



THE *Ahmadiyya* **Gazette** **USA**

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

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**33RD U.K. AHMADIYYA ANNUAL CONVENTION HELD
MORE THAN 17000 PARTICIPANTS FROM 59 COUNTRIES ATTENDED
LIFE GIVING DISCOURSES FROM HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH IV
5,004,591 NEW MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN THE INTERNATIONAL BAI'AT
(INITIATION) FROM 93 COUNTRIES AND 223 ETHNIC GROUPS**

The 33rd UK Annual Convention of Jamaat Ahmadiyya was held on July 31, August 1 and 2, 1998. Because of the presence of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV, this Convention has assumed international dimensions. Delegates from all the continents participated in the convention. They listened to the discourses of Huzoor and had a chance to meet him.

In addition to the five daily prayers, the *Tahajjud* prayers were also attended by the participants who also listened to the *Dars* of the Holy Quran and the Hadith. On the last day of the Convention, there was a Question and Answer session, with Huzoor answering to the questions from the audience, especially the non-Muslims participants.

The International *Bai'at* has become an institution for the last so many years. At this ceremony, new converts to Ahmadiyya Muslim Community participate via satellite, with representatives from the various countries being present at the ceremony. Words uttered by the Khalifatul Masih IV are simultaneously translated in many languages. The scene presented is unique. At the conclusion of the International *Bai'at*, all the participants bowed in prostration to thank the Almighty Allah for His bounties.

This year, over 5 million new persons joined the Movement. Since 1993, when the International Bai'at was organized for the first time, more than ten million new members have joined the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat.

The highlight of the programs of the Convention was the addresses by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV and the Mulaqat of the participants with Huzoor in which thousands of participants get a chance to have a personal audience with Huzoor. Huzoor addressed the audience four times during the Convention, in addition to giving the Friday Sermon, just before the start of the Convention.

Many months before the Convention, hundreds of volunteers from the Jamaat Ahmadiyya UK got busy to prepare for the Convention, which includes beautifying Islamabad for the occasion. More volunteers

joined them during the Convention to take care of all the arrangements, including feeding and housing the participants.

An International Tabligh Seminar was held one day before the Convention in which delegates from many countries participated and gave accounts of their experiences in Tabligh.

In addition of the Ahmadiyya delegates from various countries, local and national officials addressed the convention and praised the superb arrangements made by the Ahmadiyya Jamaat for the Convention. Messages from the British Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition and leaders of other countries were read out.

The International *Shoora* was held on the day following the Convention.

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FROM THE HOLY QURAN

"Verily, the righteous will be placed amid gardens and fountains. 'Enter therein with peace and safety'. And We shall remove whatever of rancor may be in their breasts so that they will become as brothers seated on thrones, facing one another. Fatigue shall not touch them there, nor shall they ever be ejected therefrom. Tell My servants that I am surely the One Most Forgiving, the Merciful; And also that My punishment is the grievous punishment." (15:46-51)

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ
فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۖ أَدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ أَمْيُنِينَ ۖ وَنَزَعْنَا
مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۖ
لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَوَهْمًا وَمِمَّا يَشْتَأُونَ وَيَأْتِي
عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ۖ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ
الْأَلِيمُ ۖ

SAYINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET (peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

Hadhrat Anas bin Malik, may God be pleased with him, reported that the Holy prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, said: God is very pleased with a person who repents. This pleasure of God is more than the pleasure of a person who has lost his mount in the middle of a jungle and then unexpectedly finds it. In another tradition it is reported: God is pleased with His servant's repentance much more than the pleasure of a person who

had lost his mount in a jungle while it had all his provisions of food and water. He is extremely worried and looks all around till, exhausted and extremely sad, he lies down under a tree and falls asleep. He suddenly wakes up to find his mount near him. He jumps up with joy and in his extreme excitement he exclaims: O my Allah, You are my servant and I am your provider, although he really meant the other way around.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH (peace be on him)

THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE

Istighfar means not to commit a sin apparently and the faculty of sinning should not upsurge. The same is the meaning of a Prophet's *Istighfar* also. They are surely innocent but they repeat *Istighfar* so that this faculty does not upsurge in future. For others its meanings are that Allah may protect them from the dire consequences of the crimes and sins committed in the past and forgive them. Simultaneously, He may secure them from committing sins in the future.

It is incumbent upon man to always remain busy repeating *Istighfar*. The miseries like famines and other calamities that are inflicted on the world mean that people should keep busy in doing *Istighfar*. But it does not mean that they do merely

lip service by saying only *Astaghfirullah, Astaghfirullah*. As a matter of fact, for our people, reality remains concealed because the word comes from a foreign language. Arabs knew its meaning very well, but because of the foreign language, a lot of realities remained hidden from people of our country.

Many assert that they repeated *Istighfar* a lot of times or counted rosary a hundred times or a thousand times. If asked its meaning, they know nothing and remain dazed. One should keep on begging forgiveness of his sins and crimes that he may not suffer their consequences and continue seeking Allah's help that He grants strength for virtuous deeds in the future and keep him secure from sins also.

Remember very well that mere lip service will avail nothing. You can repeat *Istighfar* in your own tongue that Allah may forgive you past sins and secure you from future misdeeds and grant strength for virtues in the coming days. This is real *Istighfar*. It is futile to say *Astaghfirullah, Astaghfirullah* with your tongue and the heart remains unconcerned of its reality. Remember that only that act reaches God which comes from the heart.

One should pray abundantly in his own language which affects the heart as well. The tongue merely stands witness to the heart. If there is enthusiasm in the heart and tongue also combines with it, it is something good. Without the heart, mere lip service is futile. Supplications that come

out of the heart are real prayers. If man supplicates from his heart before the onslaught of disaster and repeats *Istighfar*, then it *stays*. That is why one should pray before it comes and keep on doing *Istighfar*. This secures man from future calamity when it is to befall.

Our Jama'at should exhibit distinct. He who pledges bai'at and exhibits the same harsh treatment to his wife and remains bad tempered with his family as before, it is no good. What is the use of pledging bai'at, if bad manners and rudeness persist. This should be that after pledging bai'at one should exhibit to his relatives and neighbors that he is not the man of the past. (Malfoozat vol. 9, p. 373-74)

PRONOUNCEMENTS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH

WHY NOT TO PRAY BEHIND A NON-AHMADI

(a) On the 20th of February, 1901, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was asked why he had forbidden his followers to Pray behind those who were not his followers. The Promised Messiah said: Those among the people who have hastened to think evil of this Movement have not acted with TAQWA (fear of God or righteousness). God says in the Holy Quran: *Innama Yataqabba-lallahho Minal Muttaqeen*, i.e., God accepts the Prayers of only such people as are God-fearing. That is why I have told my followers not to pray behind such people whose own Prayer has no chance of acceptance. Since ages past, the saintly people have always been of the view that he who opposes truth, gets his faith lost. Those who do not believe in the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are termed as kafirs, but those who do not believe in the Mahdi and Messiah also lose their faith: the result in both cases is identical. It starts with opposition and denials, goes to estrangement, enmity, exaggeration (in opposition) and the last stage reached is that where faith is altogether lost. Do not take it to be a minor thing. It is a matter connected with faith; it is a question of Paradise and Hell. He who rejects me does not only reject me. My rejection is tantamount to the rejection of God and His Messenger, peace be on him, because he who belies me, in fact, before belying me, belies God. For, he sees that the internal and the external

troubles have exceeded their limits, and, despite the fact that God has given a promise in the words *Inna Nahno Nazzalmaz Zikra wa Inna Lahoo La-Haafizoon* Verily, We have sent down this Remembrance, and verily, We are its Guardian) yet, according to Him, He has made no arrangement for the reformation of the world.

(b) On the 26th of July, 1902, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, is reported to have said that his followers should not pray behind anybody who is not a member of his Community. He further remarked that was virtuous for them, and, in fact, therein lay the secret of victory and progress of the Movement. He also said that if his followers got themselves mixed up with others, God would no more show them the favors which He was then bestowing on them.

MOVEMENTS DURING THE PRAYER

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was asked on November 29, 1904: If an Ahmadi is Praying (in a room) and his boss knocks at the door to ask for the key of the office of the dispensary, what should that Ahmadi do?

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was also told that a certain Ahmadi had been dismissed from his post because of not answering to this kind of call.

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, said: 'The circumstances necessitated that he should have opened the door and given the key to his boss. More so, because if due to his delay somebody (for whom the medicine was needed) had died, it would have been a great sin. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him, is reported to have said that one could walk to the door while Praying and open it; that, he said, would not vitiate the Prayer. Likewise, if a child is in danger, or there is a ferocious beast or venomous animal which can cause harm to the child, it is permissible that beast or animal should be killed and the life of the child be saved; that would not vitiate the Prayer, now would it be a sin. Some people have even gone to the extent that if you have tied a horse, and while you are Praying, it gets the rope broken and is let loose, you may tie it again and that would not spoil your Prayer. For, as far as Prayer is concerned, it can even be repeated within the prescribed time.'

Of course, it must be remembered that this permission is to be availed of in very delicate situations. You should not ignore the significance of the Prayer for petty reasons. You should not make it a plaything. It is strictly forbidden to engage oneself in different things while in the course of Prayer. God, as you know, fully knows the intentions of all the people, which are hidden in their hearts.

LONG SURAS IN THE PRAYER

A certain Imam was reported to the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, for reciting long Suras during the Prayers. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, remarked that he should not lose sight of the weak among the people whom he was leading in Prayers.

HE WHO PRAYS BEHIND A NON-AHMADI

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was told that a certain follower of his occasionally prayed behind the non-Ahmadis. And at times he had to lead the Ahmadis in Prayers. Was it permissible to pray behind him, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was asked.

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, said: 'Unless he repents, the other Ahmadis should not pray behind him.' (The Badr, 23.5.1907)

JOINING A MOSQUE WITH A HOUSE

A certain person wrote to the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, to the effect that his grandfather had set aside a portion of his house as a Mosque and that now this portion was not used as such. He then asked if that portion of the house could be joined with the rest of the building, i.e., if it could be used as a part of the house.

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, said: 'Yes, it may be joined.' (The Al-Hakam, October 17, 1907).

SUPPLICATION IN ONE'S OWN LANGUAGE

The Badr of July 2, 1904, records the following answer from the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, to the question: Is it permissible to pray in one's language during the Prayers?

'All the languages have been made by God. It is very essential that the people should supplicate to God in their own language (the language which they decidedly know more than any other language) during the Prayers. That will produce a better effect on their hearts and will enable them to humble themselves before God, as they are expected to do. The Word of God should be recited in Arabic language, but you must learn its meaning, and as for supplication, that should be done in one's own language. Such people as finish up their Prayers hurriedly and then sit down to supplicate to God, are ignorant of the fact that Prayer offers the best chance to supplicate to God. You should supplicate much during your Prayers.'

PLURALIZING THE PRAYERS

The Imam of a certain Mosque asked the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, if he could pluralize the singular number mentioned in the prayers and thus join all those who Prayed behind him in those prayers.

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, said: 'The prayers which occur in the Holy Quran should be recited in their original words and no change should be made therein. As for those taken from the books of Hadith, they can be changed from singular to plural forms.'

PROPAGATION OF ISLAM DEPENDS ON FOLLOWING METICULOUSLY THE ADVICE OF THE HOLY PROPHET

(Summary of Friday Sermon of July 31, 1998. Translated by Dr. Rasheed Syed Azam from Urdu Text of Al-Fazl International Weekly, London of August 14, 1998)

Syedna Hazrat Ameerul Momineen (aba) delivered this Friday Sermon from Islamabad, Tilford, England, on the eve of the 33rd Annual Jalsa in UK. After Tashahud, Ta'awazz and Surah Al-Fatiha, Huzoor (aba) recited a verse from the Holy Quran:

"And for the believers who perform righteous deeds, We shall surely remove from them their evils and their works shall certainly earn the best of rewards." (29:8)

Huzoor (aba) after the translation of the verse explained that here Allah has given His promise to those who become righteous and perform good deeds that He will remove the consequences of their evil deeds done in the past and give them the best of rewards for their good deeds.

Huzoor (aba) said that he would like to give some advice with reference to the directives of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) in the guiding light of the verse just recited.

Huzoor (aba) presented some *Ahadeeth* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) related to the following important matters in religious preaching, teaching and practice:

- Give people glad tidings
- Make the practice of religion easy for people;
- Do not be hard or exacting in religious practices as this breeds hatred for religion;
- Use of force in teaching or in practice is forbidden and is against the spirit of Islam.

Huzoor (aba) emphasized that the propagation of the true religion of Islam is dependent upon the fact that we meticulously follow the advice and observe the practice of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), the best of all the Prophets of Allah. Huzoor (aba) said that the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is often advised to carry the load of the whole world. Members are directed to serve the humanity to their maximum ability. However, it is essential that they are also informed how to discharge this duty so that they may neither get tired nor give up feeling frustrated. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) advised people to act according to their capacity, as Allah does not

burden any one beyond one's capacity. However, you should also remember that your capacity continues to increase with help from Allah when you perform good deeds.

Huzoor (aba) said that it is an arduous task to invite the whole world to the path of God Almighty. Helping the world follow this path requires continuous training and education to transform godless people into godly people. This is an unending task and accomplishment of this objective may be beyond the capacity of one single nation and too heavy a burden to bear. You will get tired but God Almighty never gets tired. Therefore, Allah loves those good deeds, however small, which are within one's capacity and are performed with regularity and consistency. This was the practice of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) to be considerate for the weak that they are not overburdened or exhausted.

Huzoor (aba) narrated some examples from the sacred life of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.):

- He advised that the smaller chapters from the Holy Quran should be recited to make the Prayer (Salat) easy on people.
- His sermons were cut appropriately short or delivered long sometimes as needed.

Huzoor (aba) mentioned one Hadith of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) in which such noble deeds are narrated which bring a person closer to paradise and the hell is far removed from him. The pivotal point of those good deeds is to keep one's tongue under control. Huzoor (aba) also narrated the following prayer of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and explained its meanings:

"O My Allah, Who controls all hearts, keep my heart steadfastly on your Deen (way)."

Huzoor (aba) said: "Do not just desire to follow but truly follow the advice of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and make his directives as an amulet, the most precious and the dearest object of your life. Your conduct during this Jalsa should be in accordance with the directives of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). It is absolutely wrong to delay the implemen-

tation an action after receiving the right command.”

There is another reason Huzoor (aba) added. There is no certainty about life and no one knows how long one is going to live. Therefore, it is improper to delay action when one is invited to do a good deal in life.

At the end, Huzoor (aba) also read out a passage from the writings of the Promised Messiah (ah) which contained the following message:

“Irrigate the garden of your faith with the pure water of the streams of your righteous deeds.”

ENTERTAIN YOUR GUESTS WITH HONOR

ADVICE FOR HOSTS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS VISITING GUESTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE ANNUAL JALSA IN GREAT BRITAIN

(Summary of Friday Sermon of July 24, 1998. Translated by Dr. Rasheed Syed Azam from Urdu Tex AlFazi International Weekly, London of August 14, 1998)

Syedna Hazrat Ameerul Momineen Khalifatul Massih IV (aba) delivered this sermon in Fazl Mosque, London. After Tashahud, Ta'awazz and Surah Al-Fatiha, Huzoor (aba) recited verses 25-27 from Surah *Al-Dharyat*, from the Holy Quran:

"Has the story of Abraham's honored quests reached thee? When they came to him and said 'peace be on you'. He replied 'peace be on you too'. They all looked strangers. And he quietly went to his household and brought a roasted calf (for them to eat)." (51:25-27)

Huzoor (aba) said that he had made those verses the subject of his sermon because the days for hosting our guests were at hand. Huzoor (aba), narrating how Hazrat Abraham (ah) entertained his guests, said: 'I have selected this topic with the expectation that all members of Ahmadiyya Community will revive the Sunnah of Hazrat Abraham (ah).'

Huzoor (aba) said that "all the guest who are coming to participate in the Annual Jalsa are our worthy guests, they are indeed the honorable guests of the Promised Messiah (ah). We are expected to treat our guests according to the noble traditions established by the Promised Messiah (ah)."

Huzoor (aba) then presented some *ahadeeth* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). The subject matter of the *ahadeeth* highlighted the mutual relationship and responsibility of the hosts and their guests, in particular the responsibility of the host to honor his guest in providing him with necessary comfort.

Huzoor (aba) said that suitable arrangements are made by the Jama'at for guests in accordance with their needs and circumstances but all guests are honorable. In the light of those *ahadeeth*, Huzoor

(aba) made several other points:

- It is righteous to greet your brethren with a smile,
- A leader of his nation should be treated according to his status
- According to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), a guest should be asked to wake for Prayer.

Huzoor (aba) read out some extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah (ah) which included the advice that all guests should be respected whether you know them or do not know them. Huzoor (aba) also gave some general directives to the visiting guests regarding (a) Length of their stay under the management of the Jama'at; (b) Abstaining from asking for loans; (c) Observing purdah and covering head; (d) Usage of Islamic salutation; (e) Tarbiyyat of women and children; (f) Crowding roads or standing on the roads to obstruct passage of others; (g) Discharging one's obligation by removing anything harmful from the path; (h) Being always mindful of cleanliness all around.

Huzoor (aba) gave a detailed guidance to all participants of Jalsa Salana to remain constantly vigilant about the security and safety and remain involved in prayer and supplication to Allah at all times. "We should always remember our obligation to fulfill the high standards and expectations now associated with our *Jam'at's* Organization".

Huzoor (aba) prayed to Allah *Ta'ala* for the success and safe completion of the Annual Jalsa and for making it a joyous experience for all participants in every way and that all the participants return home with happy memories and good news. *Ameen*.

*Majlis Irfan***RELIGIOUS SIMILARITIES**

(Transcribed by Amatul-Hadi Ahmad)

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the Fourth Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, from time to time offers to people of all faiths and beliefs, the opportunity of raising questions and issues that may be of interest to them. Presented below are answers given by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad to questions raised in two sessions held in London on 26th March 1995 and 3rd March 1996 respectively.

26th March 1995

Questioner: There are about five or six major religions in the world at the moment. Some of these religions claim to possess the pathway to God. For instance, Jesus said I am the Truth and the Light and that no one cometh to the Father except through me. May I ask which of these religions is the right pathway to God?

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad: First of all, let me remove the misunderstanding about Jesus (a.s.) being the gateway to God. All Prophets of God, when they come and wherever they come, are the gateway to God at the time of their advent and in the society in which they come. Were all those other Prophets 'closed gates'? When Buddha invited people to come to (his teaching of) emancipation from their own devilish command over themselves, what was he inviting them to—a shut door? Similarly, when Moses (a.s.) came before Jesus (a.s.) and Abraham (a.s.) before him and Noah (a.s.) and Adam (a.s.), what did they claim? Did they claim that we are a door shut—you cannot go through us to God? If that is the position then it is such an absurd thing to have happened in history that religion no longer remains worthy of acceptance as such.

It is a misunderstanding on the part of the Christians who misinterpret this claim of Jesus Christ to be a claim of monopoly. He never made any claim to monopoly. All Prophets of God are raised to God (and thus guide their people to God). The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) enlarged this even further when he stated that, 'My companions are like stars—whichever you follow you will be led to the Truth'. So, this is a universal phenomenon and if it is not accepted as a universal phenomenon then God has to be rejected universally.

Questioner: My second question is about God's omnipresence—He is present everywhere. In the Bible there is a passage that says God is in the innermost

part of your heart.

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad: Again, this expression is not specific to Christianity. This expression is found in almost all religions that I have studied. In the Holy Qur'an, speaking of man, God states, 'We are nearer to him than his jugular vein', (Ch. 50, v. 17). So, God is in man. And again, the Holy Qur'an states that God is so close to man that between his decisive power and his heart God intercedes—He remains there. (Ch. 8, v. 25). Then describing God from a different point of view, the Holy Qur'an says, whichever way you direct your attention, you will find God there. Then the Holy Qur'an states that God is the Light of the heavens and the earth, (Ch. 24, v. 36), and so He is everywhere. There is no concept of any existence where God is not and no concept of any void where God is not. So, this is the complete claim of the Holy Qur'an and it is not in contradiction to any other religious claim.

3rd March 1996

Questioner: I am from Malaysia and we believe that by the time Imam Mahdi comes to this world, Islam will be the strongest religion in the world. What is confusing is that if we say that this religion is the strongest religion then why is it that for the past three years when Bosnia was suffering attack from the Christian community, no Islamic country came forward to help? Why is America involved instead?

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad: You have asked two questions in one. The second question I advise you to address to Saudi Arabia, to Kuwait, to Jordan, to Syria and to such other countries you are blaming for the absolute lack of interest in Muslim affairs. I am not answerable for what they do. I am answerable only on behalf of the Ahmadiyya Community with our belief that the Imam Mahdi has come.

Now, as far as your hearsay reports about Imam Mahdi suddenly transforming the world of Islam into

the most powerful people on earth is concerned, I disagree with that view as false on the count of contrary historical evidence. No man who was ever raised by God as a Prophet or a Messenger or a Reformer brought about such a miracle in the world—not even the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). Fourteen hundred years have passed and still you yourself are quoting the example of the Bosnians being Muslims completely helpless and laid at the mercy of their non-Muslim enemy. Here, it is not the Christians who have perpetrated any crime against them—that is also wrong. Those who have perpetrated the most horrid crimes against the Bosnian Muslims are people without any religion—they are practically atheists and morally destitute. So, why blame Christianity unnecessarily for crimes committed by non-Christians.

Now, coming back to the question of Imam Mahdi, I remind you of the basic fundamental principle that God has enunciated repeatedly in the Holy Qur'an, (Ch. 35, v. 44) and that is, God's ways in relation to mankind, in relation to religion, have become part of human history and of religious history and you will never see any change in the conduct of God in relation to the attitudes of the people on earth and (the Holy Qur'an) repeatedly challenges man to find one single instance where God changed His way and His attitude to the problem. Whenever He raised a Prophet He chose a person who, whilst belonging to the stronger sections of society, was individually weak and was never supported by any powerful group. Every Prophet came independently as a single person yet he gained a following through a very strong and persistent struggle and endeavor which he continued regardless of the pressure of the enemy against him. The miracle which is the *Sunnah* (the way) of God in this case which was common to all prophets was that despite the fact that they were neither supported by any powerful social group, economic group, religious group or political group, yet they invariably emerged victorious.

They achieved success through a slow process of change which began with moral change and that change itself was not brought about by a spell cast by the Prophet. That change was brought about through human sacrifices. Each person who answered to the call of a Prophet accepted a miserable life for the sake of truth. He was put into the mill of torture and persecution and the society which had previously honored him, now treated him as a menial, and in this

there is no inconsistency in the ways of God if you learn those ways through human history. From the time of Adam (a.s.) up to the time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) this is the story of the Prophets repeated over and over again, exactly like this. Ultimately, if the people did not reform and rejected the Prophet altogether, then the people were wiped out, not the Prophets. What happened to the people of Noah (a.s.)? What happened to the people of Lot (a.s.)?

So, religious history as preserved in the Holy Qur'an is most reliable and unchangeable. How can you fit your concept of Imam Mahdi in that history? Where can you fit it if you believe that somebody is divinely appointed and with his supernatural powers he destroys the rest of the world and makes those who share his views and his religion conquerors of the whole world. Why should that be so if they are themselves corrupt people—if they are at least as corrupt as other people are? What justice would there be in God bringing about a revolution in favor of such a people as you find in many Muslim states. If you really study the current history of Muslim states you will find that most of the people living there have become dishonest and corrupt, indulging in all the malpractices which are to be found in the rest of the world. Name a crime which is found elsewhere in the world but is not found in a Muslim state.

So, why, one fine morning should the Imam Mahdi appear and say, 'All right, do whatever you please—religion does not appear for the purpose of revolutionizing morals and conduct, religion only comes to establish the supremacy of one people and that is all. So, I have come and you will emerge as victorious. I'll hand over the keys of the world to you and disappear back to nothingness'. Can you agree with this scheme of things? It's impossible.

Questioner: My question is about visions. Since becoming a 'brother' I have received quite a lot of visions. I would like to hear your guidance as to how one should take these visions.

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad: Visions can also be born out of illusions and the working of the human psyche by itself. It is a very fine area which should be observed without any bias and with great caution. Visions that come from God have their own signs—they carry their own evidence within them whereby you can separate them from the products of human psyche. If they do not possess such signs then

do not give them any importance. They may have been caused by your suddenly becoming more seriously religious than ever before and thinking more deeply about religious views and ideology, taking a greater personal interest in these matters. In such a state it is quite likely that the mind gets agitated. It is the case that every human mind is provided with that machinery which is responsible for the experience of visions but the difference is that when it is agitated by God's command then purposeful messages are delivered through visions. Otherwise, left alone, any one can have visions and illusions and can 'see' imaginary ghosts or demons or even angels before him. However, what I am pointing out is that when a vision is from God it has a quality of truth which cannot be confused with other visions. It has a message and a language which cannot be concocted by the human psyche and the future events which are foretold in many visions prove the truth of the vision and, hence, there is no question of your misreading the visions from Allah and confusing them with the products of your own psyche.

For instance, I draw your attention to the dream, and a dream is a sort of a vision, of the Egyptian King at the time of Prophet Joseph (a.s.). He saw a dream which people thought was just a product of his psyche. However, when this vision was related to Prophet Joseph (a.s.) who was specially gifted by Allah in the art of interpretation, he read the whole message so clearly that despite the fact that the message related to the seven years yet to come, every year gave evidence in favor of the truth of that dream with relation to the welfare of the people not only of Egypt but also of the people of surrounding areas.

So visions that come from God have that quality of a special language, a special quality of truth is contained within them which sometimes defies the person who actually sees that dream or vision. He doesn't know what message the vision is conveying, as for instance, the King was confused. But when presented to a more knowledgeable person, who had been trained in the art of reading visions and dreams, they suddenly fall, like the pieces of a jigsaw, into the right place. That is all I can say at the moment but if there are any particular visions that are agitating your mind, then you can write to me and, *Inshallah*, I will help you understand their meaning.



Translation of Circular No. AVT-0617

Dearly respected Amir sahib/Sadr sahib/
Missionary Incharge

*Assalamo Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa
Barakatuhu*


I hope that you are all well.

1. Hadhrat Khalifatul Mashi IV (ABA) has directed that if the translation of any book is required, permission should be sought through the *Vakalat Tasnif*.
2. We have several times earlier conveyed Hadhrat Khalifatul Mashi IV (ABA)'s directive that before publishing any book/pamphlet (whether old or new) request for permission should be duly submitted. All members should be informed of this directive.

Please inform all concerned and ensure that these directives are followed.

Wassalam

Respectfully
Muniruddin Shams
Additional Wakiluttasnif
June 22, 1998



TREATMENT OF PARENTS – ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

(by Shiraz Ahmad – Madras, India)

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

The Lord has decreed that you worship none save Him alone, and behave beneficently towards parents. If either or both of them should attain old age while you are alive, say not 'ugh' to them, nor chide them, and speak kindly to them. Lower to them the wing of humility out of tenderness and pray: Lord have mercy upon them as they brought me up when I was little. (17:25)

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

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

IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS

(a) Hazrat Abu Umamah narrated that once a man asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) about the rights of parents upon their children He replied that: *'The parents are the Heaven or Hell for their children.'*

(b) Hazrat Abdullah Bin Amr narrates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: *'The pleasure of Allah lies in the pleasure of father and the displeasures of Allah lies in the displeasures of father.'*

(c) Once a person came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and sought his advice about taking part in Jihad with him. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) asked him whether his mother was alive? He answered 'yes'. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) then told him, *'Go back home and serve her as Heaven was under her feet'*.

(d) Hazrat Abu Hurairah narrates: The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) cursed the person three times whose old parents (both or one) were alive and he still did not earn Heaven (by serving them).

REWARDS FOR SERVING PARENTS

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) once told a very interesting anecdote to his companions about three

persons. According to him, the three persons were once traveling when heavy rains began to fall. They took shelter in a cave. Incidentally, a big stone came hurtling down and blocked the opening of the cave. All the three travelers lost the hope of their survival. One of them told the rest not to lose hope and pray to Almighty Allah, by describing the most virtuous deed of their lives, for enabling them to get out of the cave.

One of them addressing Almighty Allah, submitted that he had old parents and several small children. When he would come back home after grazing the goats he would first offer the milk to his old parents and then to his children. Once when he came home quite late, his parents were asleep. He milked the goats as usual and taking the cup of milk went to his old parents, but did not disturb their sleep. The whole night he stood near his parents (to give them milk whenever they get up). He prayed to Allah to enable them to come out of the cave. Allah was pleased with the act of this man and the stone moved a little. Similarly, after the other two related their tales, the stone was fully moved and they were able to come out of the cave.

NICE BEHAVIOR WITH PARENTS

(1) Once Hazrat Abdullah-Bin-Masood asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) to tell him the deed liked by Almighty Allah. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) replied: *'To offer prayers in time.'* He asked him to tell the second best. He was told *'to behave nicely with parents'*.

(2) Conduct of Hazrat Abu Hurairah with his mother: Once Marwan appointed Hazrat Abu Hurairah to officiate for him for some days in his absence. At that time he was in ZUL. Hulaifah and his mother was living in another house at some distance from him. Whenever Abu Hurairah went out he would first come to the house of his mother and say: *'My dear mother peace be upon you and may Allah be merciful to you.'* The mother would reply, *'My dear son, peace be upon you too and may Allah be kind and merciful to you.'* He again would say, *'May Allah be kind to you as you have been kind to me in my childhood.'* She would reply *'My dear son, may Allah be kind to you as you are kind to me in my old age.'*

RESPECT FOR FATHER

Once Hazrat Abu Hurairah came across two persons. He asked one of them about the other. The person replied that the other one was his father. Then Hazrat Abu Hurairah strictly advised the son never call his father by name and neither to walk ahead of him nor to take a seat before he takes the seat first in a gathering.

BEHAVIOR WITH FATHER

Once a man complained to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) about his father who took his belongings whenever he liked. The Messenger of Allah called for his father, who was a very old man, and asked him the details of the matter. The father said: 'O, Messenger of Allah, a time was when my son was weak and helpless and bare handed while I had strength and wealth. I never hesitated to give him my belongings whenever he needed them. Today I am weak and bare-handed while he is rich and now he keeps his belongings from me.' hearing this, tears came to the eyes of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and he said to the son: 'You and your belongings belong to your father. You and your belongings belong to your father.'

BEHAVIOR WITH MOTHER

(1) Hazrat Abu Hurairah relates that once a person came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and asked, 'O Holy Messenger of Allah who is the most deserving person to get nice treatment from me?' He replied, 'Your mother'. He asked, 'Who next?' To this, he got the same reply. When he repeated this question for the fourth time, he was told by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), 'Your father'.

(2) Compensation for mother: Once Hazrat Abdulla bin Umar saw a Yemenite doing *Tawaf* of Holy Ka'aba with his mother on his back. Seeing Hazrat Abdullah he asked that had he not compensated for the rights of his mother? Hazrat Abdullah replied that it was not the compensation even for a single birth pang of his mother.

(3) A person came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and complained that his mother was ill-tempered. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said, 'She was not ill-tempered when she kept you in her womb for nine months.' The person insisted, 'Sir, I am telling you the truth that she is ill-tempered.' The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said,

'She was not ill-tempered when she used to keep awake the whole night for your sake and fed you.' The man replied, 'I have recompensated all the favors of my mother.' The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) then asked: 'How have you recompensated her?' He replied, 'I have helped her perform Hajj by putting her on my shoulders.' After hearing this, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) put a question to the complainant, 'Can you recompensate the painful pangs your mother bore at the time of your birth?'

TREATMENT OF NON-MUSLIM PARENTS

Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, says her mother (who was a non-Muslim) came to her. Asma came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) to ask her whether she should do her some kindness. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) replied, 'Yes, show kindness to your mother.' Then this following verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

Allah forbids you not respecting those who have not fought against you on account of your religion, and who have not driven you out from your homes, that you be kind to them and deal equitably with them; surely Allah loves those who are equitable. (60:9)

ABUSING THE PARENTS

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: 'It is a grievous sin for a person to abuse his parents.' Someone asked: 'Would a person ever abuse his parents?' 'Yes, said the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). If a person abuses another's father, his own father will be abused in return and if he abuses the other mother the same abuse will be returned.'

DISOBEDIENCE TO PARENTS

(1) Hazrat Bakr narrates that once the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) asked that should he not warn them against three major sins? All of them said: 'Certainly, O Prophet!' He then said: 'To ascribe partners with Allah, to disobey parents'; getting up as he was reclining, he said 'to tell a lie or to give false evidence'. He went on repeating his words for such a long time that we wished him to be silent.

(2) Hazrat Abu Bakr narrates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said, 'Allah postpones the punishment for one's sins till the day of judgement, if He so desires. But He awards the punishment for disobeying the parents during this life, before his death.'

Sauban narrates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

There are three sins which nullify all other virtues:

- (i) *Ascribing partners with Allah*
- (ii) *Disobedience to parents*
- (iii) *And fleeing from Jihad*

(3) Once, when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) was talking to his companions, a man came and addressed him; 'O, Messenger of Allah! A young man is breathing his last. People are asking him to recite Kalima but he is unable to do so.' The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) asked, 'Did this man offer prayers?' and the man said 'Yes'. Then he accompanied the man to the house of the dying young man along with others present at that time. The man was at the end of his life journey. The Messenger of Allah advised him to offer Kalima. The man replied that he was unable to do so as the words would not come out of his mouth. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) then called for the mother of the dying man whom he had disobeyed persistently. When his aged mother came, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) asked; 'Respected lady is he your son?' She replied 'Yes'. He then put her a question, 'O Respected lady, if we threatened to throw your son in a raging fire, will you recommend him to be forgiven?' The lady replied that she would definitely do so at that time. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) then said to her, 'If so, declare, making Allah and me your witness that you are now pleased with him.' The old woman readily declared, 'O Allah, you and your Messenger be my witness that I am pleased with this beloved son of mine.'

Just after that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) turned to the dying man and asked him to recite 'Kalima'. By the virtue of the forgiveness of his mother he found the words flowing out of his mouth and he recited the Kalima. Seeing this the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) praised Almighty Allah saying, 'Thanks to Almighty Allah that He saved this man from the fearful fire of Hell through me.'

RESPECT FOR WIFE'S PARENTS

The Prophet's own parent and grandparents had died while he was still a child. The parents of some of his wives were, however, alive and he always treated them with great consideration and respect. The occasion of the surrender of Mecca when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) entered the town as a victorious General, Abu Bakr brought his father (Ayesha's grandfather) to meet him. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.)

said to Abu Bakr: 'Why did you trouble your father to come to me? I would gladly have gone to him myself.'

INCIDENT ABOUT THE PROMISED MESSIAH

The Promised Messiah (a.s.) instilled in his children great respect of their mother, recalling the saying of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) that 'paradise lay under the feet of mothers'. Once when his wife and her (wife's) mother had a disagreement and were both in tears, he took his wife and led her in front of her mother where she bowed her head, her mother immediately raised her daughter's head and embraced her. All annoyance was gone.

DEBTS OF PARENTS AFTER THEIR DEATH

Hazrat Abdulah Bin Zubair never neglected the rights of his parents even after they were dead. Hazrat Zubair was a very rich man. Usually as soon as any rich father dies his children start clamoring for their shares from the belongings of the deceased. But Hazrat Abdullah was not at all worried. He could have been well anxious to get his share which amounted to millions. But his only anxiety was about the debt, of his father which he wanted to repay without any exception.

Consequently, he first cleared the debts of his father from the left property. Immediately the other legal heirs started scolding him for getting their shares from the property of the deceased. But Hazrat Abdullah strictly told them to wait for four years. During these years, he said, he will announce on the occasion of Hajj to the people to come and collect their debts, if any is due upon his departed father till not a single debt remains unpaid. Only after that he would distribute the property.

OTHER DUTIES OF CHILDREN AFTER THE DEATH OF PARENTS

A man asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.): 'Do I owe a duty to my parents after their death?' The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: 'Indeed yes, in four respects:

1. That you should pray for Allah's forgiveness for them and call down His blessings upon them,
2. That you should carry out whatever they undertook to do,
3. That you should honor their friends,

4 That you should strengthen the ties of kinship with those who are related to you through them. This is what you owe them after their death.'

TWO INCIDENTS

(1) Once Hazrat Abu Darda fell critically ill. Knowing this, Hazrat Yousuf-bin-Abdullah came to enquire about his health, traveling a long distance. Hazrat Abu Darda was surprised to see him there and asked, 'How did you come here?' Hazrat Yousuf replied: 'Sir, I came here only to enquire about your health, for my respected father had most friendly relations with you.'

(2) Hazrat Abdullah-bin-Umar once met a bedouin (an Arab desert tribe person) on his way to Mecca. The bedouin looked minutely at him and asked whether he was the son of Hazrat Umar. Hazrat Abdullah replied 'yes' and gave his turban to the bedouin and made him sit respectfully on his donkey. According to Hazrat Ibn Dinar who was one of the co-travelers, all of us were surprised to see it. They asked Hazrat Abdullah the reason for giving so much respect to a bedouin. Hazrat Abdullah replied that the bedouin's father was a friend of Hazrat Umar and then quoted the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) 'Maintain the friendship of your father and do not let it be finished otherwise Almighty Allah will put off the light (noor) for you' and 'The greatest virtue is to favor the son of one's father's friend after gaining power to do so'.

CHARITY ON BEHALF OF DEAD PARENTS

Narrated Aisha: A man said to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), 'My mother died suddenly and I thought if she had lived she would have given alms. So, if I give alms now on her behalf will she get the reward?' The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) replied, 'yes'.

PRAYERS BY CHILDREN FOR THEIR DEAD PARENTS

Hazrat Abu Hurairah narrates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said that when a person died, his period of activity was over. But there were three things which remain benefitting him even after his death.

1. Lasting acts of welfare
2. His knowledge beneficial to people
3. His/Her righteous children who pray to Allah for his/her deliverance and forgiveness.

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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AN ISLAMIC SOCIETY

(by Maryam Chaudhry – Chicago, Illinois)

"Surely, men who submit themselves to God and women who submit themselves to Him, and believing men and believing women, and obedient men and obedient women, and truthful men and truthful women, and men steadfast in their faith and steadfast women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him – Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward." (Ch. 33, v. 36)

The passage that has just been recited was from the Holy Qur'an, the book which Muslims believe to be the word of God in its entirety, revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). In this verse, God Almighty tells us that by following a certain way of life, both men and women can attain to the same spiritual heights. There are no double standards in Islam, the requirements of piety are the same: submission to God, true belief in God, obedience to God, truthfulness, steadfastness in the faith, giving alms or charity, fasting, and remaining chaste. If these conditions are met in constant remembrance of God, then both men and women can achieve nearness to God and the same spiritual status. In the Holy Qur'an, God tells us:

Whoso does good whether male or female, and is a believer, shall enter Paradise and they shall not be wronged a whit. (4: 125)

Before I continue, however, I want to give you a brief introduction to Islam. Being a convert who was born and raised as a Christian, I realize that your understanding of Islam is either limited or contains a lot of totally erroneous information. Also, if I talk about the role of women in Islam it will make no sense without a basic understanding of the religion. I am going to ask you to put aside your paradigms for the next hour or so and to keep your mind open to new ideas. I will pose some questions and I will present to you different alternative. We will play a game of what if? What if you are not here today by chance? What if what you hear today is the truth and could be the beginning of a whole new life for you? Bear with me patiently for a while. You have been given an outline of my speech with spaces in which to take notes or write questions. So please hold your questions until I have completed my lecture.

If you are a Christian, you believe in all the prophets mentioned in the Bible and the Old

Testament, don't you? Now, did it ever become a source of wonder for you that the prophets as far as you know were all Jewish? It would seem odd that God found pious people worthy of prophethood only in the Jewish nation, even though all races and people of the world are God's creation. Also, the message of Christianity was conveyed throughout the world only after Christ. Do you think it makes sense that God in His Infinite Wisdom would have let the people of Africa, of China, of Australia, of the Americas, and so forth fumble in ignorance without any guidance until the advent of Christ?

Another question which I like to pose to you is this. Why is it that people that belong to different religions throughout the world hold so dearly to their beliefs? After all, there are learned people in every community who have accepted the major religions of the world.

Now, try to visualize the world as a pie. Each segment of society or community is represented by a slice of the pie. Each group declares that their religion is true. The Christian community to which many of you belong claims that God only chose prophets from the Jewish community. I was in my early teens when I started to wonder about such questions.

As I look in front of me, you will notice that my field of vision is limited to a certain angle of this room. If I don't move my head, I can visually detect only a certain segment of the room. To me that is reality, is it not? Is it the only reality? Of course not. There are people and objects that are not within my field of vision. This is exactly the position in which followers of different religions are, including those of you who are Christians. In order to see all the reality available in this room, I would need to be standing from a different position, perhaps higher up, near the ceiling.

Islam provides the only logical and sensible answer to this problem of equity and justice. After all, we will all agree that God is Just, is He not? And to assume that God only sent guidance to one group of His creation so that during the 6000 years or so of the history of the Old Testament, only the Jews were correctly guided, does not seem to fit our concept of God's absolute justice. Now, again, I will ask you to lay aside your paradigms. Paradigms are ideas that you have always held to be absolutely true simply because you were taught those ideas from childhood. Paradigms affect our perception of reality. We filter and interpret information received through our senses and reject and do not notice information that does not confirm our paradigms.

A simple illustration: If I believe that dogs are cute and friendly and a dog comes into this room and barks, I will interpret it as a message that he likes me and wants to play. If I believe that dogs are mean and vicious, I will interpret the bark as a sign that the dog wants to bite me. Same evidence, filtered through different paradigm. The world being flat was another paradigm. Another example was the advent of Jesus Christ. The Jews of the time, having interpreted the Bible literally, expected him to be a worldly king who would liberate them from Roman domination. It took twelve disciples and a handful of others who laid aside that old established paradigm and, as Jesus asked them to do, took another look at the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the advent of the Messiah, and lo and behold, they were able to accept Prophet Jesus as the Messiah.

Asking you to lay your old paradigms aside for just one hour, I will give you the following information. When Jesus gave his message, he made two important points. The first one is that the people of his time were not ready to receive the message of God in its entirety:

'I have yet many things to say unto you and you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of Truth will come, He will guide you unto all truth; for He will not speak of His own authority, but whatever He shall hear, He will speak' (John 16:12-13).

Also, he told the Jews,

'The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits

thereof' (Matthew 22:42-43).

The kingdom of God, or the gift of prophethood, was taken away from the Jews and given by God to the descendant of Prophet Abraham's first son, Ismael, that is the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) who came to bring to mankind a complete code of law, contained in the Holy Qur'an.

The Message of Islam provides the view from the ceiling I mentioned earlier because the Holy Qur'an claims to contain 'a message . . . for all the worlds' (81:28) while all other previous religions specifically mentioned that their message was addressed to a specific group of people. For example, Jesus Christ declared: 'I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matthew 14:24).

God explains in the Holy Qur'an that all the people of the world received divine guidance in the form of prophethood.

And there is a Guide for every people... (13:8)

And for every people there is a Messenger... (10:48)

Verily, We have sent thee {the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)} with the Truth

Duties to God, and duties toward fellowmen. Since we would expect Islam to provide a more refined spiritual guidance, we would expect the precepts of Islam to be also in keeping with what human beings have discovered through years of progress. To name a few, 1400 years ago, Islam declared that all men are created equal (an idea expounded by the French philosopher Rousseau around the year 1750). To quote the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.),

...Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any rights, any superiority to claim over another. You are as brothers. O men, your God is One and your ancestor is one. An Arab holds no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a White over a Black person, nor vice-versa, but only to the extent to which he discharges his responsibility to God and man. Only the God-fearing people merit a preference with God

The pursuit of knowledge (education) was stressed for both sexes:

The pursuit of knowledge is a duty of every Muslim, man and woman (Hadith).

The Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.) told the world that God had especially entrusted to him the task of safeguarding the rights of women. Islam gave women rights that the non-Islamic world has given to women only within the past 200 years; the right to inherit property (from their husbands, their parents, their next of kin), the right to own, keep, and manage their own property, the right to ask and get a divorce in case of ill treatment or abandonment from the husband, the right to remarry, the right to obtain an education.

The responsibility for the maintenance of the wife and children was placed on the husband (only recently have child support laws been made and enforced in this country). Remember that Islam was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) by God 1400 years ago. In the United Kingdom, it was only in late 1882 that the first Married Women's Property Act was passed by Parliament, and before that, a woman could not hold property on her own, independently of her husband, and in Italy as late as 1919. Misconduct was accepted in English law as cause for divorce only in 1923. Abandonment was accepted as cause for divorce in New Zealand only in 1912. In Tasmania, 1919, in Victoria, 1923, in Cuba, 1918, in Mexico, 1917, in Portugal, 1915, in Norway in 1909, in Sweden, 1920, in Switzerland, 1912, divorce was allowed for various forms of mistreatment. But Islam had proclaimed and enforced the rights of women since approximately the year 600 only through revelation from God, not as a result of women having to fight for their rights. As American Justice Pierre Craibites has rightly observed:

Muhammad (s.a.w.), 1300 years ago assured to the mothers, wives and daughters of Islam a rank and dignity not yet generally assured to women by the laws of the West.

A principle of change which has been discovered recently is that change in organizations takes place effectively only when the change is directed at the entire organization rather than at individuals. Islam takes this very view. The dictates of Islam that have to do with men and women and children will change the entire society, not just the individual. You will agree that it is better to raise a good child in a good neighborhood, isn't it? Would any of you want to spend a lot of time raising your child and then would

you go and live in a gang-infested environment? Of course not!

Another paradigm which I ask you to lay aside at this time is that, as a society, you have all the answers. The society in which we live presently, with increasing number of broken homes, single parent homes, drugs, murder, illegitimate births, child abuse, general lack of morality, certainly lack of spirituality, should be a source of shock to all of us. Is this the ideal society? Is this the environment in which we want to leave our future generations? Are conditions improving or getting worse? If indeed we believe in God and an afterlife, is the society around us conducive to the achievement of this goal? If what you have is not so great, stop hanging on to the belief that you are the only one who can find solutions. Now, let's stop putting money into government funded programs to prevent child abuse, use of drugs, unwanted pregnancies, murders. These programs do not work. Listen to a different alternative, one that works.

Islam's approach is proactive (not waiting for problems to occur then trying to find solutions). Islam's approach is positive. There are more than 700 commandments of positive things to do in the Holy Qur'an and a few things not to do. Islam's approach is systemic. It addresses change in the entire society, not just in the individual. These three conditions make Islam educationally sound. Islam gives a system for producing and maintaining a social climate in a society that is conducive to allowing human beings to achieve the real goal of their creation which is the worship of God (Allah is the same God that people of all faiths understand to be the Creator and Supreme Being):

O ye men! worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may guard against evil. (2:22)

The dictates of Islam create a good moral individual but in addition, Islam which is from God Who, of course, understands the nature of the humanity He has created, realizes that this good individual must be placed in a very moral society so that his energies are not spent fighting off evil, but instead, are spent in progressing in nearness and communion to God in preparation of the life to come. If you believe in God and in an afterlife, then a great portion of your time should be spent in preparation for that next life. When

you want to prepare for a race or a championship fight or for an exam or for getting a job, you spend years, hours in preparation, don't you? I asked someone at work what she did to prepare for the next life. She answered, 'I go to church on Sunday.' Is it really enough?

For the individual, Islam prescribes a minimum of five daily prayers which progressively bring human beings closer and closer to God, and a recipe of spiritual foods contained in the Holy Qur'an. When you do weight lifting, don't you follow a strict program of regular exercise coupled with a diet rich in nourishing foods? Islam then tells human beings how to regulate their relationships with one another within the content of the family, the society, and humanity.

The great and noble quest that, we as human beings undertake in this life in search of our Creator, must approach it as brothers,

Surely, all believers are brothers

Human society must provide internal support for its individual members:

And help one another in righteousness and piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression... (5:6)

We are all in this together, all of humanity! God, in His Infinite Wisdom, has created humanity in a wonderfully diverse and complementary manner. Men and women are diverse in their respective faculties and capacities.

Our Lord is He Who has endowed everything with its appropriate faculties and then guided it to their proper use (20:51)

God has fashioned mankind according to the nature designed by Him, there is no altering the creation of Allah. (30:31)

Men and women are equal in the sight of God, but in view of the differences in nature, they have been assigned different roles for the smooth functioning of the human society. Women have the unique ability to bear children and to nurture them. Men are physically stronger. Look at the cover of the latest Newsweek magazine. This article discusses brain wave research which shows how differently men and women think and feel and how different parts of

the brain are affected differently for the same mental function. Women are one segment of humanity. In an Islamic society, women can occupy three positions:

First as a daughter, her importance is such that the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.) tells us: '*He who brings up his daughters well, and makes no distinction between them and his sons, will be close to me in Paradise.*'

Secondly, a woman can be a wife. The character of men in an Islamic society is established in relationship to their treatment of women, '*The best from among you is one who behaves best towards his wife.*' (Hadith).

Thirdly, in her role as a mother, Islam has placed women at a higher status than men, '*Paradise is at the feet of the mother.*' Islam recognizes the great role that women play in the upbringing of the children and that the future of mankind and of societies depends on mothers. The paradise mentioned by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) refers to both the social paradise that can be achieved in Islam and the heavenly paradise. Therefore, mothers have been placed at a position of the highest respect. As a convert, I can testify to the profound respect (almost unimaginable if you are not a Muslim) which is accorded to mothers in Islamic homes.

People who sell or teach, people who aim to effect behavior changes in others, need to fulfill three conditions in order to be effective: First they must sell themselves, that is gain trust and credibility; for example real estate sales people are told that it is not the house that they must sell to their customers, it is themselves. Secondly, they must constantly model the behavior which they want others to adopt. As a teacher trainer, I constantly tell my staff that they must 'walk the talk'. The third and most vital condition is that the teacher must have high expectations of the learners. Therefore, in order for mothers to effectively mold humankind in the highest mold of excellence required by God, they must share the high expectations that God has for His creation:

'Verily, We have created man in the best make (95:5)

And they must become those fortunate beings under whose feet paradise can be earned.

If an organization such as a university entrusts the

training of students to teachers, would you not expect that organization to also provide adequate training for the teachers, good schools or places for the training to take place, and also, good job opportunities after the training is completed?

You would expect nothing less from God, the Almighty Creator. The dictates of Islam that have to do with behavior of women are the training of this crew of teachers of mankind. The family unit provides the setting for this teaching to take place, but the society which is the workforce of life where the teaching is practiced must also be regulated and maintained in the best of ways.

Teaching is not effective unless the teacher has credibility and respect. Both need to be earned. Can you respect someone who does not behave in a respectable fashion? Can a child behave well unless you accompany your teachings with good modeling? Of course not. Therefore, the high respect which God commands us to hold for women in Islam also dictates that women have to behave with utmost dignity and piety in order to become the most respected and honored segment of our society. It is sort of the 'Noblesse Oblige' concept of the French. Those of higher nobility are under constant obligation to behave in the best of ways.

Ask yourselves this question, 'Why did nuns used to dress very modestly and cover their heads?' Because they were supposed to be very noble and very pure. In both the Old Testament and the Bible, a head covering is prescribed for chaste women (Genesis 24:64,65; 1 Corinthians 11:5,6). A paradigm which comes from misinterpretation of the Bible is that Eve was responsible to make Adam sin, therefore there is an implication in Christianity that women are impure and that association with them diminishes a man. That is why priest and nuns were told not to marry if they wanted to be close to God. Islam denies the theory of the original sin, and rejects monasticism as a human invention. God tells us in the Holy Qur'an that all human beings are created pure and that both men and women are capable of achieving the highest degree of spirituality (high expectations).

Going back to the question of modest dressing, nuns dressed modestly because they did not intend to marry and, therefore, did not want to attract the attention of members of the opposite sex. But Islam wants all women to be pure, and all men also, no

double standards in Islam. What you wear affects both how you feel about yourself and how others view you. For example, at my school, which is not air conditioned, the principal always wears a suit, no matter how hot it is. Teachers and parents know that well dressed children feel good about themselves, and teachers subconsciously view them as well cared for and treat them better. Well dressed children do better in school. Many public schools are now adopting uniform policies for the students because wearing a uniform puts the student in a learning mood and makes the teachers view them as potential learners. This affects both the student and the teacher's behavior so that the entire atmosphere becomes conducive to learning. Also, even in my childhood, women used to wear veils when they entered the church which points to the relationship between dress and attitude.

Islam prescribes modesty for both men and women in order to maintain a pure Islamic society. As a matter of fact, the responsibility to create and maintain this society starts with men:

*Be chaste and your women will be chaste
(Hadith)*

It is a society in which the institution of marriage plays a vital part. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) says, 'Marriage is my way.' The Holy Qur'an describes the relationship between husband and wife in a beautiful manner:

*They are a sort of garment for you and you are
a sort of garment for them.*

A garment embellishes, protects, safeguards, gives dignity and honor. It's a beautiful relationship based on love and respect and characterized by grace:

Consort with them graciously...(4:20)

In order to allow women the opportunity to fulfil the challenging obligation of producing these moral individuals who will become members of the Islamic society, the responsibility for providing for the family has been placed on men. They are appointed as protectors of the members of their household.

*Men are appointed guardians over women...
(4:35)*

*Wives have rights corresponding to those which
husbands have, in equitable reciprocity, though,*

in certain situations, men would have the final word and thus enjoy a preference. Allah is Mighty, Wise. (2:229)

When you married, God appointed you trustees of those rights (of your wives). You brought your wives to your homes under the law of God. You must not, therefore, abuse the trust which God has placed in your hands: (Hadith)

Just as in any system, different individuals are assigned different roles for the optimum functioning of the system. Similarly, in the family unit, man is the head of the household. This does not imply superiority or inferiority in any way, just difference in roles because the functions men and women each play in the family unit are different. For example, in the school where I work we have the principal. The staff shares in decision making through committee work but the suggestions always receive the final approval or disapproval from the principal. No one would ever think of disobeying the principal because he has final accountability, therefore he must have the freedom to make the ultimate decisions.

In the family unit, the men bears the ultimate responsibility for providing that pious and safe haven of love and comfort called the Islamic home within which paradise is formed under the feet of mothers during the course of the sacred task of the moral upbringing of the children. In return, men receive obedience and support from their spouses. God instructs parents to pray for the success of this sacred duty, because seeking God's help through prayer is a necessary precursor to every endeavor of a Muslim:

Lord, grant us of our spouses and our offspring the delight of our eyes and make us a model (family) for the righteous (25:75)

Therefore, in order for a society to be a pure society, both men and women should think, dress, and behave in ways that allow pure thoughts and actions to dominate the way of life and create a social climate conducive to the achievement of communion with our God, our Creator. Physical attraction between men and women is good and pure only within the context of the sacred institution of marriage. In the Holy Quran, God tells us:

Of His Signs is that He has created mates for you of your own kind that you may find peace of mind through them, and He has put love and

tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect. (30:22)

To fulfill the natural need for love and comfort, God established the family unit as a safe and healthy place for the experience and manifestation of these normal needs. God also tells us how men and women should behave with people other than their immediate family:

Say to the believing men that they restrain their looks and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is Well-Aware of what you do. And say to the believing women that they restrain their looks and guard their private parts, and that they display not their beauty or their embellishment except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they display not their beauty or their embellishment save to their husbands, or to their fathers, or to the fathers of their husbands, or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, (all men that are not possible for a woman to marry) or women who are their companions (decent women), or those that their right hand possesses, or such of male attendants as have no desire of women, or young children who have not yet attained knowledge of the hidden parts of women. And that they strike not their feet so what they hide of their ornaments may become known. And turn ye to Allah all together, O believers, that you may prosper. (24:31,32)

God asks us to follow these injunctions for our own benefit. A pure society will result not only in salvation but in prosperity. What would you choose, a society where men and women respect one another and help one another achieve nearness to God, or would you prefer the present society? Let's face reality. Women have no respect in this society. Just turn on the radio, you will hear how men talk about going to the beach to look at women, free ladies' night at the clubs; we see surveys in major magazines where more than half of American men report being sexually aroused on the job daily by the way women dress themselves; teen pregnancies, rape, youth suicide, runaways, adultery, divorce on the rise, broken homes; another survey of Time Magazine reports that men between the ages of 25 to 40 have 6 to 9 sexual partners; picture the scenes on college campuses, especially where there are dorms, is this

really the society in which you, your children, your future generations want to spend the short time we have on this earth to prepare for our eternal life?

As a woman, I pity women in this society. From early childhood, they are taught that their main asset is their physical attraction (think of teen beauty pageants; there are now cheer-pom squads for girls even in elementary schools). They are made to believe that they must parade their physical beauty, spend hours working out in the gyms to shape their figures only to display them at the beaches, all this demeaning compromise so that eventually they will catch a husband. Once they do, they continue to display their attractiveness outside the home, only to be complimented by men other than their husband, or sexually harassed on the job, generally starting the slide into the path of adultery, divorce, broken homes, etc... Enough is Enough.

In Islam, a woman need not compromise her dignity, her integrity, her high self-esteem at any time. She thinks, behaves, and dresses modestly. She is respected by all members of the society, particularly men. She displays her beauty for her own husband, not providing a free show for all to enjoy:

...and display not your beauty like the displaying of the former days of ignorance. . . (33:34)

Here is the key word: 'ignorance.' If you walked in an area where prostitutes were parading, would you not feel pity for them and understand that they chose their way of life out of ignorance, because of low self-esteem learned from bad childhood experiences? The Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.) tells us:

When you are contemplating a certain course of action, reflect first upon its consequences; if they are good persist, if they are bad desist.

Modest behavior, of which clothing is only one part, is worth the effort. Why would we, as women, who are entrusted the great responsibility of teaching all of mankind the ways of our Lord, why would we ever want to cause indecent thoughts in the mind of our fellow men who are our brothers in the sight of God. In an Islamic society, men and women help each other achieve goodness, they are not devilishly tempting one another.

The believers, men and women, are friends one of another. They enjoin good and forbid evil and

observe Prayer and pay the Zakat (tax for the poor), and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is these on whom Allah will have mercy. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise. Allah has promised the believers, men and women, Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide, and delightful dwelling places in Gardens of Eternity, and the pleasure of Allah, which is the greatest bounty of All. That is the supreme triumph. (9:71-72)

God understands that all men do not feel tempted every time they look at a woman, however indecently she may be dressed. But we have no way of knowing the inner state of morality of others.

Islam, as I mentioned earlier, takes a pro-active and systemic approach to the establishment of morality in an upright society. Regulation of behavior between men and women is only one of the preventive dictates of Islam. Others include no intoxicants at all so that human beings are always acting with a clear head and able to make responsible choices. Remember the goal is to produce individuals who eventually achieve communion with God. Of course, production of such individuals in large numbers, who would be the rule rather than the exception, can only be achieved in an upright society where spiritual thriving is the norm.

Earlier, I referred to the fact that principals in schools, bosses in organizations, always dress the part. This clothing does not make them the bosses. It is symbolic of their role in organization. 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, behavior and is in turn positively affected by dress and behavior. When, as a teacher, I see the sad consequences of immoral behavior perpetuated by behaviors of parents learned by children, I realize that it is a vicious circle. I like to think of the Islamic system as the 'pious circle.'

O children of Adam, we have indeed sent down to you raiment to cover your nakedness and to be a means of adornment, but the raiment of righteousness - that is the best. That is the commandment of Allah, that they may remember. (7:27)

The eventual goal is the righteousness of hearts.

Look around you and see morality declining and a system that is not working. Islam offers a system that works. Women play a vital part in this complex and refined system. You know that the more frequent the opportunities for social interchange between men and women, friendships, dating, parties, and so forth, the more likely chances are that the natural attraction which God has placed between them will result in relationships that are bound to endanger morality in a society. Islam restricts this free and unrestrained intermixing of the sexes. Believe me, it is a lot more of a restraint on men than it is on women. And women are protected from all kinds of molestation. Molested individuals lose their sense of self-esteem and unless they undergo lengthy therapy they are usually unable to form stable relationships.

In this society, I view women as suffering from Psychological Molestation Syndrome (PMS) because of the way they are treated as sex objects by the media, at school, on the job, and unfortunately, sometimes in their own homes. The resulting self-esteem of women is low as evidenced by the fact that they allow themselves to be continually exploited in this fashion. Therefore, unless we change the entire system and allow women to gain the self-esteem and respect God provided for them through Islam, stability of relationships between wives and husbands, between mothers and children will continue to be endangered.

When I taught High School students, I would become so saddened by the plight of those teenagers. They felt pressured by society to date. A few girls and a few boys in a class of twenty five would get all the requests. The rest would always feel unhappy, living in constant fear of not being asked out, and often I saw that girls who were finally asked would be ready to give up everything for fear of losing the opportunity. But when relationships of a more serious nature developed, most of the time, they would end up in tremendous heartbreaks, then a process of healing followed in which the teenager hardened and lost this wonderful softness which would have been so critical in forming an enduring relationship in a marriage. After a few of these relationships and ensuing heart breaks, there was nothing left of these poor souls. What would these broken hearted, mended, patched human beings have to contribute to the great task of motherhood. How would you expect individuals who had been exposed to so much to be contented in a relationship with a single partner?

Don't you see that it is the very system that you have created which contributes to the progressive degeneration of your social system? Don't you see that the divorce rate, unwanted pregnancies, lack of commitment to the institution of marriage, all these ills are increasing day by day. Women are so exposed and available that men are losing their attraction for them, and homosexuality, children molestation are becoming more and more common. Unlimited and unrestricted pleasures bring no happiness, indeed they result in unhappiness and instability throughout the entire society. It's like drug usage, the more you take, the more and stronger drug you need to get the temporary but potentially deadly thrill.

As I mentioned earlier, you cannot affect change by targeting individuals or different aspects of a system. You must create change by changing the rules that govern the entire system. The rules must be proactive and preventive in nature. The dictates must be positive and include a large number of behaviors and progressively lead to the targeted change. The change proposed by God in the Holy Qur'an will produce a healthy society where goodness becomes a source of pleasure and happiness. Islam promotes strong emotional attachments in relationships between wife and husband, parents and children, siblings, extended families which provide comfort and support and result in happiness, peace of mind and heart, harmony, trust, and stability. In such a society, the natural human need to be loved and to love is fulfilled in so many chaste ways that the individual is satisfied.

A few years ago, I felt so lucky to be a woman in Islam that I became overwhelmed by my Beloved God's goodness toward me. I have, by the grace of God, pious and wonderful children, a wonderful son-in-law who is also a convert, and I can see Islam at work creating heaven daily in front of my own eyes. I cannot wait until the time that more and more Americans adopt Islam. Americans are so kindhearted, welcoming, sympathetic, generous human beings, they will, God willing, make the best of Muslims.



LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

A poem by Hazrat Musleh Mau'ood (R.A), translated by Dr. Rasheed Azam)

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

Is the hand that points to Ka'aba', and is the elixir for al heartaches.

Spell of the enchanting eyes ever induces from my heart the cry

LA'ILA'HAILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

Dead hearts and souls revive when the trumpet sounds

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

When I stagger under the weight of my sins, who comes to my rescue?

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

All riddles are solved and my heart finds peace with

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

Be it the Doctrine of Duality or Trinity

All arguments are blown away like cobweb against the Truth irrefutable

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

From all that exists rises but one song

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

Idols in your heart, avails you nothing just saying with your tongue

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

Intercession before God on the Day of Judgement is

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

The darkness of shirk will be no more

With the appearance of the light of

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

There may be thousands worthy of love

But my love is only

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

Every bright face manifests His Glory,

His Light pervades the Universe.

He is manifest everywhere.

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

Never can remain hidden the Glance

Which has vanquished me

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

All will abandon you on the Day of Judgement

Except the only Faithful One

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

There may be a thousand, nay a million cures

For the ailing soul but, the quintessence is

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH (THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH)

INTRODUCING THE BOOKS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH (A.S.)

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (a.s.), wrote more than eighty books, mostly in Urdu, Arabic and Persian. Only a small number of these have been translated into English. In order to hopefully bring English readers closer to the original writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (a.s.), we are serializing *Introducing the Books of the Promised Messiah (a.s.)* by Mr. Naseem Saifi. In this work, Mr. Saifi has presented a brief account of every book written by the Promised Messiah (a.s.).

Ijaz-I-Ahmadi (The Miracle of Ahmad)

Ijaz-I-Ahmadi is a supplement to the *Nuzulul Masih* and it was published on 15th November 1902 offering a prize of 10,000 rupees. The title of the book says that it was written on the request of Maulvi Sana Ullah, one of the bitterest opponents of Hazrat Ahmad (a.s), and it was completed in five days. It also mentions Pir Mehr Ali Shah, Maulvi Asghar Ali, Maulvi Ali Hairi (a Shia). Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) says: 'The skies have borne a witness for me so has also the earth, but most of the people of the world have not accepted me.'

He mentions the prophecy about *Lekhram* and describes its details and fulfilment. He refers to a book written by a Jew who, he says, is just like Sanaullah or Mohammad Hussain, for he says that Jesus Christ (a.s.) did not show a single miracle nor any of the prophecies of his were proved true.

He then asks: 'Tell me, what is the difference between this Jew and Maulvi Mohammad Hussain and Mian Sanaullah; are their hearts not similar? Behold how they tell the untruth by uttering the words that none of my prophecies has come to pass, whereas the fact is that all the prophecies that I made have proved true.'

He further says: 'How strange that my opponents raise such objections as make them deprived of Islam, for their objections are the same that were raised against the other prophets as well. Had they been endowed with *Taqwa* (fear of God), they would have never raised these objections.'

He pointedly says that for almost twelve years he did not realize that God had called him the Promised Messiah in the *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, in very forceful words, and he was still holding to the traditional belief in the second advent of Jesus (a.s.) (in person).

When twelve years had elapsed, then the time came that the truth of the matter should be made manifest for him. Then he started getting revelations one after the other which clearly said that he was the Promised Messiah.

He throws a challenge to Maulvi Sanaullah for a prayer duel and he also gives the wording of the prayer.

He adds a poem in Arabic about which he says that he prays to God that it should prove to be a sign for the people and nobody else should be able to compose the like of it.

The book concludes with an announcement for a prize of 10,000 rupees for anyone who would write a poem like the one mentioned above and also refute the arguments written in the Urdu language.

REVIEW

This is a review of the debate between Abu Saeed Mohammad Hussain and Maulvi Abdullah. The former laid undue stress on the authenticity of Hadith and the latter rejected the Hadith altogether.

In this review Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) Points out the mistakes of the two of them. He says:

'The straight path which I should like to make known through this article is that the Muslims have three things to guide them for Islamic affairs.

1. The Holy Qur'an which is the word of God and which is not excelled by any writing in authenticity; there is nothing doubtful in it.

2. The second thing is the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. And when I talk of the practice I do not link it with the terminology of Hadith. I do not take the Hadith and the Sunnah to be one and the same thing. They are different from one another. The prac-

tice actually means that practical tradition which was acted upon by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and was there since the starting point of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. Or we can say that the Holy Qur'an is the word of God and practice (Sunnat) is the work of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. It has always been the practice of God that the prophets bring the word of God for the guidance of the people and they put it into practice and tell others also to do the same so that its practicability becomes beyond any shadow of doubt.

3. The third thing for the guidance is the Hadith and by Hadith I mean those traditions which were collected almost 150 years after the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Thus the difference between the Sunnat and the Hadith is that Sunnat is a practical demonstration which takes place continually and was started by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) himself and stands second only to the Holy Qur'an. Just as it was the commission of God that he should spread the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, so also was he commissioned to show its practicability to the people.

Mawahibur-Rahman

(Gifts of God)

Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) says on the title page: 'I have compiled this book with the help of God, the Gracious, and I swear by God that it has been compiled with the help of God and not by the power of man and verily it is a great sign for the one who thinks deeply and who fears the one who is the Judge (God) and I have called it *Mawahibur-Hahman*. And I, Ghulam Ahmad, am the servant of Allah, the One, may God protect me and help me. He has made my town, Qadian, the home of peace and the place where the noble angels descend.

Mustafa Kamal Pasha, the editor of *Al-Lewa* (which was published from Egypt), received a handbill in the English language which contained the claim of Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) and also the promise of God that Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) and his sincere followers would remain safe against the attack of the bubonic plague. The handbill also stated that since this was a promise from God, Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) said that there was no need for him and all those who lived in his house to get the inoculation. The editor objected to it and said that to tell the people that they should not get themselves inoculated was going

against the law of nature, for the necessary means must be adopted to ward off sickness and he further remarked that it was going against the teachings of the Holy Qur'an as well. He quoted the verse '*wa la Tulqu bi aidikum ilattah likati.*'

It was in reply to this objection that Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) wrote *Mawahibur Rahman* in Arabic; it was published in January 1903. In addition to the answer given to the editor, Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) also makes mention of the beliefs of the Jama'at and the signs which God had shown during the past three years.

The book contains a chapter on 'Our Beliefs' and another on the 'Teachings for the Jama'at'. In the chapter 'Our Beliefs' Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) says, 'Verily, we are Muslims, we believe in the Furqan, the Book of Allah, and we believe that our Chief, Mohammad, is His Prophet and Messenger and that he brought the best religion. We also believe that he is the Khatamul Ambiya and there is no prophet after him except who is brought up by himself through his grace and who appears in accordance with his promise. God speaks to His friends in this Umma.'

And he lists all the beliefs that go to make a Muslim in the chapter 'Teachings for the Jama'at'. He says, 'Nobody can join his Jama'at unless he first professes to be a Muslim and who follows the book of Allah and the Practice of our Chief who is the best of the whole creation (i.e. the Holy Prophet Mohammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Next he cites the belief in Allah, the Messenger, in the Day of Judgement, the Heaven and the Hell. And like this, he makes mention of all the teachings of Islam and urges his followers to stick to them, for Ahmadiyyat is nothing new; it is simple and pure Islam.

Naseem-I-Dawat

(The Cool Breeze of Invitation)

In the early part of 1903 some of the newly converted Muslims published a handbill in which they appealed to the Aryas, the Hindus and the Sikhs, in very polite words, to prove the truth of their religions through prayers and prayer duel or by holding a religious conference. On 8th February 1903, the Aryas published a reply to this handbill, the reply was full of filthy abuses; they also talked of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, very disres-

pectfully and accused him of various things in a very contemptuous way. The Aryas, in this handbill, also abused and wrote dirty things about Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) and his followers. It is this handbill that has been replied to in the book *Naseem-I-Dawat*. Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) had no intention of answering this handbill because of its filth but he received a Divine Command to answer it. He says:

'God has addressed me in a special revelation and said that you should write a reply to it and that I am with you.' Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) further says: 'I was very pleased to receive this revelation, for I felt that I would not be alone while replying to this handbill. So I got up with the power of God and I wrote this reply with the help that I received from Him. With the help of God I decided that despite the fact that they had hurled abuses on the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) I would be very polite and courteous in my reply, and then leave it to God to decide. But before I start writing the reply I should like to advise the members of my Jama'at that on hearing the abuses the people hurl on the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the contemptuous words they have used about me and about members of the Jama'at (he has mentioned some of those words), they should be patient. I do realize that when one is being abused or his religious leader is being abused it is not easy to suppress one's feelings, but I ask you that if, when you hear the abuses you do not show patience, where lies the difference between you and the other people? This is not a thing that is happening to you alone, it has happened to the other divine communities before you. Every true dispensation that has ever been established has been opposed by the people. Since you are the inheritors of the truth, the worldly people must oppose you.'

One of the points they had raised was that unless one reads all the four Vedas one should not be converted to Islam or to any other religion. Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) tells his readers what is enough to know before one could change his mind for another religion. He points out three things. One, what does a religion say about God? Two, what does that religion say about the nature of man and how does it like the people to deal with one another and whether there is anything that stands in the way of uniting the people in the bond of mutual relationship? Or, does it teach him good morals, or does it drag him to

shameless acts? Three, that religion must not present a fake God or a God who lives only in stories of the olden days.

Having mentioned these three things in detail, Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) compares the teachings of Christianity, Arya religion and the Holy Qur'an. This comparison covers three chapters and is quite detailed.

Sanatan Dharam

In this book, published on 8th March 1903, Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) has helped the Sanatan Dharam people to understand some points of their religion. He takes up *Nayog*, i.e. the wife of a person going to someone else for sexual intercourse in order to beget children. He tells the Aryas how repulsive this teaching of their religion is to the human conscience. In the epilogue to the book, Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) repeats, in different words, what he had said in *Naseem-I-Dawat* in connection with the principle of changing religion.

Seeratul Abdal

(The Characteristics of the Godly People)

This book, written in Arabic, is a most beautiful piece of literature. To start with Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) says that he would like to remind the people that he had been commissioned by God through revelation and has been sent to all of them and the angels had descended for him from the heavens to the earth and his abode-Qadian-had been made a sacred place. He further says that if the people thought over the matter they would see what he has seen and they would drink pure water (i.e. they would receive knowledge from the heavens) and their certainty would increase. He puts forward his claim to be the Promised Messiah and he offers good news to the God-fearing people, he quotes their signs and tells the readers how to distinguish them from others. In fact, this book is a continuation of *Alamatul Muqarrabeen* and in it Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) has explained at a greater length the characteristics of those who are commissioned by God to reform the world and he also dilates on the blessings that accrue to the world through these Reformers. Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) claims that he possesses all these characteristics and he definitely is a Reformer and commissioned by God to bring the people back to His door.

Islam Aur Mulk Ke Dusrey Mazahab

(Islam and Other Religions in this Country)

This is an Address delivered by Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) on 3rd December 1904 at Lahore. It is also known as Lecture Lahore, i.e. an Address that was delivered in Lahore.

In it, Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) compares the teachings of Islam with those of Hinduism and Christianity and proves with very convincing proofs that Islam is the best religion and it is this religion that the people must adopt.

The theme on which he dilates is that the prevailing condition of sinfulness in the world is the outcome of lack of God-realization. The more a man realizes the powers of God the more he is prone to doing virtuous deeds. The farther away he goes from God the greater his indulgence in sinful life.

Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) says that the atonement taught by Christianity cannot cure this malady nor can it be set right by the teachings of Vedas (the sacred books of the Hindus). A perfect God-realization is possible only through revelation (talking to God and listening to Him) and it is only Islam which can help create conditions conducive to the revelations from God: the Hindus and the Christians do not believe that God speaks any more.

Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) says that there are two parts of religion:

1. Beliefs (tenets) and
2. Practice.

The basic belief is our belief in the existence of God and in His attributes. He dilates on this point and proves to his listeners that Trinity taught by Christianity and the non-creation of matter and soul by God taught by the Vedas can never be true.

Talking about the practices or deeds, Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) says that there are three stages of our duties towards human beings according to the teachings of Islam and here he refers to the verse *Innallaha ya'morobil adli wal Ihsani wa eeta'zil Qurba*.

Hazrat Ahmad (a.s.) also compares the teachings of Islam and other religions in connection with forgiveness and vengeance.

Before closing the book, he mentions his claim to be the Promised Messiah and cites proofs of the truthfulness of his claim and he also mentions his prophecies that had come to pass till that time.

Lajna Camp

(continued from page 30)

Lajna and Nasirat members with the opportunity to purchase Jama'at books and pamphlets.

Evaluation forms were distributed to the members after the final session on Sunday so that they could inform us of our shortcomings and help us to improve in our performance for the service of Islam and Ahmadiyya, *Insha-Allah*. Following the Nasirat Banner parade on Sunday, prizes were distributed by Sahibzadi Amatul Qayyum Ahmad and sister Salma Ghani, candies were distributed to the Nasirat by sister Saliha Bhatti, and the East Coast Ijtema came to a close on a very emotional and spiritual note with silent prayers.

By the Grace of Almighty Allah, the Ijtema held true to its purpose (as expressed by the Promised Messiah (a.s.), since we had widened our knowledge about Islam, developed a closer bond with other sisters, discussed ways to improve ourselves and provide better services to humanity. In summary, this Ijtema was a blessed occasion for all those who attended and participated. May Allah reward every one abundantly for their efforts, cooperation and sacrifices, Ameen.

ANSARULLAH IJTEMA

The 17th Annual Ijtema and the 6th Majlis Shura of the Majlis Ansarullah, USA, is being held at Masjid Baitur Rahman, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, September 11, 12, and 13, 1998.

The Majlis Shura will be held on the morning of Friday, September 11, 1998 and the Ijtema proceedings will commence after the Jumua prayers on September 11, 1998.

Sadr Majlis Ansarullah Grieved

Sufi Khuda Bakhsh Zirvi Sahib, Waaqf-e-zindagi Passes Away in Rabwah, Pakistan

Sufi Khuda Bakhsh Abd Zirvi Sahib, father of Dr. Karimullah Zirvi, passed away on July 31, 1998 in Rabwah.

Inna Lillahe wa Inna Ilaihi Rajioon.

He was born on March 1, 1911 at Zira, District Ferozpur, India. He was the first in his family to accept Ahmadiyyat at the age of 16 years in 1927. Later on through him, his parents and brothers also accepted Ahmadiyyat. In 1948 he went from Lahore to Qadian and stayed there for six months as a *Darwesh*. He was in the service of military and on his return from Qadian he was posted in Murree, Pakistan. The same year, he resigned from the military job and devoted his life to serve Ahmadiyyat and Islam. Thus, in 1948, he moved with his family from Murree to Rabwah where he served the Jama'at for about 45 years.

He was one of the earliest workers of Tehrik-e-Jadid and later on Waqf-e-Jadid. He had the opportunity to work in Waqf-e-Jadid for many years with Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ABNA) and he always felt pride in it. He was fortunate to have attended the U.K. Jalsa 11 times. He always liked to be known as and wrote with his name the title, *Waaqif-e-zindagi* (a devotee for life).

He always wished for his children to become true servants of the Faith. For his children, he was not only a father, but also a mother as his wife died when his oldest child was 15 years old and his youngest child was one year old. By the grace of Allah, he had all his children highly educated. He had all of his three daughters finish their M.Sc. Degree and with insistence had them married to *Waaqifeen-e-zindagi*. He is survived by three sons and three daughters. His sons are:

- i. Dr. Karimullah Zirvi, Sadr Ansarullah, USA
- ii. Habib-ur-Rahman Zirvi, Librarian, Khilafat Library, Rabwah
- iii. Bisharat-ur-Rahman Zirvi, M.Sc., who was teacher for four years in a Jama'at School in The Gambia and currently lives in London

and his son-in laws are:

- i. Mohammad Azam Akseer, Murabbi Silsila Ahmadiyya and Qa'id, Islaho Irshad, Ansarullah, Pakistan.
- ii. Hafiz Muzaffar Ahmad, Additional Nazir, Islaho Irshad (Da'wat Ilallah)
- iii. Anwar Ahmad Anwar, Murabbi Silsila Ahmadiyya

By the grace of Allah, the deceased was a moosi and participated in every project that required sacrifice, with a competitive spirit. Hafiz Muzaffar Ahmad Sahib, Additional Nazir Islaho Irshad, Da'wat Ilallah, led his Janaza Prayer after the Friday Prayer on July 31, 1998 at the Aqsa Mosque. He was laid to rest in Bahishti Maqbara. Sahibzada Mirza Masroor Ahmad Sahib, Nazir Al'a, Sadr Anjamun Ahmadiyya and Amir Muqami, led the silent prayer at the completion of the grave. Hazrat Khaifatul Masih IV (ABNA) offered his *Janaza Gha'ib* on August 13 at the Fazal Mosque, London.

The members are requested to pray that God Almighty raise the spiritual status of Respected Sufi Sahib and keep him close to His mercy.

THE 1998 NATIONAL EAST COAST LAJNA/NASIRAT IJTEMA

(Report submitted by Shanaz Butt, National General Secretary)

By the Grace and Mercy of Almighty Allah, a Tri-Regional East Coast National Lajna/Nasirat Ijtema was held at Masjid Baitur Rahman, from August 14-16, 1998. Lajna and Nasirat members from the North East, South East and Central Regions (Boston, Queens -NY, Brooklyn/Staten Island, North Jersey, Willingboro, Philadelphia, York/Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Maryland, Virginia, Virginia Beach, Washington DC, Research Triangle, North Carolina), as well as some members from the East and West Mid-West Regions (Detroit, Cleveland, Dayton, Milwaukee and Zion), attended the Ijtema. Some Lajna members visiting from Pakistan, London, Sweden and Egypt as well as non-Ahmadi guests were also in attendance. True commitment to the cause was reflected by the record attendance; close to 400 members attended on Friday, 700 attended on Saturday and 400 attended on Sunday, *Alhamdo Lillah!*

The central theme for this Ijtema was "OUR FUTURE—OUR CHILDREN". Our aim was to discuss topics that dealt with improving family values and family ties, becoming better parents and role models for our children, and bringing up a (morally and spiritually) stronger generation of Ahmadi Muslims in America, *Insha Allah*.

The Ijtema program was organized with the hope of meeting the needs and expectations of Lajna and Nasirat of all ages and backgrounds. While 140 members were actively involved in some aspect of the Ijtema program, many members volunteered their services for important duties such as registration, accommodation, transportation, cleaning, discipline, *ziyafat*, audio visual and others. The guests were mostly accommodated in the homes of Maryland members, with some accommodation provided by neighboring Lajna chapters. Preparation of all the main meals (deliciously cooked) and desserts was graciously undertaken by Br. Sadat Abdullah of Philadelphia and his team, with assistance from *Atfal!*

The Ijtema commenced on Friday afternoon after Jumma Prayers. All sessions began with Talawat-e-Qur'an, Hadith and Poems. On Friday, Nasirat and Lajna pledges were recited, followed by a welcome address by Tazeem Ahmad, president of Maryland

Lajna. On Saturday morning, sister Saliha Bhatti (National Nasirat Secretary) addressed the Nasirat while sister Salma Ghani, National Lajna Sadr, spoke to both Lajna and Nasirat in her opening address. The Ijtema concluded on Sunday afternoon following Salat, prize distributions and lunch.

NASIRAT PROGRAM

The nasirat program consisted of competitions, sports and workshops. Competitions in memorization of selected *Suras* from the Holy Qur'an, Salat, Speech, Handicraft and Sports were held for all 3 age groups. On the spot written speech competitions (prepared by sister Nusrat Ahmad, SE regional president) were held for the older nasirat, ages 14-15, and these speeches were of high quality and very well prepared. On Sunday 100 Nasirat from 10 chapters took part in a well rehearsed Nasirat Parade (assisted by Shaima Ahmad), and sang their chosen *Tarana* in unison while holding up banners with their chosen mottos. This program was taped for MTA by sister Tahmeeda Ahmed and her team.

LAJNA PROGRAM

The Lajna program included competitions, panel discussions, workshops, social hour discussions, sports, *Bait Bazi* and *Meena Bazaar*. Competitions for Lajna were held in memorization of Holy Qur'an, English and Urdu Speeches. In an attempt to encourage our members to become more expressive (both written and oral), impromptu speech competitions were organized for the first time for Lajna. One contestant from each chapter was provided with the topic and reference materials (prepared by Shamin Azam, National Education Secretary) to write her speech (either English or Urdu) and present it to the audience and a panel of judges. The speeches were very impressive and stirred our hearts, *Alhamdulillah!*

Panel discussions and workshop topics dealt with some aspects of the theme "*Our Future – Our Children*." thus, Lajna started off with a panel discussion on Saturday morning entitled "*Establishing Family Values – The Islamic way*." The members of this panel were Dr. Aliya Fauzi, Uzma Ahmad, Tazeem Ahmad and Jamila Hamid, and moderated by

Sister Shamin Azam. The panel members emphasized how developing better family values can lead to a better future for our children. The next panel discussion was held on Saturday afternoon and was entitled "*The Apple does not fall far from the Tree.*" The panel members were Zuna Ahmad, Naima Latif and Bushra Fauzi, and were moderated by Humma Asad. This panel brought home the very serious message that training of children begins with training of mothers! The audience actively participated through group discussions and activities. The final panel discussion for Lajna was held on Sunday morning and was entitled "*Investing in the Future – Investing in our Children.*" The panel members were Khullat Alladin, Salma Ghani and Mubarika Shah, and were moderated by Shanaz Butt. This panel dealt with Huzoor's message to America regarding the vulnerability of our children to the "pollution" of this society. This panel discussed ways for mothers to recognize these "pollutants" and find preventive and protective measures to safeguard our children, and in this way safeguard our future. The audience actively participated in these discussions and realized the seriousness of the problem.

SOCIAL HOUR

For the first time, two concurrent workshops were held for Nasirat on Saturday evening. The topic was "*Exercising Moral Courage in America.*" Under this broad general topic, four young Lajna (Aisha Malik, Shazia Dad, Uzma Ahmad and Aliya Khan), moderated by Farhat Mahmood, prepared a 5 minute presentation on sub-topics such as "Honesty," "Modesty," "Respect" and "Knowledge", and presented it to the 7-10 year old Nasirat, followed by small group discussions. Thus even though the topics for both age groups were the same, the level of discussion was different depending on whether the *nasira* was in elementary school or in middle and high school. Nasirat (and some mothers!) thoroughly enjoyed these informal discussions which provided them with a chance to express their views about the challenges (peer pressure) they face in their daily lives, and they indicated great interest in having similar sessions in the future.

Lajna attended social hour sessions of their choice. On Friday evening, some Lajna chose to take part in *Bait Bazi* competition (moderated by Mubarika Shah), while others took part in an open forum

entitled "*The Healing Powers of Prayers,*" which was moderated by Aisha sharif along with Hanna Zafar and Zakia Mahmood. It was a very informative and spiritual evening and some members continued their discussions even after Salat. On Saturday evening, Lajna took part in sports competitions and then attended a workshop on "*Khidmate-Khalq + Tabligh = Service to Humanity.*" This workshop was moderated by Sisters Shakura Nooriah (National Tabligh Secretary) and Tahira Lateef (National *Khidmat-e-Khalq* Secretary), and aimed at addressing points that Huzoor has raised with regard to Lajna's role and responsibilities in these areas.

SPORTS

Sports competitions for Nasirat (organized by Philadelphia Lajna) and for Lajna (organized by North Jersey Lajna) were found to be most enjoyable. After a little hesitation, many members took part in three-legged race, backward race, 50 meter dash, relays, etc. A number of hidden talents were uncovered during the sports sessions!

POEMS

English, Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic and Persian poems were sung in beautiful melodious voices by Nasirat and Lajna from different chapters throughout the Ijtema weekend. Some highlights included the poems by Sister Jameela Ali who brought tears to our eyes when she sang "Message to Rabwah" and "I am an Ahmadi," and reminded us to pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Pakistan. Sister Fatimah Haneef graced us with her beautiful voice and sang a Poem from Durres Samin in Urdu while sister Jamilla Hamid rejuvenated the sisters with a poem which required the audience to sing "Ahmadiyyat" after every verse. Some sisters spontaneously began singing "La ilaha illalla" and helped close the final session on a very high spiritual note, *Alhamdolillah*.

During lunch and tea breaks, members could purchase items from the *Meena Bazaar* tables or enjoy a variety of foods (snacks, soda, kulfi or pan) sold at the Snack tables (organized by sister Amatun Noor Ahmad, Central Regional President). These tables were arranged with great enthusiasm by different Lajna chapters so that they could raise funds for national and local causes. Sister Zakia Mahmood (National Ish'at Secretary) and her team provided
(continued on page 27)