish and misguided
enemy!*

*Beware of the sharp sword of
Muhammad^(saw)!*

*The path of the Lord God, which
mankind has lost;*

*Seek it in the progeny of
Muhammad^(saw).*

*Beware, O denier of the status of
Muhammad^(saw)*

*And of the manifest light of
Muhammad^(saw)!*

*Even though miracles are no more;
Come and witness them among the
devotees of Muhammad^(saw).*

(Announcement February 20, 1893,
Majmu'a Ishtihirat, Vol.1, pp. 371-
372)

References to the Holy Qur'an item count 'Bismillah...' (In the Name of Allah...) as the first verse of each Chapter. In some non-standard texts, this is not counted and should the reader refer to such texts, the verse quoted in *The Review of Religions* will be found at one verse less than the number quoted.

In this journal, for the ease of non-Muslim readers, '(saw)' or 'saw' after the words, 'Holy Prophet', or the name 'Muhammad', are used. They stand for '*Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*' meaning 'Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him'. Likewise, the letters '(as)' or 'as' after the name of all other prophets is an abbreviation meaning 'Peace be upon him' derived from '*Alaihis salatu wassalam*' which are words that a Muslim utters out of respect whenever he or she comes across that name. The abbreviation 'ra' or (ra) stands for '*Radhiallahu Ta'ala anhu*' and is used for Companions of a Prophet, meaning Allah be pleased with him or her (when followed by the relevant Arabic pronoun). Finally, 'ru' or (ru) for '*Rahemallahu Ta'ala*' means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him.

In keeping with current universal practice, local transliterations are preferred to their anglicised versions, e.g. Makkah instead of Mecca, etc.

MERCY FOR THE UNIVERSE

Part 8

This is the eighth extract taken from the book Murder in the Name of Allah by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru). This chapter examines the teachings of Islam from the Holy Qur'an and examples of the Holy Prophet^(saw) on how to treat verbal abuse against the status of the Holy Prophet^(saw).

‘They were clever enough to realise that a Musalman’s feelings are never more easily aroused than over a real or fancied insult to the Holy Prophet^(saw). They, therefore, began to proclaim that their activities were meant to preserve the *nabuwat* [prophethood] of the Holy Prophet and to repel attacks on his *namus* [honour]. . . . The trick succeeded and they began to attract large audiences to their meetings. Since some of the Ahrar speakers are experts in the choice of words and expression and the use of similes and metaphors and can intersperse their speeches with flashes of humour of however low an order, they soon began gaining in popularity.’

*Justice Mohammad Munir*¹

Disparaging a prophet of God is as old as prophecy itself. Even Muhammad^(saw) could not escape it. He was mocked, not only during the Makkan period of his life, but also in Madinah where he had the authority to punish. The Jews of Madinah had sharp tongues and a sick sense of humour and did not miss an opportunity of ridiculing the Prophet^(saw).

After the Hijrah, the Quraish of Makkah joined forces with these Jews to stop the progress of Islam. The hypocrites were already there, starting work as fifth columnists. Apart from intrigue and war, they also employed the communications network for propaganda. The propagandist poets, whom Maxime Rodinson has described as ‘the journalists of the time’ and Carmichael as ‘kindlers of battle’²; accused the Muslims of dis-

honouring themselves by submitting to an outsider. Abu Afak taunted the children of Qayla (the Aws and the Khazraj):

‘I have lived a long time, but I have never seen
 Either a house or gathering of
 People
 More loyal and faithful to
 Its allies, when they call on it,
 Than that of the children of
 Qayla
 (the Aws and the Khazraj) as a
 whole.
 The mountains will crumble
 before they submit
 Yet here is a rider come among
 them who had divided them.
 (He says) ‘This is permitted;
 this is forbidden’
 To all kinds of things.
 But if you had believed in
 power
 And in might, why did you not
 follow a *tubba*?’³

Abu ‘Afak in effect was saying, ‘The *tubba* was, after all, a south Arabian king of great reputation, yet you resisted him. Now what has happened to you that you have accepted the claims of a Makkan refugee?’ Meanwhile, Kab was elected chief of the Jews, replacing

Malik b. alSayf⁴ who also lamented the loss of Quraish at Badr.⁵ In an elegy he said:

‘Drive out that fool of yours
 that you may be safe
 From talk that has no sense!
 Do you taunt me because I
 shed tears
 For people who loved me
 sincerely?
 As long as I live I shall weep
 and remember
 The merits of people whose
 glory is the houses of
 Makkah.’⁶

Obviously, the main purpose of this vulgar and abusive campaign was to sow the seeds of dissention between the Ansar and the Muhajirs on the one hand and between the Aws and the Khazraj on the other. The campaign seemed to pay off when a Jew from the Banu Qua’inq’ua, Shas b. Qays, ordered a Jewish youth to recite some poems composed at the battle of Buath. They were recited to a mixed gathering of Muslims, comprising the Aws and the Khazraj. Eventually, both sides got worked up and challenged each other, saying: ‘If you wish we will do the same thing again.’ They both replied: ‘We will! Your

meeting place is outside – that being the volcanic tract. To arms! To arms!⁷ As soon as the Holy Prophet^(saw) heard the news he hurried to the spot with the Emigrants and addressed the men of the Aws and the Khazraj:

‘O Muslims! Remember God, remember God. Will you act like pagans while I am with you? After God has guided you to Islam and honoured you and saved you from paganism? After he has delivered you from unbelief and made you friends by so doing?’⁸

The following verses of the Qur’an were revealed on the occasion:¹⁰

O ye who believe... if you obey any of those who have been given the Book, they will turn you again into disbelievers after you have believed. When you are the people to whom the signs of Allah are given and among whom the Messenger of Allah is present, how can you disbelieve? He who holds fast to Allah is indeed guided to the right path.

O ye who believe, be mindful of

your duty to Allah in all respects, every moment of your lives, so that whenever death overtakes you, it will find you in a state of complete submission to Him. All of you, take hold of Allah’s rope which He gave you when you hated each other. He united your hearts in love so that by His grace you became brethren.

(Ch.3:Vs.101-104)

This was the atmosphere of unrest in Madinah when the Prophet^(saw) decided to stop the poets’ propaganda campaign and asked for volunteers to execute them. It was clear they had become a grave danger to peace. To say that they were killed because they reviled and insulted the Prophet^(saw) is to twist historical fact. To use these executions as a precedent for the execution of those who defame the Prophet^(saw) is either deliberate dishonesty or sheer historical ignorance. Defaming the Prophet^(saw), known technically as *sabb*, is neither a *hadd* offence according to the Qur’an nor a capital offence according to the *Sunnah*. In fact it is not punishable at all, unless there are contributing circumstances. Its punishment, like that of

apostasy, is in the hands of Allah alone. The Qur'an uses goodwill to uphold the honour of Allah and his prophets, not the sword. The Qur'an says:

Revile not those to whom they pray besides Allah, lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance. Thus unto every nation have We made their deed seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they used to do.

(Ch.6: V.109)

Respect, honour, love and esteem for someone come from the heart. Force can shut mouths, create terror and result in disrespect and irreverence. This is why the Qur'an takes a positive view in matters of the heart.

As regards respect for the Holy Prophet^(saw), the Qur'an says:

Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and honour him with a worthy salutation. Lo! Those who malign Allah and His Messenger, Allah hath cursed them in this world and

in the next and hath prepared for them the doom of the disdained. And those who malign believing men and women undeservedly, they bear the guilt of slander and manifest sin.

(Ch.33:Vs.57-59)

The Qur'an is very clear about *sabb*. It asks Muslims not to scorn even the false gods of unbelievers and it does not lay down any punishment for those who show disrespect to the Prophet^(saw) – for them, God has prepared the 'doom of the disdained'.

And how did the Excellent Exemplar^(saw) treat those who reviled him? Let us return to the leader of the *munafiqun*, Abdullah b. Ubayy. After the battle of Al-Mustaliq (6AH/AD737), while the Holy Prophet^(saw) was staying by the watering-place of Al-Muraysi, an unpleasant dispute took place between the Muhajirs and Ansar. A hired servant of Umar, Jahjah b. Masud, and Sinan b. Wabar al-Juhani, an ally of Ansar, began fighting. According to Ibn Ishaq:

'The Juhani called out: "Men of AI-Ansar!" and Jahjah

called out “Men of the Muhajirun!” Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Salul was enraged. With him were some of his people, including Zayd b. Arqam, a young boy. He said: “Have they actually done this? They dispute our priority, they outnumber us in our country. Nothing is more apt for us and the vagabonds of Quaraish than the ancient saying, ‘Feed a dog and it will devour you.’ By Allah, when we return to Madinah the most honourable will drive out the meanest.” Then he went to his people and said: “This is what you have done to yourselves. You have let them occupy your country and you have divided your property among them. Had you only kept your property from them they would have gone elsewhere.” Zayd b. Arqam heard this and, when he had disposed of his enemies, went and told the Prophet^(saw). Umar, who was with him, said: “Tell Abbad b. Bishr to go and kill him.” The Prophet^(saw) answered: “What if men should say Muhammad kills his own Companions? No, but give orders to set off.”¹⁰

The Holy Prophet^(saw) was, of course, greatly upset. The tribal appeal of Juhani to Ansar and Jahjah’s call to ‘the men of Mahajirun’ reminded him of the Day of Buath and the war of Basus, which lasted forty years. Had Abdullah b. Ubayy succeeded the Ansar, the Muhajirs would have gone back to their tribal wars. The message of Islamic unity, which changed these disunited tribes into a mighty Arab nation, would have been lost forever. The Holy Prophet^(saw) was so upset that he gave orders to move, although, as Ibn Ishaq reports, ‘This was at a time when the Prophet^(saw) was not used to travelling’¹¹ Referring to this incident, the Qur’an says:

*They [the Munafiqun] say:
‘When we return to Madinah
the one most honourable shall
surely drive out the meanest.’
True honour belongs to Allah,
to His Messenger and
believers; but the hypocrites
know it not.
(Ch.63.V.9)*

When Abdullah, son of Abdullah b. Ubayy, heard of this affair, he went to the Prophet^(saw) and said:

‘I have heard that you want to kill Abdullah b. Ubayy for what you heard about him. If you must, order me to do it and I will bring his head, for AlKhazraj know they have no man more dutiful to his father than I. I am afraid that if you order someone else to kill him, I could not bear to see his executioner walking around and might kill him. I would therefore be killing a believer for an unbeliever and I would certainly be damned. The Prophet^(saw) said: ‘No, but let us deal kindly with him and make much of his companionship while he is with us.’¹²

Muslim rulers, who understood why the Holy Prophet^(saw) treated Abdullah b. Ubayy and other hypocrites and Jews as he did, have been extremely reluctant to create false martyrs in the process of protecting the honour of the Prophet^(saw) (Namus-i-Rasul). In Cordova, between 850 and 859, a group of Christian zealots was formed under the leadership of Eulogius. The members of this group were determined to denounce the Holy Prophet^(saw)

publicly and to accept martyrdom. The *qadis* of Cordova, however, refused to oblige them and jailed them instead. Will Durant reports one such incident:

Isaac, a Cordovan monk, went to the *qadi* and professed a desire for conversion; but when the judge, well pleased, began to expound Mohammedanism, the monk interrupted him: ‘Your Prophet’, he said, ‘has lied and deceived you. May he be cursed, who has dragged so many wretches with him down to hell’ The *qadi* reproved him and asked had he been drinking? The monk replied: ‘I am in my right mind. Condemn me to death.’ The *qadi* had him imprisoned, but asked permission of Abd-ur Rahman II to dismiss him as insane.¹³

Shaykhul Islam Ebus’u’ud Effendi, chief mufti of the Ottoman Empire during the reign of the Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, allowed the death penalty, but only for habitual and public defamers of the Holy Prophet^(saw). Shaykhul Islam went out of his way to insist that execution should not be ordered lightly. He clearly wished to avoid frivolous and malicious

prosecutions and laid down that an offender could not be treated as habitual ‘merely on the word of one or two persons’. The habitual character of the offender had to be proved to the authorities by impartial (*begharaz*) Muslims, who had no axe to grind. But there was an important rider to this which showed that though Shaykhul Islam Ebussuud issued a *fatwa* without any Qur’anic or *hadith* authority, he knew the punishment of *sabb* was Allah’s alone. The *fatwa* was issued, probably under political pressure, because he nullified its entire effect by stating that unbelievers were not held guilty for declaring ‘that which constitutes their disbelief: that is, for rejecting Muhammad’s^(saw) prophetic mission.

The quality of a Muslim’s faith and the measure of respect he holds for the Prophet^(saw) cannot be legally defined. Conversely, an unbeliever can neither be forced to embrace Islam nor to honour its Prophet^(saw) at gunpoint. This is why God has prescribed no punishment for *irtidad* or *sabb* in this world. Despite the disparaging words uttered by Abdullah b. Ubayy at the

watering-hole of Al-Muraysi, the Holy Prophet^(saw) did not punish him.

The punishment of these two offences is easily exploited by politically orientated *ullema* who would debase religious causes by using them for materialist purposes and exploit religious belief for their own ends.¹⁴

At the moment, Deobandi Ahli Hadith *ulema* are accusing the Ahmadis of disparaging the Prophet^(saw). Little do they realise that in doing so they have created the means of their own destruction. In comparison with mainstream Sunnis, who constitute the majority of Muslims in the subcontinent,¹⁵ Turkey, and many other Muslim countries, the Deobandis/Ahli Hadith and the followers of the Najdi reformer Abdul Wahhab are in a minority throughout the Muslim world (except in Nejd). They are accused of belittling the Prophet^(saw). The Deobandi/Wahhabi *ulema* consider the mainstream Sunnis to be *kafir* for attributing to the Prophet^(saw) qualities which, to say the least, are polytheist. For instance, they say that his body did not cast a shadow

because he was filled with light. When *Meauud-i-Sherif*, popularised by the Turkish poet Suleyman Chelebi of Busra (1410), is concluded with *ya Nabi Salam Alaika* (peace be with you), the Prophet's(saw) soul is present at the event, and, therefore, everyone attending should stand to show respect. In the same manner, praying at his tomb, kissing the grillework surrounding it and many other such beliefs and practices of the Sunnis/Brelvis are *shirk* according to Deobandis. The Wahhabis, having demolished the historical graveyard of *Jannat ul-Baqi*, wished to destroy even the dome of the Prophet's(saw) mosque and were prevented from doing so only by the strong reaction in the Muslim world. For these acts of destruction of graves, tombs and domes, Sunnis all over the world accuse the Wahhabis of denigrating and belittling the Holy Prophet(saw). The Barelvis consider that it was the Deoband scholars Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautwi and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, who did not believe in *Khatm-i-nabuwatt*. In a booklet, *Deobandi Maulwiyon Ka Iman*, Maulana Abdul Mustafa Abu Yahya Muhammad Muinuddin Shafi 'i

Qadri Rizvi Thanwi writes:

'O Muslims! Look how this accursed, unholy, satanic assertion has destroyed the very basis of *Khatm-i-nabuwatt* See that Maulwi Qasim Nanautwi does not believe in *Khatm-i-nabuwatt*, while Maulwi Rashid Ahmad, Maulwi Khalil Ahmad and other Wahhabi *ulema* have declared those who reject *Khatm-i-nabuwatt* as *kafir*.'¹⁶

Barelvi-Deobandi polemics – all in the name of protecting the Holy Prophet(saw), the very paragon of modesty – have reached such vulgarity that even the mildest examples are offensive. Shourish Kashmiri, a supporter of the Deobandi school, said in his pamphlet '*Kafir saz Mulla*' that anyone who declares the great leader of Deoband as *kafir* (unbeliever) is a liar. In the same pamphlet he said that the Barelvi *ulema* sell religion and the Sharia of the Prophet(saw) to make a living, that they are the born slaves of Lord Clive's household, the enemies of the Muslim League and Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah. In another

pamphlet, he said that these people were even lower than a brick in Maulana Husain Ahmad's and Syed Ataullah Shah Bukhari's lavatory¹⁶. The Barelvi reply to these abusive charges was tasteless. They said that the man slandering them and the Holy Prophet(saw) had spent his life wandering the red-light districts. 'The man who called Nehru a prophet is now accusing us of selling the Shari'a of the Prophet(saw), they cried. 'Why shouldn't Muhammad Qasim Nanautwi be called a *kafir* and how can we accept Ashraf Ali Thanwi as a Muslim? Aren't they the men who said the door of prophet hood was open? Aren't they the pathfinders of the Qadiyanis? Who has taught you how to denigrate Mustafa? Who has taught you unbelief/ You have taken your clothes off, have you no sense of decency or modesty? You have created disorder under the name of *khatm-i-nabuwwat* and spread mischief under the name of peace. You are collecting money under the name of *nabuwwat* and begging under the name of the Prophet(saw):

Another poet, Sayyad Muhammad Tanha, said:

'How can you appreciate the high status of Ahmad Raza? Go and smell the stinking underpants of Hindus. Gold is your prophet, gold is your God
You belong to the party of those who show you gold
You have spent all your life with *Kufr*
How can you, a Khatri Hindu by caste, join Islam?
O Nimrod, how can you glorify Allah?
Your place is with Hindus, go there and praise
there the name of Hari, Hari.'¹⁸

Compare the language, the style and the contents of this Barelvi attack on Deobandi *ulema* with the tirade of Deobandi scholars against Ahmadis:

1. Ahmadis deny *khatm-i-nabuwwat*;
2. Ahmadis denigrate the Holy Prophet(saw)
3. Ahmadis created British imperialism in India;
4. Ahmadis opposed the creation of Pakistan;
5. Ahmadis are opposed to *jihad*;

6. Ahmadis associate with non-Muslims;
7. Ahmadiyah is a racket in religion's name.

Both the Ahli-Sunnat wal Jama'at (Barelvi) and Deobandi *ulema* accuse each other of disparaging the Holy Prophet^(saw). As we saw earlier, the Jama'ati Islami described the Ahl-i Qur'an as being worse than the Ahmadis. But the Shias have not been spared either – they have been accused of degrading the status of the Holy Prophet^(saw) by claiming that Ali shared the prophethood with him.

The Canadian scholar, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, who visited the subcontinent and closely observed the Muslim society of India and Pakistan, has accused Muslims of 'a fanaticism of blazing vehemence'. In his book, *Islam in Modern India*, he says:

'Muslims will allow attacks on Allah: there are atheists and atheistic publications and rationalistic societies, but to disparage Muhammad will provoke from even the most liberal sections of the community a fanaticism of blazing vehemence.'¹⁹

This is an incorrect assessment of Muslim temperament. Prof. Cantwell Smith has generalised. Actually, it is the Mullahs and the politically orientated leadership which recognised: 'that the feelings of a Muslim are never more easily aroused and his indignation awakened than over a real or fancied insult to the Holy Prophet.'²⁰

No doubt the rich and the poor, the intellectuals, the uneducated, the pious and impious have always been united in the love of the Prophet^(saw) and considered *Jana fir-rasul* (annihilation in the name of the Prophet^(saw)) to be the peak of religious experience. But no Muslim is unmindful that the Holy Prophet's^(saw) highest experience was the *miraj*, when he, surrounded by clouds of angels, soared high into the Divine Presence, where even the angel Gabriel has no access. The power-hungry Muslim leadership forgets that the exhortation 'Muhammad^(saw) is the Messenger of God' is only the second part of the confession of the Muslim faith. The first is: 'There is no God but Allah.'

There is no way to measure love or respect. Lovers and mystics wrote *diwans* after *diwans* and finally devoted their lives to trying to express feelings no language could really convey. The mullahs can scan the poem of love, but cannot understand it. It is no mere accident that the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was named Ghulam Ahmad^(as).

What an honour! What a status! What a glory! In the following three couplets he answers those who accuse him of disparaging the Holy Prophet^(saw) and critics, like Cantwell Smith, who accuse Muslims of being negligent of Allah's honour:

‘After the love of Allah it is Muhammad’s love which has captivated my heart; If this love be *kufir*, by God I am a great *kafir*.’²¹

My Love! My Benefactor! Let my life be sacrificed in Thy way,
For when hath Thou shown indifference in Thy goodness to this slave?²²

If it be the custom that claimants of Thy love be beheaded at Thy

threshold,

Then let it be known I am the first to claim that reward.’²³

The founder^(as) of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam has clearly and honestly declared his faith in the supreme authority of the Holy Prophet^(saw) as *the Khatam-un-nabiyyin*. He said:

‘The basis of our religion and the essence of our belief is that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad^(saw) is His Prophet. The faith that we follow in this earthly life and the faith in which, by the grace of God, we shall depart from this transitory abode, is that of our Lord and great Master, Muhammad – may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.’²⁴

And, again:

‘A superior status, comprising all that is good, belongs to our Lord and Master, Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad^(saw) Mustafasa. It is unique to him, it is unapproachable’.²⁵

The writer of the four quotations given above, Mirza Ghulam

Ahmad^(as), and his followers have been declared non-Muslims by Muslims described by Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1875-1938) in the following stanzas of a long Urdu poem:

*Hands are impotent and nerveless,
hearts unfaithful and infidel,*

The Community a heartbreak to their Prophet and a shame;

Gone are the idol-breakers, in their places idol-makers dwell;

Abraham their father was: the children merit Azar's name.²⁶

*New and strange the band of drinkers,
and their wine is strange and new,*

*A new shrine to house their Ka'aba,
new and strange the idols too,*

Very heavy on your spirits weighs the charge of morning's prayer;

*How much more would you prefer sleeping, than
rising up to worship me,*

Ramadan is too oppressive for you

tempers free to bear;

*Tell me now, do you consider that the
law of loyalty?*

Nations come to birth by faith; let faith expire, and nations die

So, when gravitation ceases, the thronged stars asunder fly,

Why, you are a people utterly bereft of every art;

*No other nation in the world so lightly
spurns its native place;*

*You are like a barn where lightnings
nestle, and will not depart;*

*You would sell your fathers' graveyards,
And say that such a thing was right;*

*Making profit out of tombstones has
secured you such renown*

*Why not set up shop in idols, if you
chance to hunt some down?*

Loud the cry goes up 'The Muslims?'

They are vanished, lost to view',

Were-echo, 'Are true Muslims to be found in any place?'

Christian is your mode of living, and your culture is Hindu;

Why, such Muslims to the Jews would be a shame and a disgrace.

Sure enough, you have your Syeds, Mirzas, Afghans, all the rest;

*But can you claim that you are Muslims if the truth must be confessed?*²⁷

Having claimed that the Muslims of the day would shame even Jews, and that they would even sell their ancestors' tombstones, the 'poet, philosopher, political thinker and altogether most eminent figure in Indian Islam of the twentieth century'²⁸ decided to distinguish between Muslims and Ahmadis. So in 1936 he wrote in an open letter to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the predominantly Hindu Indian National Congress and, later, first prime minister of India,

demanding that Ahmadis should be declared a non-Muslim minority. In the constitution of secular India the demand was, of course, ignored. But for the *ulema* of Deoband it was a matter of life and death. Hindus have occupied Babari Masjid in Ayodhya and converted it under police protection into the Ram Janma Bhoomi temple. Another section of Hindus demand the conversion of Benares and Kashi mosques into temples. Most Hindus are agitating for the abolition of Muslim personal law.

This is what becomes of people who reject prophets of God and men of peace. They stand disunited and bereft of the blessings of the peace they sought to disturb. They breed violence and terrorism.

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 26. According to the Qur'an, Abraham's^(as) father's name was Azar, (Adhar) the name given by the Church historian, Eusebius, and not Terah as given in Genesis 11:26; Qur'an, Ch.6.V.75.
 27. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *Bang-i-Dara, Jawab-i-Shikwah*, stanzas VII, IX, X and XVII, trans. A. 1. Arberry.
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JALSA SALANA - FIJI

Below is the text of the address delivered by the head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya community Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad – Khalifatul Masih V, on the occasion of Jalsa Salana in Fiji, April 2006.

An Ahmadi should be an exemplary Muslim. We should always have the excellent example of the Holy Prophet^(saw) before us. And the command of Allah is:

Verily you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model, for him who fears Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much.

(Ch.33:V.22)

The Holy Prophet^(saw) set excellent examples in his worship of Allah. He established high examples in honouring the rights and obligations that man owes to Allah and the rights that are due to other human beings. The standard of his worship existed before he became a prophet.

Carrying food for a few days, he used to retire to a cave and sit by himself, worshipping God. Nevertheless, his worship had not made him a recluse and cut him off from the world. He got married. He

discharged the rights due to his wife and children. He looked after the rights of the poor. He took care of the rights of the neighbour. He looked after the relations and also discharged the rights due to the society.

This is why when he received the first revelation, he returned home full of fear. He mentioned to his wife, Hadhrat Khadija, the incident that had shaken him to the core that day. He said that he did not know what God was going to do with him. This incident greatly agitated him.

In a state of shock he requested that he be wrapped in something warm. So after doing what she had been told, Hadhrat Khadija asked him what had happened, and he related to her the whole incident.

He told her how an angel had squeezed him in a tight grip and asked him to read the following words:

*Recite thou in the name of thy
Lord Who created man...*
(Ch.96:V.2)

Hadhrat Khadija replied: ‘God has not sent you that He should then give you up. Be not afraid because you are kind and considerate to your relations, help the poor and the forlorn and bear their burdens. You are restoring the virtues that had disappeared from our country. You treat guests with honour and help those who are in distress.’

So whereas he was already worshipping God and abhorred associating partners with Allah long before he became a Prophet, he was at the same time discharging all his social responsibilities. Then after the call to prophethood, his noble characteristics became all the more prominent.

He became an excellent model for the whole of mankind. There was now no way of attaining nearness to Allah without following in his footsteps. This is why after stating that you have in the Prophet of Allah^(saw) an excellent model, the Holy Qur’an says that this exemplar is for him who wishes to

attain nearness to Allah and wants that his end should be good. If such a person desires the life Hereafter, which is an everlasting life, then he or she should reflect those excellent examples that the Holy Prophet^(saw) had established for us in himself in this earthly life. These examples are about the discharge of the rights due to the Creator and the rights due to His creation.

We Ahmadis claim that we act in accordance with everything commanded by the Holy Prophet^(saw). We claim that in compliance with his command, we have believed in the Imam of the Age and the Promised Messiah^(as) who was to appear in accordance with the prophecies of the Holy Prophet^(saw). He presented the best examples of following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet^(saw) and became his prototype in this age.

We have renewed our pledge that we will continue to abide by the commands of Allah the Almighty and the Messenger of Allah^(saw) that the world of today had somehow forgotten.

We have promised that after this

bai'at, or pledge of allegiance, we will not only fulfil the obligations due to Allah and His creation in our lives, but shall try our best to get our children to continue with these good works.

Then above everything else, we will try our utmost to spread this beautiful light around us.

So each Ahmadi should pledge that having become an Ahmadi, he would reflect in his deeds those lofty examples that are worthy of the religion brought by the Holy Prophet^(saw) and display to the rest of the world the beauty of his character. Only when you mould your lives in this manner, can you ever hope of benefiting from the blessings and beneficence of Allah and only then can you become the inheritors of the everlasting paradise in the next life.

What was that excellent example of the Holy Prophet^(saw) that we have been asked to follow?

What were those noble examples that were so liked by Allah the Almighty that He commanded that the only way to come near to Allah and to become the beneficiaries of

Allah's bounties lay in emulating the ways that His beloved Servant, Muhammad^(saw) used to tread? I shall give you a few examples of his precept.

After his prophethood, what were the standards of his worship and the manner in which he discharged the rights owed to Allah?

In this connection, it is narrated that when he used to observe the Tahajjud prayers, his *Qiyam* or standing position used to be for such a long time that his feet would swell. Once, one of his wives, Hadhrat Sauda, who used to observe her Prayers very regularly, joined the Holy Prophet^(saw) in Tahajjud prayers. He bowed for such a long time that when the Prayers finished, Hadhrat Sauda said to the Holy Prophet^(saw) that the bowing position had stretched for such a long time that her nose almost bled.

Then in response to a question, Hadhrat Ayesha summed up the manner of the Holy Prophet's^(saw) worship by saying that his tahajjud prayer used to be so long, adorable and beautiful that you should not ask her about its length and its

beauty. That is to say, she did not have the words to draw an image of his worship. So this used to be the standard of his act of worship of which I have given you one or two examples.

Once the Holy Prophet^(saw) was seen performing his tahajjud prayers so fervently that he was trembling all over and he was heard weeping again and again. Hadrat Ayesha summarised this state by saying that the sound seemed as if a pot was boiling, that is to say that the passion with which he observed his prayers sounded like a pot was boiling away. When the Holy Prophet^(saw) finished his prayers, Hadhrat Ayesha said: ‘O Prophet of Allah. Allah has forgiven your past and future mistakes and sins. Then why do you pray with such passion and so fervently.’ He replied, ‘Should I not then be a grateful servant of Allah.’

So these are the standards of the gratitude of our Holy Prophet^(saw).

These prayers of the Holy Prophet^(saw) that Allah the Almighty should continue to create such people who obey the Laws of Allah

and are regular and consistent in their prayers, were, of course, for his followers and those who believed in him. His prayers were because of his concern lest his people should draw away from their Lord because whatever the Holy Prophet^(saw) wanted for himself, Allah provided without his asking for it.

His prayers were an expression of his gratitude that Allah the Almighty had made him discharge his position as the caretaker for the good health of his followers. His prayers were in gratitude for the tidings of His spiritual son through whom Islam was going to triumph over all other religions.

So we who call ourselves Ahmadis can be the beneficiaries of these prayers of the Holy Prophet^(saw) only when we observe our prayers in accordance with the model set before us.

Admittedly, we cannot rise 100% to the standard of the Holy Prophet^(saw) but we should remember that the more effort we spend in following in his footsteps, the better beneficiaries we will

become of the Holy Prophet's^(saw) prayers that he said in the dark hours of the night.

Therefore, the first thing that every Ahmadi should remember is that he must put new life into his prayers. Get into the habit of observing all your prayers, then acquire the habit of saying all your prayers in congregation and then get the habit of observing the voluntary prayers. May Allah enable every Ahmadi to do this. Amin.

The second important matter that should exist in every Ahmadi who, by performing the bai'at at the hands of the spiritual son of the Holy Prophet^(saw), has renewed the pledge that he shall follow the model set by the Holy Prophet^(saw) is that he should display those excellent values and discharge the rights owed to fellow human beings.

We are fortunate that we believe in that Prophet^(saw) about whom the Almighty Allah has given the testimony that:

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

Therefore, the followers who have found such an excellent Prophet who has presented such lofty examples of high moral excellence can very well imagine the standard of moral excellence to which such followers must rise. Hence, every Ahmadi should assess himself by this standard.

Now, I shall mention a few moral values that are essential for promoting an atmosphere of love and affection and brotherhood in the world.

An excellent moral value for the maintenance of peace in the world is truth. If the world becomes steadfast on truth, many troubles can be removed.

We resort to falsehood for personal interest as a result of which dissension begins to spread in society. We rely on lies ranging from domestic issues, to social matters and then from national to international levels.

This has begun to be termed a matter of convenience or expedience and it is said that it is perfectly acceptable to resort to falsehood. In today's society, the

habit of telling lies and spreading falsehood has become so prevalent that any sense of the disliked and profane has all but vanished.

The husband tells lies to the wife and the wife tells lies to the husband. We can see cracks appearing in the contract between a husband and wife, a contract that is supposed to be based on a dignified and scared trust. It is because of not speaking the truth that there is an absence of trust between the parties. It also has an effect on the children. Then because of not speaking the truth, the relationship with neighbours has begun to worsen. The relation between the master and servant has begun to deteriorate. The relations amongst business shareholders have begun to become bad.

Likewise, grievous misunderstandings and distances have begun to grow between one nation and another.

All this is because they have stopped using the honest and straightforward truth. They have gone away from the truth. What is the straightforward word? It is that truth in which there is no

trace of any lie. It should not have words from which double meanings should arise but it should be the unadulterated and straightforward word. This is what we are taught in the Holy Qur'an.

What is the example and directive of the Holy Prophet^(saw) in this matter? I will illustrate this by the following few examples.

The standard of honesty of the Holy Prophet^(saw) was so high that well before his prophethood, the people of Makkah used to call him as the Truthful and Trustworthy. This attribute of speaking the truth was so well marked in his character that the Holy Qur'an refers to it as proof of the truth of his claim. It says:

... I have indeed lived among you a whole lifetime before this. Will you not then understand? Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah or he who treats His Signs as lies? ...
(Ch.10:V.17-18)

In other words 'I have lived such a long time with you. I spent my youth with you, traded with you

and adjudicated matters for you. But you have never found that I have ever indulged in the evil of telling a lie.

So when I have never told a lie amongst people, then how could it be that I should forge a lie about a matter relating to God?’ The disbelievers could not deny this and kept saying that as far as the standard of his honesty was concerned, they could not deny his honesty but they could not accept that his teaching was correct. This testimony was given by his strongest enemy, Abu Jahl.

The second biggest opponent was Abu Sufyan.

When Abu Sufyan appeared before Heraclius to lodge a complaint against Muslims who had gone there, he incited the Emperor against the Muslims. After the answers provided by the Muslim envoys, Heraclius asked Abu Sufyan, ‘Did your people ever charge the Prophet with lying before he announced his claim?’ Abu Sufyan had no other answer than to say, ‘No!’ to this question. Thereafter the Emperor Heraclius said, ‘I inferred from this that a

person who does not lie about men will not lie about God.’

This was the standard of truth that the Holy Prophet^(saw) had established that despite enmity with him, not even an enemy could accuse him of telling a lie.

What expectation does he have about truth from his followers? He admonished that always speak the truth because truth leads to good works and good works lead to paradise. He said that the one who always speaks the truth is written as the Truthful before Allah.

Hadhrat Hasan bin ‘Ali narrates that he remembered the directive of the Holy Prophet^(saw) clearly: ‘Leave alone that which leaves you in doubt and adhere to that which is free from doubt, for truth is comforting, falsehood is disturbing.’ (*Tirmidhi*)

Now see what expectations he had from his followers that they should always speak the truth because this is the means of paradise. Paradise is attained not merely after death, but by doing good works and obeying the commands of Allah, a person can begin to build his or her

paradise in this very world.

While mentioning truth, I said earlier that there is unrest because of placing too much reliance on lies in matters ranging from domestic life – in which husband, wife, children, brother, sister and relatives are included – to international affairs. If by making truth the basis of all our dealings, we resolve matters, then heaven will begin to emerge on earth. You will see that as a result of the saying of the Holy Prophet^(saw) that truth is comforting, falsehood is disturbing, paradise will begin on earth. Your domestic differences would begin to end. Trust upon each other would begin to grow. Because of speaking the truth, suspicions would begin to reduce and once suspicions reduce, then differences and disputes would also end. When disputes and fights end, then heaven would begin to appear in this world and the cool breeze of paradise would flow through each household.

Moreover, if international relations begin to strengthen on the basis of truth, then the government of one nation would begin to trust the government of another country.

The people of that country would begin to place reliance on the others. If any mistakes are committed, then on the basis of truth, a solution would be found in a friendly manner.

If we analyse the situation today, it is because of lies and falsehood that there is so much disorder and dissension. An agreement is drawn up. Then it is breached in such a way to serve self vested interest that although overtly the agreement is still in place, yet covertly another nation is made to suffer. Today, the powerful nations are doing precisely that with the smaller nations and the rich nations are doing the same with the poorer nations.

On the pretext of aid, they ensnare poor nations in their clutches with a smooth tongue in which there is absolutely no truth. In this way, they capture the economy of the less developed nations. When the people of the effected nation react, then suspicions begin to grow further.

Quarrels and disorder spread. The ordinary people begin to lose faith in the governments. They spill out

on the streets. They begin to break up their own country and cause damage that can never be justified. As a result, instead of being a heaven, the beautiful country becomes a living hell.

Therefore, lies are severe evils. The absence of truth from a people, and today the absence of truth throughout the world, is the true cause of disorder. We Ahmadis should save ourselves from this and should inculcate the habit of speaking the truth.

In this way, we at least can make our society a reflection of heaven on earth. It is possible that by seeing us, the other people within our society can also adopt truth as their way of life. To establish truth is such a good work that it can be the means of acquiring all other good values.

It is narrated in a tradition that a person came before the Holy Prophet^(saw) and said that it was not possible for him to leave all evils at once. He asked him to tell him one evil that he could leave first of all.

The Holy Prophet^(saw) said: ‘Leave telling lies because it is such an

evil that can rid you of your other evils.’ He said that this was an easy matter and he would Insha Allah act in accordance with it. After this, he went home and whenever the thought of committing an evil crossed his mind, he recalled that if the Holy Prophet^(saw) heard that he had committed such an evil, and he asked him about it, it would be a matter of great shame because he could not now tell a lie. He would have to speak the truth. Anyhow, one by one, all his evils ended.

In brief, if you want to save yourself, your peace and quiet and want to purify your society, then you will have to stay completely away from lies and tread the path of truth.

Because the responsibility of the future generation is that of women, if the ladies acquire this attribute then you will be the means of establishing heaven on earth and being a helper and assistant in this task. But remember that the reformation of women takes place only when the men try to reform themselves and make themselves the exemplar.

There are many other moral values

that are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith and it is a duty of each Ahmadi to acquire these values. It is not possible to mention them all here because I have to keep time in mind. But remember that having believed in the Promised Messiah^(as) when you have renewed the pledge that you would try to obey all the commands of Allah the Almighty and His Messenger, then you should save yourselves from those evils that Allah and His Messenger have mentioned. These include high values in discharging trust and honesty. Remember that trust and honesty have a connection with honesty.

If you have honesty in you, then you will also be trustworthy and be the one who discharges the rights of people. You will also be able to discharge the trust reposed in you. The place where you work is also a trust that has been placed in you.

This is why you should discharge your trust with responsibility and honesty, whether you work in a farm or in a factory or in the civil service. Wherever you work, discharge the right and obligations of your work. An Ahmadi should

be more diligent and enthusiastic about his work so that the justice is done to his work.

Then in today's democratic world, there is the right of a vote. Whether you exercise this right in the election of office bearers for the Jama'at or the election of representatives for national government, always elect the one you believe is hard-working and one who has the knowledge and skills for that task for which he is being elected and can discharge the responsibilities entrusted on him.

Do not elect someone because he is your relative or has some other connection with you. The persons elected in this manner should continue to assess themselves that the people have placed their trust in them and hence all their work should be in the interest of the people and the nation.

Another value is the fulfilment of promises. If you fulfil your pledges, then the standard of honesty will rise automatically. The standard of vieing with one another in good works will also increase automatically.

Pledging to act in accordance with the conditions of bai'at of the Promised Messiah^(as) you Ahmadi have entered Ahmadiyyat. Then there are pledges of Khuddam, Ansar and Lajna in which you repeat that you will give preference to your faith over worldly matters.

So if you keep thinking seriously all the time that you have to give precedence to your faith over worldly pursuits, you will be discharging the obligations and rights due to God Almighty and also observing the rights of Allah's creation because Allah commands us to fulfil the rights due to people.

You will also remain steadfast on truth. You will also be doing justice to serving your people and your country which are the duties of every citizen. Thus there are many other ways of good works to which Islam commands us and whose examples were established by the Holy Prophet^(saw) We should act on these.

The Holy Prophet^(saw) faithfully fulfilled the pacts that were drawn up with the disbelievers and the Jews.

Unless the others broke a pact, he abided by each promise and each condition of every pact. And he set these examples for us so that we act upon them.

Another good work is thankfulness and gratitude about which I mentioned with reference to the Prayers of the Holy Prophet^(saw). Every Ahmadi should acquire the habit of gratitude. When you have gratitude, it will cause contentment and tranquillity to develop.

When there is contentment, there will be little attention paid to the satisfaction by improper means of one's desires. Instead, the habit of hard work and bowing before Allah in gratitude will grow.

Then, another good work is forgiveness, that is to say, pardon any excesses. The Holy Qur'an states:

Let them forgive and pass over the offence...

(Ch. 24:V.23)

The Holy Prophet^(saw) showed so many examples of this quality that one is amazed at reading or hearing about them. Hadhrat Ayesha^(ra)

relates that the Holy Prophet^(saw) never extracted any revenge for any excess committed against himself. Once he received a roasted leg of meat from a Jewish lady. It had been spiced with some poison.

The moment he put it in his mouth, he knew that it contained poison. The poison was so potent that it still left its effect. When this lady was presented before him, she admitted that she had mixed poison in it but the Holy Prophet^(saw) forgave her. So, this was the standard of his forgiveness.

This is why he advised his followers that a wrestler who throws another on the ground in a wrestling match is not a champion but the one who overcomes his anger is the true champion wrestler because he has overturned his Satan.

So these few examples of good works that I have presented before you are so that they should become an integral part of your lives. An Ahmadi should be superior to others because he has believed in the true servant of the Holy Prophet^(saw) in this age.

If having believed in the Imam of the Age, no change has occurred in you, there is no use in your being an Ahmadi. Therefore, if you have joined Ahmadiyah because you believe it to be true, then truth should become manifest from each action of yours.

This manifestation of truth and the pure reformation within you will serve as the means of silent propagation. It will draw you nearer to the Almighty Allah for which you have accepted Ahmadiyah.

The Founder of Jama'at Ahmadiyah, the Promised Messiah^(as) states:

‘It is incumbent on each person in my Jama'at to adhere to all these legacies (that is to say on all these matters about good works) and it is necessary that there should be no impiety or laughter and ridicule in your gatherings. Walk on earth with a good heart and clean nature and pure thoughts and remember that every mischief is not worth responding to.

This is why it is essential that you should acquire the habit of

forgiveness and overlook the fault of others at most times and work with patience and wisdom. Do not attack anyone in an unjust manner and suppress your passions and egos and if anyone deals with you in a barbaric manner just say ‘peace’ and leave that gathering.’

He said:

‘May Allah make us such a community that you become a model of good works and guidance for the world... you be identified by the observance of the five daily prayers and moral conditions....

It is necessary that your hearts are free of deceit and your hands are innocent of cruelty and your eyes are pure of all impurities and apart from veracity and kindness for the creation there is nothing within you.’

So remember that it is the work of every Ahmadi to do these good works. You can be called a true Ahmadi only when you act in accordance with this teaching of the Promised Messiah^{as}).

The object of holding these Jalsas

is to remind ourselves about these good deeds because in this atmosphere when the emotions are a little bit different, attention should be drawn towards it so that the pledge that we made with the Promised Messiah^{as}), and with the Messenger of Allah and Allah the Almighty is renewed.

May Allah make everyone an exemplary Ahmadi, an exemplary citizen and an exemplary human being through whom Allah’s creation can always return His grace. Amin

Dangers of the Age and the Safeguarding of Islamic Values

(A speech delivered at the 2006 Ahmadiyya community's UK Jalsa Salana Annual Conference)

By Bilal Atkinson – Teeside, UK (A former policeman and currently Regional Ameer, North-East Region)



The dangers I have chosen to discuss are materialism, alcohol, gambling, the internet, the free social mixing of men and women, diseases such as Aids that are closely related to unchecked and uncontrolled promiscuity, and finally deceit and untruthfulness.

Materialism

The Holy Qur'an refers to this condition where it states:

Vying with each other for amassing wealth had made you oblivious. Even when you reached the graveyards.

Nay! You will soon come to know.

Nay again! you will soon come to know.

Nay, were you to know the certain knowledge,

You will surely see Hell in this very life'.

(Ch.102:Vs.2-9)

The desire to own things and to fulfil that desire occupies a very prominent place in the struggle to find contentment for most people.

Newspapers, cinema, television and radio repeatedly broadcast to lure prospective and often susceptible customers to buy the latest accessories or other fashionable luxury items and shopping centres are specifically

designed with images of fashion and glamour to entice us as we walk past. A high-paying job, a fully furnished modern house, a new car and expensive clothes are high on the priority lists of most people who see them as 'must have' commodities rather than asking themselves 'do I really need it?' or 'can I really afford it?'

When material wealth and values becomes the goal in life, one can become blind to the financial nightmare that inevitably accompanies it. In pursuit of that goal, a person often becomes selfish and loses consideration for the welfare of others and has no regard for the true values of life at all.

A superficial glance at some national economies, especially those in the West, gives the false impression that they are rich and flourishing. A superficial look at normal family living standards also gives this same false impression. However, on closer inspection, in most cases, all the amassed wealth of a nation or a family in the form of houses, cars, furniture, clothing and major household items have been bought on credit or at a hidden price.

Any economy whether national or individual which relies on spending unearned income does so at a very high cost. Most economies are run on the basis of interest, and banks are ever willing to lend the money. Thirty years ago it was not so easy to borrow money from any financial institution as there were safeguards in place based on personal income and the ability to repay the loan. However, many of those restrictions have now been removed, so much so that people who are engulfed in debt are encouraged to borrow more. Ultimately they are not really borrowing from the banks; they are borrowing from their own personal future.

The Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) has addressed the dangers of pursuing the wealth of the world. He stated:

'Too much indulgence in luxurious, easy, irresponsible living is a curse, as it is ill mannered, and heartless, to be indifferent to the sufferings of others. Every rich man is as much answerable over the due discharge of his obligations to his Creator and his fellow men,

as a poor man is. In fact a rich man is more answerable. Indeed, how unfortunate is he, for the sake of this brief life in this world, who completely turns away from God’
(*Kashti-e-Nuh*, 1902)

The Egyptian Pharaohs’ tombs were filled with all their riches and belongings as they expected to take it with them into their after-life. They arrogantly thought they could take their amassed wealth with them into to the next world; at least they thought about it, but wrongly concluded about the Hereafter. People in this age seem to have no thoughts of their life after death and this is the main cause of their moral and spiritual decline. They remain engrossed in worldly pursuits and desires until death comes upon them and they find they have wasted all their precious life chasing perishable wealth instead of pursuing the Creator of all their wealth. This increasing pursuit of materialism has caused and continues to cause a decline in spirituality.

It is the blind craze for worldly things that prevents disbelievers from acquiring the higher and

much more commendable moral and spiritual values.

The Holy Qur’an states:

O ye who believe! Spend out of what We have bestowed on you before the day comes wherein there shall be no buying or selling, nor friendship, nor intercession; and it is those who disbelieve that do wrong to themselves.
(Ch.2:V.255)

A Muslim should always try to follow the example of the Holy Prophet^(saw). Although he became the undisputed ruler of Arabia, his lifestyle was very simple and this simple life is one that is best and uncomplicated to follow. As far as the material world is concerned, we should question the true need for material goods. We should avoid borrowing money and paying interest for luxury items. We should eat simply and well and should not waste food.

Regular fasting promotes a real understanding of the needs of those who ‘have not’ and a desire to help the poor and to eradicate poverty. We should give willingly to

charitable causes and respond to all appeals of the Khalifa of the day. We should encourage an interest in sport and other outdoor pursuits as well as personal hobbies rather than visiting expensive restaurants, cinemas and other similar establishments.

Islam does not forbid us to seek worldly pursuits, that is, to gain knowledge or wealth, or occupy ourselves in business and industry. It only changes our point of view. It teaches us to give preference to divine commands over everything else. In this way, we acquire spiritual blessings and God's pleasures as well as worldly attractions. Devotion to God does not deprive us of worldly rewards. In fact, these rewards follow us like a servant. Our goal is our God and we must keep this goal in our mind every minute of our life.

Excessive materialism is at the root of many social problems, such as gambling, narcotics and crime, which often also lead to family, social and community breakdown.

Alcohol

Likewise, an even greater malaise which destroys family life and has a

huge and destructive impact on society at large, is the problem of alcohol.

The Promised Messiah^(as) addressed this issue and said:

‘O ye wise. This world will not last forever. Take hold of yourself and be steady. Give up every excess, leave all intoxicants. Alcohol is not alone in that it destroys man, but opium, marijuana, cannabis and every intoxicant that becomes habitual, disrupts the mind and eventually kills you – You must avoid them!’
(*Kashti-e-Nuh*, 1902)

In many societies, alcohol consumption seems to be the staple diet among an increasing number of people, especially the younger generation. It also seems to be an irreplaceable component of socialising and other forms of entertainment. No social gathering seems complete without alcohol as its soul mate. At weekends, the goal in life of some people, mainly from the younger generation is not to have a ‘good time’ as was the usual practice some years ago, but to ‘go out and get drunk’. That is,

to lose one's senses, decorum and modesty.

According to *The Independent* newspaper, 2nd November 2005:

'A large majority of people consume alcohol and it is well known that an increasing number of these become alcoholics. 1.1 million adults in England suffer from alcohol dependency'.

Consumption of alcohol not only destroys the individual, it destroys their family, their economy, their physical and mental health and in the long term, it damages the community at large. As a direct outcome of alcohol consumption, it has been proved beyond any doubt that morality and a sense of responsibility cease to exert any influence on those afflicted. Criminal activity also pursues a relentless advance in terms of thefts, burglaries, violence, domestic violence, child abuse, rapes, suicides and death by dangerous driving to name but a few.

The British Crime Survey 2004/2005 revealed that 48% of all

violent crime and 60% in cases of stranger violence occurred where the offender was under the influence of alcohol.

According to a study by the Institute of Alcohol Studies UK (2006) entitled '*Alcohol in Europe*', 'Apparently, one in every four people in Britain enjoys drinking with one single aim – to get completely drunk. Binge drinking is no longer a male domain either, adolescent girls and young women are just as likely to go out and get "plastered as males."'

To redress the issue of 'binge drinking' and alcoholism, the British Government have, in my opinion, erroneously, actually increased the number of hours a licensed premises is allowed to remain open. In fact, in some areas, alcohol premises are allowed to remain open 24 hours per day.

The teachings of Islam in this regard have given the perfect answer, the perfect antidote and the perfect reasoning. The Holy Qur'an states:

They ask thee concerning wine and the game of hazard. Say: In both there is great sin and

‘GOD’S CURSE FALLS ON TEN GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO DEAL WITH ALCOHOL. THE ONE WHO DISTILS IT, THE ONE FOR WHOM IT HAS BEEN DISTILLED, THE ONE WHO DRINKS IT, THE ONE WHO TRANSPORTS IT, THE ONE TO WHO IT HAS BEEN BROUGHT, THE ONE WHO SERVES IT, THE ONE WHO SELLS IT, THE ONE WHO UTILIZES MONEY FROM IT, THE ONE WHO BUYS IT AND THE ONE WHO BUYS IT FOR SOMEONE ELSE.’

(SUNAN IBN-I-MAJAH, VOL.3, BOOK OF INTOXICANTS, CHAPTER 30 HADITH No. 3380)

also some advantages for men; but their sin is greater than their advantage.

(Ch.2:V.220)

It was reported by Anas^(ra) that the Holy Prophet^(saw) said:

‘God’s curse falls on ten groups of people who deal with alcohol. The one who distils it, the one for whom it has been distilled, the one who drinks it, the one who transports it, the one to whom it has been brought, the one who serves it, the one who sells it, the one who utilizes money from it, the one who buys it and the one who buys it for someone else.’
(Sunan Ibn-I-Majah, Vol.3, Book of Intoxicants, Chapter 30 Hadith No. 3380)

Further to this the Holy Prophet of Islam^(saw) said:

‘Alcohol is the mother of all evils and it is the most shameful of evils.’

(Sunan Ibn-I-Majah, Vol.3, Book of Intoxicants, Chapter 30 Hadith No. 3371)

We should therefore teach our children about the bad effects of alcohol and should lead by example. We should avoid pubs and bars even though our non-Muslim friends may frequent them and we should only ever offer them non-alcoholic drinks.

Gambling

A recent survey by a UK newspaper (*The Independent* 25th May 2006) revealed some very interesting but shocking statistics in regard to the

UK as a gambling nation. £50 billion was spent on gambling in the UK in 2005. Since 2001, there has been a 700% increase on the money spent on gambling and more frightening, since the year 2001 there has been a 23,000% increase in online (Internet) betting. It has also been reported that there are 370,000 people addicted to gambling and it is expected that this number will increase to 700,000 within the next five years.

In total disregard to the increasing number of addicts and the destruction of their family lives, the British government, seduced by the lure of extra revenue from gambling have, this year, introduced the Gambling Act (2006) which will allow eight small, eight large and one regional or super-casinos to be built.

The whole nation is also encouraged to gamble each week on the National Lottery where gamblers are enticed by the lure of instant fortunes.

As a result, those people who seek to climb out of the depths of poverty are usually the ones who waste so much money on the Lottery leaving

them more and more penniless and frustrated as they are unable to fulfil their dreams.

Mark Griffiths, Professor of Gambling, Nottingham Trent University has commented:

‘Gambling is a voluntary form of taxation although people do not see it as such. By expanding gambling, the Government can bring in more money. There has been no great public push to liberalise it. It has all come from the gaming industry and the Government. But if you tried to reverse it there would be uproar.’

For many, gambling may become very addictive – and due to the ease of betting using the internet, it has become a much more accessible idea to certain groups of people. It is very simple to turn on a computer and log on to a website. Everywhere on the internet are recollections of users who started by placing a small bet and eventually ended up losing their homes as they tried to re-coup their losses by spending more and more on gambling. Even worse, there are players who go into major debt

because they use their credit cards and bank accounts to gamble. This can result in severe financial hardships, bankruptcy, marital and family strife and unfortunately in some instances, suicide.

Islam gives the answer and solution to the ever-growing maladies of alcohol, drugs, and gambling – it simply commands *‘Abstain from them that you may be saved.’*

There are no other means and no shortcuts to control this malignant epidemic. Islam’s social teachings are very important for the protection and survival of the family system.

These dangers tempt and attract us to their worldly advantages until before we realise it we are sucked into an addictive behaviour, so much so that we justify to ourselves no harm in partaking in these vices. This is a very slippery slope that we must guard against at an embryonic stage.

A greater openness of money matters between husband and wife, engaging in more existing interests such as study skills, creative crafts,

and spending for good causes are some of the solutions to benefit the moral and spiritual health of mankind.

The Internet

We have all heard of the many dangers of the Internet. Although some of these dangers have been greatly exaggerated, it does not alter the fact that a computer and its operator, connected to the Internet are susceptible to very real attacks on their conscience both overtly and covertly. The Internet can be a very useful tool for the pursuit of knowledge; however, there are people who feel compelled to use their knowledge about computers to access files remotely in illegal and unethical ways. Subsequently, they make life difficult for other Internet users. There is no true and proper policing system of the Internet and it is open to abuse by unscrupulous companies and individuals seeking to amass great wealth or knowledge without regard to the moral well-being or vulnerability of the people they are targeting.

The Internet is also open to abuse by criminals. For instance, there are paedophiles and other

perverting sexual deviants who try to ensnare young people by pretending to be someone other than who they actually are and this can be illustrated in the use of what are known to be Chat rooms. People can enter a chat room without any verification of who they are. The anonymity of the Internet allows chat room participants to feel more comfortable to speak without fear of being judged.

The majority of Internet users may be genuinely looking for a person of their own age and interests to talk to, but how can they tell? One's true identity is never revealed online and as a result one's inhibitions and social conscience are lowered.

Therefore, chat room conversations and topics of discussion are usually vastly different from normal interaction and often include topics one would never speak of to someone's face. In chat rooms, discussions can be violent, abusive, and can even promote hatred against others.

The Internet also gives free access to shopping, music, games, films, pornography, etc. where a person

can spend many hours pursuing these often addictive and useless pastimes which distract from healthy normal daily life. Internet use, no matter how innocent it may seem, can become addictive, and push the user beyond a balanced life.

It is becoming increasingly challenging to monitor someone's activity on the Internet while respecting their privacy at the same time. Parents worry that children will have contact with someone online who may wish to harm them and there is always the fear that increased Internet use will lead to children accessing inappropriate content such as pornography, racism and violence.

A child's safety is hard enough to protect in real life, let alone on the vast expanse of the Internet. They should be restricted to using the Internet to access information and for talking to pre-existing friends only and the computer should be in a room that is under the responsible control of the parents. Children should also be encouraged to read books and other literature as a prime source for gaining knowledge.

Free social mixing between men and women.

In Islam the free mixing of men and women from the time they become sexually aware is prohibited. On the face of it, this may appear rather harsh, but if we examine the effects of unrestricted contact between the sexes, we will soon see the wisdom behind this restriction.

Today, in the world, every type of crime that results from free mixing of the sexes is on the increase with a parallel degeneration of morals. Whilst morality is on the decline, immodesty and licentiousness seem to be more and more acceptable to modern society.

In the West particularly, men and women can walk semi-naked in public, swim topless, drink and dance in bars and clubs, and feel free to have casual sex with anybody they choose.

Pornography, prostitution, adultery, divorce, one-parent families, abortion, co-habiting couples and same sex couples, as well as immodest dress and speech seem to be much more acceptable now than they were in the past; and the

results and consequences are quite devastating. The so-called 'permissive society' in which we live has proved to be quite destructive in terms of family unity, human dignity and self-respect. Families are often torn apart, diseases are spread and people's characters become twisted and distorted.

There are many practices in modern society that may slowly affect the institution and acceptability of purdah for both Muslim men and women. If the Islamic concept of purdah is not followed by both men and women, then it is an institution that will be lost.

In addition to offering prayers in congregation, men, women and their children should keep company of the righteous and regularly attend at Jama'at functions. This should be their priority to avoid segregating themselves from Islamic values. Islam restricts this free and unrestrained intermixing of the sexes.

Umm Salamah reported that she and Maimunah (who were both wives of the Holy Prophet^(saw)) were with the

Holy Prophet^(saw) when the son of Umm Makhtum, who was blind, came to speak with him. The Holy Prophet^(saw) told his wives to observe purdah in front of the visitor. Umm Salamah said:

‘O Messenger of Allah, he is a blind man and will not see us’. The Prophet said, “He may be blind but you are not, and do you not see him?”
(Sunan Abu Daud Book 32 Number 4100)

In the Qur’an, God explains the essence of Islamic purdah or covering which embodies the attitude of both men and women and is reflected in dress and behaviour.

The Holy Qur’an gives guidance and teaches:

Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them... And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts...
 (Ch.24:Vs.31-32)

Not only do women have to cover

themselves in front of men who are strangers to them, but they are also required to lower their gaze. Men are also required to observe purdah, thus preventing them from falling into any moral lapses. Purdah should be observed in a most appropriate manner but it should not be restrictive. We should never become lax in our values especially as more of us are now interacting at work and other social gatherings. We must still maintain the spirit of purdah e.g. we should try to avoid attending office parties and other functions especially those where alcohol, music, singing and dancing is ‘the order of the day’. Handshaking between men and women should also be avoided.

The more frequent the opportunities for social interchange between men and women, the more likely is the natural attraction which God has placed between them; this will result in relationships that are bound to endanger morality in a society.

Then there are the diseases, such as Aids, which are partly fuelled by uncontrolled promiscuity and sexuality.

A decline in moral and spiritual standards almost inevitably leads to a decline in physical health. The spread of sexually transmitted diseases, as well as neurotic, mental and psychological diseases that claim hundreds of thousands of lives of people are among the acknowledged effects of sexual promiscuity.

One of the most dangerous diseases is Aids which is caused by the HIV virus. This virus is responsible for damaging the body's immunity leaving it vulnerable to all factors of decay. AIDS has reached all the continents of the world and continues more or less unabated despite certain drugs that may prolong the life of those infected. Millions of people have succumbed to this menace, a fact that provides a modern piece of evidence for the words of the Prophet Muhammad^(saw) who said:

‘It never happens that permissiveness overwhelms a people to the extent that they display their acts of sex shamelessly and they are not uniquely punished by God. Among them, invariably, pestilence is

made to spread and such other diseases, the like of which have never been witnessed by their forefathers.’

(Sunan Ibn-e-Majah. Kitabul-Fitan, – ‘Uqoobat.Vol.11. Dar-ul-Fikr Al-Arabi, p.1333)

Again we should encourage an interest in sport and other outdoor pursuits as well as other interests such as design and construction or agriculture and gardening rather than watching unsuitable indecent, lewd or violent programmes and films on TV or at the cinema.

Deceit and Untruthfulness

Falsehood is the basis, the starting point of most sins. Today, lack of truth is found all over the world without any exception. Of all the moral evils, lying is the worst and has a variety of complex causes. Most people look upon the telling of a so-called ‘white lie’ as socially acceptable. A lie is a lie no matter what colour you paint it and no matter how acceptable it is to society. Many moral, social and economic problems in the world stem from lack of truthfulness, honesty and integrity. Without truth there can be no proper justice, and without justice,

bitterness and recrimination is spawned. In the end, man's inhumanity to his fellow man pursues a relentless and most damaging course. When we allow materialistic values to enter our daily life and rely on falsehood, then we surround ourselves with unscrupulous people and thus get into a spiral of betrayal of trusts and treachery.

Speaking the truth is a great virtue that should be instilled in every person and every child as if it was an actual limb without which the body cannot function.

For a truly truthful person it is essential that he follows the truth without any regard to his own personal desires or interests. Only those people who stick to the truth, even at the risk of loss of life, honour or property, are really truthful.

Once, a man approached the Holy Prophet^(saw) and explained to him that he had many evil habits which included lying. He asked how he could free himself from such a sinful way of life. The Holy Prophet^(saw) gave a very simple answer – he told him to always tell

the truth as this would rid him of all his evil habits.

The man soon realised that if someone enquired about his day-to-day activities he would have no choice but to tell the truth. Submission to truth proved to be the most appropriate medicine and a cure for his evil ways.

The teachings of the Holy Qur'an in regard to truthfulness is complete and of the highest order: The Holy Qur'an states:

Truthful men and truthful women.....Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward ..

(Ch.33:V.36)

In this verse, the nature and philosophy of the truth is described and all aspects are fully covered. The Holy Qur'an says that truth should be for the sake of God alone. We know we cannot hide anything from Him. Also, if we really believe that God is Omniscient, then we cannot hide behind a lie or falsehood to save our skins.

We should therefore self-reflect

every day about our own actions and their consequences and strive to reform in accordance with Islamic teaching.

A verse of the Holy Qur'an summarises the requirements mankind needs to fulfil in order to maintain and preserve high moral standards and to shield it from evil influences. It states:

Verily Allah requires you to abide by justice, and to treat with grace and give like the giving of kin to kin; and forbids indecency and manifest evil, and transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.

(Ch. 16:V:91)

The words of this verse are quite plain and simple and can be easily understood by persons of all intellectual abilities. In a nutshell, this verse has enjoined justice, the doing of good to others, kindness as between brothers and has forbidden indecency, manifest evil and wrongful transgression.

This particular verse of the Holy Qur'an combines all the essential qualities of a perfect teaching and

encompasses the complete course of moral and spiritual evolution and growth of man and by following such Divine guidance, a true believer is ensured delivery from all conceivable vices.

As Ahmadi Muslims we should remain as close as possible to the Khalifa of the day and his instruction as they will safeguard us from the ills of the age. Khilafat is a blessed institution, a gift from Allah the Almighty, which we should cherish and use to help us maintain our Islamic values. If we ignore his guidance then we have no excuse for our moral decline.

Avoiding vices of the modern age is indeed the fundamental way of fighting our modern day jihad – the upward struggle for self-improvement, achieving closeness to Allah and vying in the doing of good deeds. Unless we remove these vices from ourselves we cannot reach Allah and we cannot convey the beauties of our perfect religion to others unless we are practising it.

In his pursuit of theoretical worldly happiness and contentment and by developing selfish ways, man

disregards the true purpose of his life, which is to attain closeness to God and the road to true happiness and contentment.

The Holy Qur'an states:

Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort.

(Ch13:V.29)

'This beautiful verse embodies a profound truth. The more the people of the world gain the paltry goods of this life, the greater becomes the hunger and the consequent burning of their heart. But as for those who seek God, the more they turn to Him, the greater is their peace of mind. This shows that the search for God is the innermost yearning of human nature and the real goal of man's life and when that goal is attained man begins to enjoy perfect peace of mind.'

(P.1212, Commentary 1640, Holy Qur'an edited by Malik Ghulam Farid, Islam International Publications Ltd. 1994)

In conclusion, I have only highlighted a small number of the many dangers and obstacles facing mankind today especially the unity and stability of our family life. It is only by faithfully and sincerely adopting the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an and the practice of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad Mustafa^(saw), that Muslims, can preserve and safeguard their moral Islamic values. Faithful practice of Islamic values will safeguard them for the next generation. Muslims and especially Ahmadi Muslims should be easily recognisable in modern society as torchbearers for strong moral values contributing to a moral and just society for now and for the future of our children.

Abdus Salam and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics

By Sameen Ahmed Khan – *Middle East College of Information Technology (MECIT), Muscat, Sultanate of Oman*

The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics has turned forty. We shall briefly review its origins and achievements.

40 Years of ICTP

On 4-5th October 2004, ICTP (Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, in Trieste, Italy) celebrated its 40th anniversary with an international conference, *Legacy of the Future*. The conference attracted more than three hundred scientists and policy makers around the world. Significantly, the conference held a roundtable discussion on the future of science in the developing world. It is this concern for the developing world, since its inception in 1964, which makes ICTP unique.

The name of ICTP is forever linked to its founder, Abdus Salam, a co-winner of the 1979 Nobel Prize in Physics, the

founder and long-time director of ICTP. Salam was born in 1926 in Jhang, then part of India. Jhang became part of Pakistan after the division of the subcontinent in 1947. Salam returned to Pakistan in 1951 after a brilliant start to a research career in Britain. In Pakistan he experienced the dilemma of trying to perform scientific research and advanced studies in the relative isolation of a developing country. Without access to conferences, journals and other forms of support, Salam made the very difficult decision to leave his home country to continue his work in physics. He joined the Imperial College in London and established a research group with extraordinary distinction. Salam's first hand experience in coping with scarce resources and the remote location of his country prompted him to create ICTP with the aim to foster the growth of advanced scientific studies and research in developing countries.

Salam's vision has been fulfilled.

Abdus Salam decided to create an international centre dedicated to theoretical physics, which would pay special attention to the needs of scientists from the developing world. In 1960, Salam outlined a proposal for the Centre, at the *Tenth Annual International Conference on High Energy Physics*, in Rochester, USA. The same year he presented the proposal before the delegates attending the General Conference of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Commission), in Vienna, Austria.

Salam's brainchild met with enthusiastic support from eminent physicists including the Nobel Laureate Niels Bohr and later his son Aage Bohr (who later received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1975). But Salam's ongoing efforts to secure support for the creation of the Centre encountered a series of obstacles set in place by the IAEA's *Scientific Advisory Committee* (SAC). The Committee (which included Nobel Laureate Isidor Isaac Rabi) suggested that

programmes at existing centres of theoretical physics could prove more cost-effective and easier-to-implement, than creating a *new* Centre from scratch. Committee members also expressed concerns that a centre in theoretical physics would have no practical applications for developing countries struggling to improve their living standards (see Page No.7 in ⁽¹⁾). It is very glaring that Rabi who had drafted the Florence resolution of 1950, urging UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) to create regional science centres, had opposed the creation of ICTP. It is to be recalled that the Florence resolution had played an important role leading to the establishment of the European Organisation for Nuclear Research⁽²⁾. It is widely known by the French acronym CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire). CERN, located in Geneva, Switzerland was founded in 1954 by a group of twelve countries from Europe. Now it has twenty Member Countries. CERN has developed into the largest accelerator laboratory in the world⁽³⁾. In the

prehistory of CERN, Niels Bohr had expressed some reservations of creating CERN⁽⁴⁾.

Sigvard Eklund, a strong believer in Abdus Salam's vision, was appointed the Director-General of IAEA in 1961. This was the turning point as Salam's idea triumphed. The IAEA soon realised that the new Centre could not be created solely from its own funds. Financial offers came from the governments of Italy with Trieste as the candidate site; from Denmark for Copenhagen; from Pakistan for Lahore; and from Turkey for Ankara. The most generous offer came from Italy and the man behind this was Professor Paolo Budinich, a famous theoretical physicist in Italy. Budinich argued that the Centre would help ease East-West tensions due to the Cold War.

After a slow but clear sailing for four years in the corridors of policymakers, Salam's proposal became a reality. On 5 October 1964, a group of high officials, mostly from Italy, joined eminent physicists from around the world for the inaugural meeting of the

newly-created International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP). A seminar on plasma physics served as a platform from which ICTP was officially launched. Abdus Salam, who spearheaded the drive for the creation of ICTP by working through IAEA, became the Centre's director. Paolo Budinich, who worked tirelessly to bring the Centre to Trieste, became ICTP's deputy director. After residing for four years in downtown Trieste, ICTP moved to its permanent location near the Miramare Park in 1968. UNESCO joined in extending support to the new Centre in 1970. Over the four decades ICTP has accomplished its goals.

Since its birth four decades ago, several scientific bodies have spawned with headquarters in and around ICTP. Collectively, they are known as the 'Trieste Science System', which include SISSA (International School of Advanced Study) and TWAS (Third World Academy of Sciences). TWAS was recently renamed as The Academy of Sciences for the Developing World, but the acronym will remain

the same as before⁽⁵⁾. ICTP is encouraging science in the developing countries through its various visiting programmes. It is also recognising their talent through the prizes and medals it has instituted. This is reflected as follows:

- Around two thousand scientific activities (from introductory schools to advanced workshops) have been organised on the ICTP's premises.
- Around a hundred thousand scientific visitors have been to ICTP. About half of them came from developing countries and many of them regard ICTP as a scientific home away from home.
- Thousands of research papers have resulted from the work of the ICTP community.
- Almost every physics Ph.D in the continent of Africa has some link with ICTP.
- Over eighty Nobel Laureates, as well as many prestigious

scientists have given lectures at ICTP.

In 2004, ICTP had 7134 participants in about fifty meetings totaling to 4327 person-months. 69% came from developing countries. In all 124 countries were represented. ICTP has successfully evolved from a *vision to a system*⁽⁶⁾. ICTP was renamed as Abdus Salam ICTP on the occasion of Salam's first death anniversary in November 1997.

ICTP held a *Conference on Physics of Tsunamis* in March 2005, which was another evidence of its deep involvement in the developing countries. With all the visiting and international coordination programmes the annual budget of ICTP is about US\$23 million. This is the range of budget that can be afforded by the many developing countries. Centres modeled after ICTP have been set up in South Korea and Latin America, though on a reduced scale. They have been successful not only in curbing brain-drain but also in attracting back those scientists who had migrated to the developed countries. ICTP provides a viable

model for implementing science programmes in the developing countries.

Concluding Remarks

The anniversary of the ICTP was celebrated not only by physicists but by the global scientific community. They drew attention of the media and the public at large. The generous support by the Italian government for ICTP has set a unique example in the North-South cooperation. From the very beginning, ICTP has been addressing the problems being faced by the developing countries. Salam had dreamt of creating twenty ICTPs around the world. As part of that vision, he actively promoted the idea of advancing the cause of science and technology in the developing countries, not only by having researchers from the region work with their colleagues in the developed world, but also by having the region develop its own facilities. For the Middle East region, he had suggested facilities including a synchrotron laboratory⁽⁷⁻⁹⁾. SESAME (Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East)

synchrotron facility, hosted by Jordan, has been a significant development⁽¹⁰⁾. Regional Synchrotron Radiation Facilities (RSRF) in the continents of Africa, Asia and South America can be a step towards that dream⁽¹¹⁾. Will the decision-makers in the developing countries take heed⁽¹²⁾?

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