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HADHRAT MIRZA TAHIR AHMAD, KHALIFATUL MASIH IV

FROM THE HOLY QURAN

"In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

"Successful indeed are the believers,

"Who are humble in their Prayers,

"And who shun all that which is vain,

"And who are prompt and regular in paying the Zakat,

"And who guard their chastity--

"Except from their wives or what their right hands possess, for then they are not to be blamed;

"But who seek anything beyond that are the transgressors--

"And who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants,

"And who are strict in observance of their Prayers.

"These are the heirs,

"Who will inherit Paradise. They will abide therein for ever."

(18:1-12)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ②

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خِشْعُونَ ③

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ④

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ⑤

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ⑥

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ آزْوَجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ⑦

مَنْ ابْتِغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعُدُونَ ⑧

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْلِهِمْ رِعُونَ ⑨

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ⑩

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ⑪

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SO SAID THE HOLY PROPHET

(Peace and blessings of God be upon him)

Abu Huraira (May God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: God does not see your bodies or your faces, He looks at your hearts. (*Muslim*)

Abu Huraira (May God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: A aware by God that I seek forgiveness from Him and repent in front of Him more than 70 times a day. (*Muslim*)

Ibn Abbas (May God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: If a person were to acquire a valley full of gold, he will wish for two such valleys. This greed is vanquished only by his grave; except, of course, the pious and Godly people. (*Bukhari*)

Abu Saeed Khudri (may God be pleased with him) relates that once some of the inhabitants of Medina began to ask the Holy prophet (s.a.w.) the

fulfilment of their needs. He kept on giving them until he exhausted all he had. He said to them that it would be impossible for him to refuse to give them anything he possesses; but remember, anyone who wants to avoid begging, God will save him from it. Anyone who wishes to be indifferent to others (what they have), God will make him so; and anyone who observes patience when he is destitute, God will give him patience. There is no treasure bigger than contentment and tranquility given to anyone. (*Bukhari*)

Suhaib (May God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: All acts of a believer are admirable; it is the distinction of a true believer only that when he encounters ease, he thanks God which is full of blessings; when a calamity befalls him, he shows perseverance and this also results in only good. (*Muslim*)

FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH

(Peace be on him)

I admonish my community to shun arrogance because arrogance is most loathsome to God, the Lord of Glory. You may not perhaps fully realize what arrogance is. So learn it from me because I speak with the spirit of God.

Everyone who looks down upon his brother because he considers himself to be more learned, wiser, or more accomplished than him, is arrogant. He is arrogant because, instead of considering God to be the fountainhead of all wisdom and knowledge, he considers himself something. Does God not have the power to derange him mentally and instead grant superior knowledge, wisdom and dexterity to his brother whom he considers inferior?

Likewise, he too is arrogant who, thinking of his wealth or high status, looks down upon his brother. He is arrogant because he has ignored that

this status and grandeur were bestowed upon him by God. He is blind and does not realize that God has power to afflict him with such misfortune as, all of a sudden he is cast to the lowest of the low; and again He has the power to bestow greater wealth and prosperity upon that brother of his whom he consider small.

Yet again, that person is arrogant who is proud of his superior bodily health, or of his good looks or strength, or prowess, and scornfully makes fun of his brother and teases him and addresses him with derisive names. Not satisfied with this, he advertises his physical defects. It is so because he is unaware of the existence of a God Who possesses power to suddenly inflict him with such bodily defects as may leave him much worse than his brother. (*Nuzoolul Masih: Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 18, p.402*)

ANYONE WHO WISHES FOR NEARNESS TO ALLAH SHOULD FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE HOLY PROPHET (s.a.w.)

It is Allah's way that He excludes those who yearn for position the most and He raises those who want to hide and give them everything

(Friday Sermon by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah Strengthen him) on November 13, 1998. Translation by Dr. Aziza Rahman)

After Recitation of *Tashahud* and *Surah Al-Fatiha*, Huzoor recited verse 9 of *Surah Al-Muzzamil*.

“So remember the name of thy Lord, and devote thyself to Him with full devotion.”

The verse that I have recited today, presents the connection between unworldliness and nearness to Allah. *Tabbattul* means to isolate oneself from the world and turn totally to Allah. Here *Tabattul* does not mean that one should cut off all contact with the world, but that all worldly contacts should be on a superficial level, with the heart always turned towards Allah. This form of *Tabattul* precedes Prophethood, and I will shed some light on this subject with some Hadith. The notion that a prophet practices *Tabattul* after attaining prophethood is not correct. In fact, Prophethood is attained as a result of *Tabattul*. There is a distinct difference here that should be kept in mind. *Tabattul* is the stairway by which every high station, not only prophethood but also righteousness, is reached. I will present some Hadith and quotations of Hazrat Masih Mau'ood, the Promised Messiah (*alaihissalam*). Hazrat Masih Mau'ood (a.s.) referring to the verse I recited said:

“The crux of this verse is that to desire Allah’s pleasure above all else is *Tabattul*. So *Tabattul* and *Tawakkul* (trust in Allah) are twins. The secret to *Tabattul* is *Tawakkul* and the condition for *Tawakkul* is *Tabattul* and this is the essence of our Religion.”

Hazrat Masih Mau'ood (a.s.) has presented *Tabattul* and *Tawakkul* as identical twins. The amount of *Tabattul* that is practiced is equal to the same amount of *Tawakkul* that is attained. The amount of *Tawakkul* has to be the same as *Tabattul* practiced, therefore, *Tabattul* and *Tawakkul* are two names for the same subject.

The Hadith I have chosen for this section is from *Tirmidhi, Kitab-Ul-Munaqib*. Hazrat Ayesha (r.a.) related:

From the very start, even in childhood, the foundation upon which prophethood was conferred was that Hazrat Muhammad (*sallaho alaihe wassallam*) practiced *Tabattul*. Without this *Tabattul*, prophethood would not have been bestowed, because *Tabattul* is its first requirement. Thus prophethood follows *Tabattul*.

Before receiving prophethood, when Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.) was practicing *Tabattul*, he began to have dreams that would be exactly fulfilled in the morning. These dreams were the first step for preparation for prophethood. Allah bestowed the gift of true dreams on him before the series of revelations and prophecies began. Hazrat Ayesha (God be pleased with her), although not present there herself at that time, must have heard from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) about the dreams. Through the fulfillment of these dreams, his heart was assured that the path he was following would lead to Allah.

Allah kept him in this state as long as He willed, and at this time seclusion was most dear to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) liked nothing more than to separate and isolate himself from the world, for this reason he would retire to the Cave of Hira. Thus prophethood was not bestowed before going to Hira. In fact, the onset of prophethood occurred in steps, and after attaining those steps, then he went to the Cave of Hira and there he remained in solitude until Allah made him be known.

This subject is the same for all devotees. Anyone who wishes for nearness to Allah should follow the example of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and keeping it in mind, should assess how much nearer he gets to Allah

or how much effort he makes.

Another Hadith is from *Muslim, Kitab-ul-Zuhd*, where Hazrat Saad bin Abu Waqas relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: Allah loves that person who is in control of his passions, has no worldly wants, is unknown and lives a life of seclusion.”

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) stopped living in seclusion after prophethood but this did not affect Allah’s love for him (s.a.w.). He ceased his reclusiveness only when commanded to do so. All these actions are steps that take the matter forward degree by degree.

Allah loves the one who is in control of his passions, that is one who refrains from bad deeds, is obedient by nature, who avoids sins and is not desirous of anything, *i.e.*, is unworldly. He does not avoid sins to show off to people in order to gain praise. His distaste for sin is innate and others do not even know what sorts of sins he may be avoiding. His shunning of sins remains hidden and he is unconcerned about it. He does not care an iota whether the world knows that he is abstaining from something and undergoing hardship for Allah’s sake.

Now I shall present a few quotations from the *Malfoozaat* of the Promised Messiah (a.s.) that will shed light on this topic. *Malfoozaat* is a collection of the Promised Messiah’s words that were spoken in gatherings and were collected and published as a book. These contain his words because they were recorded at that time. There are some *Malfoozaat* that were collected after his death. These were verified by several sources before publication. In *Malfoozaat* Volume 4, page 317 (new edition) it says:

“When a person develops love and desire for God, then the world and worldly things become distasteful to him...”

It may seem strange that love for Allah should produce disgust and distaste for worldliness. Love of Allah bestows true mercy, kindness and affection in this life, but those people shun worldly things dislike those who ignore Allah and follow cheap pursuits. In spite of their dislike, they still make efforts to improve worldly people, the more astray these people are the more they try to reform them.

“...It is a fact that when one develops sincere love and devotion to *Allah Tal’ala*, then the world and its distraction become distasteful, such a person prefers solitude and isolation. This was the case of Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.). He was so lost in the love of Allah, that he found enjoyment in an uncomfortable and frightening place where he spent many nights in solitude. This indicates his bravery and courage. When love for Allah becomes intense, then courage develops and the believer is never afraid. While those who prefer worldly things become cowardly...”

The Promised Messiah (a.s.) points out that this is an example of *Tabattul* and testifies to the courage and bravery of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) as he spent many days and nights in the cave. Even visitors today find not only the climb to the cave difficult but the cave itself is dark and frightening place, not for the faint-hearted. This example of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) is a sign for those who are afraid of the dark and of spirits, that Godly people are not cowards. They have no fear of the unknown. The more trust they have in Allah, the less is their fear of the unknown, and it is up to all believers to overcome their fears.

Let me relate my own experience. Once my revered father and family went to the mountains and I was alone in the house. I used to sleep in the courtyard and was a little nervous because there were many stories of ghosts associated with the house. One such story was that an old woman would jump off the roof. One night it occurred to me that this is a form of *shirk*. Why am I not sleeping? I decided to confront these fears and proceeded to the most frightening area of the house which was an old fireplace, reputed to be the most haunted. I sat down in the middle of the fireplace and said: “Any spirit which wants to come, come! I have full trust in Allah, nothing can harm me, unless Allah wills.” After that I felt extremely peaceful. I went calmly to bed and slept without worry.

Reading the quotation of the Promised Messiah (a.s.) made me recall my own experience. The Promised Messiah (a.s.) could comprehend such occurrences although he never experienced them himself. He was a master of discernment and understood the human psyche. We learn through our own difficult experiences, but he was bestowed with

the wisdom that allowed him to relate to the Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.) experience in the cave.

"...When love for Allah becomes intense, courage is given, and a Believer is never cowardly..."

Now think about yourselves, a believer is not only unafraid of ghosts and spirits, but is not afraid of the trials and tribulations of the world. For those who write to me about their fears, they should offer the following prayer:

"O Lord, cover our internal weaknesses, conceal what we wish to conceal, and transfer our fears into peace."

This is a very good prayer and should be recited often. These are two types of fears, one is a fear within, having one's weaknesses and fears revealed to others and this is a constant fear. The second fear is from the outside, an attack from others, from criminals, from the government, as in some countries. I receive numerous letters in this context from Pakistan, and I tell them to say this prayer and they will be free of fear.

This freedom from fear happens in two ways. One is that Allah removes the danger Himself. A little while ago, I received a letter from an Ahmadi describing an incident that happened with his friend. His friend was kidnaped by bandits, who were well known for their bad treatment of victims; usually they would beat them and then kill them. The bandits asked his friend one question, what religion are you? This man had trust in Allah, he replied: "I am an Ahmadi by the Grace of Allah. Do what you want, I will never turn away from Ahmadiyyat!" On hearing this the bandit said to him: "Go back to where you came from" and returned him to his own place. Now he had never expected that the result of *Tawakkul* would be so great.

On the other hand, when one who has *Tawakkul* suffers misfortune, he immediately thinks that Allah gave that thing to me and He took it back. This is a test for me and I should not fail in this test. Then Allah rewards such a person greatly. So these two types of *Tawakkul* result from confidence in Allah and from *Tabattul*.

Now I present another quotation from the

Promised Messiah's (a.s.) *Malfoozaat, Volume 4*, page 664 (new edition) which is concerning a prophet's and messenger's love of solitude.

"Do not think that prophets and messengers ask to become prophets and messengers..."

How could they want to become prophets and messengers when they wish to hide from the world and they know what a heavy burden prophethood is? He (a.s.) says:

"...Absolutely not! They wish to live a nameless existence, unknown to anyone, but Allah forcefully draws them out of their closets..."

Now see how Allah compels them to become known, because He wants such people. There are many incidents in history where such people did not want to accept responsibility, but were made to do so by the sovereign of that time. Hazrat Masih Mau'ood (a.s.) says: "...Allah draws them forcefully out of their closets..." Every prophet was like the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), they all wished to remain unknown. Note here the truth and *taqwa* of the Promised Messiah (a.s.) who, in spite of his great love for the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), gave all the prophets their due. It was the habit of all the prophets, but each one has his own level. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) practiced the highest degree of solitude and bore the greatest responsibilities. The Promised Messiah (a.s.) goes on:

"The life of every prophet was like so. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) wished to remain hidden from the world and thus he would hide in the cave of Hira and pray there. It never occurred to him that he would come out of it as in:

"O mankind! Truly I am a messenger to you all from Allah." (Surah Al-Araf, v. 59.)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) desired to live an unknown life, but Allah did not will this, and made him come forward. It is Allah's way that He excludes those who yearn for it the most..."

There is great wisdom in the last point, that those who desire prophethood are barred from it. That very desire corrupts their intentions and their ambition will make them negligent of their duties to their followers. Consequently, the organization of the Jamaat follows

the same principle. There is no other community in the world where this policy is implemented, that a person who desires to hold an office is never given it. If it is shown that a person seeks nomination to an office, he will be disqualified from any post thereafter.

Now this may seem a strange idea, because no other democracy in the world does this. In most democracies people who wish to hold office form parties and spread propaganda, and are elected by those who hold the same opinions. Such democracies may use any unjust and corrupt means to achieve their goals. Jamaat Ahmadiyya alone practices true democracy, and no other community, political or religious, has been granted this distinction. There is no question that the democracy bestowed by Allah to Jamaat Ahmadiyya would ever allow anyone who asks for office to hold it. Now see how in Pakistan or Afghanistan, the desire for office has destroyed people. Pakistan's breakdown is due to everyone joining the race for positions, and this race is ruining the country. There is a great lesson in the system Allah has chosen for assigning prophethood. The way He chooses prophets provides guidance which no political dogma has ever presented.

“...made him to come forward. It is Allah's way that He excludes those who yearn for position the most and He raises those who want to hide and gives them everything. So understand that I also prefer a life of solitude...”

Now when all the responsibility was put on Hazrat Masih Mau'ood (a.s.), in his heart he preferred being alone even while living in the public eye.

“I still remember fondly that period I lived through...”

The Promised Messiah (a.s.) is remembering the time when he lived alone and had no responsibilities and no one was making any demands on him.

“I by nature prefer solitude but Allah thrust me forward. How could I ignore his command? I was always opposed to fame, but what could I do when Allah himself wanted it for me. So I am content. And I could not deny his command. The world can say what it likes, but I do not care...”

The quality of unworldliness that was granted to

the Promised Messiah (a.s.) was the result of *Tawakkul*.

Another extract from *Malfoozaat* Volume 4, page 7 (new edition) says:

“Remember that those who are commissioned by God are not desirous that people should crowd around them and praise them. They find comfort in keeping away from worldly things. Hazrat Musa (a.s.) also demurred when he was being commissioned...”

Hazrat Musa (a.s.) apparently objected because he had killed a man and his brother spoke better than he. But in actual fact, he did not want the burden of prophethood.

“...Similarly, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) preferred to stay in the Cave of Hira, but Allah raised him as a prophet for the people. Prophets have modesty and are reclusive, thus they desire less worldly contact. This leads to greater delight and pleasure in Allah.”

What is this modesty? People who feel shy and uncomfortable when they are praised, whether the praise is genuine or not, are modest. They have revulsion for false praise, and if they do not possess the quality being praised, they will clearly say so. Even if they do possess such qualities, they do not consider themselves praiseworthy, and they feel shy when praised. In this regard, the Promised Messiah (a.s.) says when Allah reveals prophets to the people, they feel shy because they are modest.

Now we can observe two kinds of modesty or shame. First, the shame felt by a wicked person if all his sins are exposed, and secondly the modesty of prophets, which is quite different. When prophets are revealed to the people, they feel the shyness of a new bride, knowing that all their hidden virtues will be exposed.

“...Prophets have modesty and are reclusive, thus they desire less worldly contact. This leads to greater delight and pleasure in Allah...”

Why is less worldly contact necessary for a close relationship with Allah? The Promised Messiah (a.s.) explains that when a person has true and pure love for

someone, all he wants is to be alone with his beloved. He does not like anyone to see his devotions, and he needs nothing else. This quality is pleasing to Allah. Allah loves these people for their unworldliness, their dependence on Him alone, and their dedication to Him.

“...and He selects them for the guidance of His creation as He wills...”

Allah knows that these people want nothing for themselves because of their unworldliness. He knows that they are dedicated to Him alone, and will fulfill their responsibilities to His creatures. This is the reason why He selects them as prophets. After they are chosen by Allah, they become even closer to Him, and He knows that they will not avoid their responsibilities or stray away from Him. He knows that the trials they will undergo strengthen their dedication to Him. He selects them as His servant, whether they are willing or not.

“Allah raises these people to the status of Messenger, those whom He considers suitable because of their pure nature and sincerity...”

It is a fact that all prophets have to be forced into prophethood by Allah

“They had wished to be unknown, and spend their time in praising Allah in the privacy of their rooms, but Allah makes them become public and reveals their beauties, and thousands of people are drawn towards them...”

This same process occurred with the Promised Messiah (a.s.) himself. One of his companions has related that one day the Promised Messiah (a.s.) was walking in Qadian surrounded by a crowd of followers. A Sikh came to him and said, “O Ghulam Ahmad, are you the same person whom your Father had to force to play with me, now all these people are running around you?”

He was surprised to see so many people were with him, when he knew that the Promised Messiah (a.s.) had always preferred solitude. So see how Allah repeats this process with every prophet.

Another *Malfoozaat*, Volume 1, page 311, new edition, says:

“If Allah were to give me the choice between a life of seclusion and a life of popularity, I swear by Him that I would prefer solitude. He it is Who has drawn me into the stage of the world. Who knows better than Allah how much I love solitude? I remained alone for twenty five years and never for a single moment did I wish for fame I dislike being in a crowd, but I am compelled to do so by Allah. When I sit with visitors or go for a walk or talk to people it is because of the command of Allah.”

It is well known that the Promised Messiah (a.s.) spent time with people, ate with, laughed and jested with them. Imagine how difficult this must have been for him, but he joined in gatherings for the sake of Allah.

One of the signs given to the Promised Messiah (a.s.) is the one hundredth sign recorded in *Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya* (p. 241), and is a prophecy. He says that Allah informed him twenty-five years before, when he was enjoying his solitude, that he would bring him forth. Hazrat Masih Mau'ood's (a.s.) translation of this prophecy is:

“Do not despair of the Blessings of Allah, and hear this, that the Favor of Allah is imminent. Be aware that Allah's help is nearby. This help will reach you by many means, people will come to you by every path and they will come in such masses that the roads they travel by will be worn down and have holes in them. Allah Himself shall come to your aid. You will receive support from those whose hearts We shall inspire. But do not ill-treat those who come to you, do not tire of meeting so many people. Twenty five years have passed since this prophecy was revealed.”

Allah's warning to the Promised Messiah (a.s.) not to tire of meeting people always comes to my mind during my *Mulaqats*, especially during Jalsa Salana. It is important to greet every visitor with warmth and fulfil their expectations. *Mulaqats* are more tiring than the Jalsa itself, for the emotions on meeting people, then the sadness at their leaving, together with regret that I cannot give them more time, due to all my other obligations, all these weigh heavily on my mind.

And it is true, Allah has set up this remarkable system, that whatever work you undertake for His

sake, it becomes dear to you. The joy and sadness of meeting and parting from people, the burden growing in one's heart was felt by the Promised Messiah (a.s.), just as Allah had informed him beforehand. We cannot imagine all the burdens that the Promised Messiah (a.s.) undertook, he took care of all the visitors' needs, he brought their food to them himself from his own home, inquiring after people and treating them with great thoughtfulness and respect. Only a prophet of God can be bestowed with such fortitude and patience, while withdrawing from worldly things for His sake.

Now those, who are disputing the truth of the Promised Messiah (a.s.), like the wretched Maulvis,

what do they know of seclusion for Allah's sake? What do they know about achieving the pleasure of Allah by passing through different stages, when opposing situations exist at the same time? These are the conditions that prophets pass through. The ignorant people of the world cannot even comprehend it. But if they would open their eyes, they would realize that he (the Promised Messiah (a.s.)) is Allah's revered prophet and can be nothing else I will end with this quotation:

"I was nothing, only a speck of humanity and was completely unknown."

JUMA OF FAREWELL OR JUMA OF WELCOME

(Friday Sermon of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV, delivered on February 7, 1997. A stimulating guidance provided for those who come to the Mosque only once a year to perform Juma'a tul wida (the Juma of Farewell) and have forgotten the true significance and importance of Salat (Prayer) in Islam. Translated from the Urdu text published in Al Fazl International, March 28, 1997, by Dr. Rasheed Syed Azam)

Huzoor (a.b.a.) said:

"*Juma'a tul wida* (the last Friday of Ramadhan) is regarded most sacred but I am not certain when this concept was introduced in Islam. It appears to have deep historical significance among Muslims of India and Pakistan and elsewhere in the world. Many stories are in vogue about this sacred concept. For this reason I asked the scholars of the Jamaat for investigation of this concept from the *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) so that I could present it to you as a special gift at the time of the *Juma'a tul Wida* of this Ramadhan. The blessings of *Juma'a* Prayer are often mentioned in the Holy Quran and in many *Ahadith* but there is no mention of '*Juma'a tul wida*'. There is nowhere to be found in the *Ahadith* or *Sunnah* (Practice of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.)) any evidence of Muslims impatiently waiting to seek blessings from the last Friday Ramadhan.

True, the blessings related to the last ten days of Ramadhan are mentioned very often. Blessings of *Juma'a* Prayer, wherever and whenever it comes during the year, are mentioned. I want to impress this

fact upon the memory of all Muslim brothers, (whether they belong to this Jama'at or not) who unfortunately are not regular in offering their obligatory Prayer and are gathered together in the Mosques in search of that sacred day and, who will hear my voice today because only God knows whether they will be able to return to the Mosques again. I want to make use of this occasion to convey to them that there is no special mention of *Juma'a tul Wida* and its sanctity in the Holy Quran, *Ahadith* or *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) or in the practice of his companions. The kind of day you were waiting for has turned out to be different from your concept of it.

However, *Juma'a tul Mubarak* is a sacred and blessed day for all Muslims according to the Holy Quran and the *Ahadith*. And this Friday comes every week. Besides, the Holy Quran repeatedly emphasizes the importance and the sanctity of *Salat* (Prayer) in the life of every believer and it comes five times every day. The Holy Quran repeatedly mentions about this blessing that is available to all Muslims five times every day. *Salat* is a treasure of goodness and full of

blessings. No other act of worship is mentioned as often in the Holy Quran as the obligatory Prayer (*Salat*). It is strange that people turn away from this obligation and blessed worship and keep waiting for one Friday for their salvation.

As I have said that the sanctity or importance of *Juma'a tul Wida* is not mentioned anywhere in the Holy Quran or *Ahadith*. But people can at least learn and earn this blessing from this Friday, *Juma'a tul wida*, if they realize that Allah's blessings and His rewards are all in His worship. All goodness of this world and in the hereafter are linked to Allah's worship and every believer is afforded an opportunity to receive them five times a day by performing the obligatory Prayers.

You pass by big Mosques everyday. It may appear to you that those big Mosques are built without any purpose. But you will be amazed to see those big Mosques are overflowing with worshipers today, the day of *Juma'a tul wida*. Streets are sometimes closed to traffic to make space for people who come for prayer in big cities like Lahore and Karachi or in any big city of the world. Many streets outside the Mosques are closed and sometimes special tents are erected to make space for people who come for *Juma'a tul Wida's* Prayer!

In fact, (according to Allah's command) these worshipers are expected to come to the Mosque (where available) five times a day for their obligatory Prayer. You can easily perceive the difference between the misconceived idea of worship of the worldly people who consider *Juma'a tul wida* as a means to salvation and forget the true concept of worship that pleases Allah and wins His mercy and blessings, and is in accordance with the instructions in the Holy Quran and *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.).

True salvation lies in the obedience to Allah and this obedience is best shown through His worship. Worship is the first door to His obedience and entry through this door leads to obedience in all respects. One who closes this door has no access to Allah.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) has put great emphasis on Prayer, especially the Prayer in congregation. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) is reported to have said to his companions after one morning's congregational

Prayer, 'some people are sleeping in their homes and if I were permitted by Allah I would take these worshipers with me with loads of firewood and would burn their homes with them. But I am not permitted to do that because God has not made me responsible for their actions.

Now, you can not imagine a person with greater love for mankind than the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). He was so kind that even a small suffering of other human beings grieved him. He was kind and forgiving particularly towards the believers, as God is Most Gracious and Ever Merciful towards His creations. The above quoted words uttered by the mouth of the most loving and caring Prophet conveys a message that people who sleep at the time they should be present in the Mosque for Prayer are the fuel of fire. It would be better for them to be burnt in this life so that they might be spared the punishment of hell-fire in the life hereafter.

The true import of this sermon is that man is created to worship Allah. Salvation is dependent upon worship. So my message today is for all the people who can hear my voice having come in large numbers to the Mosque in search of blessings for their salvation and some of them are praying outside in the streets for lack of space inside the Mosques that our real worship is our Five Daily Prayers. It is the duty of every believer to respond to the call of Prayer. They should leave their homes and business and proceed to the House of God for Prayer every time they hear 'come to the Prayer, come to the *Salat*; come to the salvation, come to success'. This call is heard five times a day then why do they not respond to it and go for success and salvation? Therefore, those who hear the call and are able to go to the Mosque should go there for Prayer. Those who are not able to join the congregational Prayer because of illness or some other reason, then they are responsible for their actions and their case rests with God. Every person knows best his own situation and has to give his own account to God.

If a person can not go the Mosque five times a day for congregational Prayer, he should make 'a mosque' wherever he can. He should try to make his friends and family members to join him in Prayer and he should lead the congregational Prayer for the benefit of all. A person, who is anxious to offer all his Prayers in

congregation but is not able to do so, is given this glad tidings that all his Prayers would be counted congregational if he calls 'AZAN' and begins to offer his Prayer if he were leading a congregation. Then God Almighty shall make the Angels descend and join with him in a Prayer in congregation.

This blessing greets you five times everyday. Those who turn away from it and run after *Juma'a tul wida*, that comes once a year to seek forgiveness for their sins do not know whether they are going to die just after the *Juma'a* Prayer when their sins have been forgiven (although there is no mention of the promise of Allah's forgiveness attached to *Juma'a tul wida*!) Only Allah knows when the angel of death will visit you, it could be any day of the year. That is why you have daily an opportunity, five times a day, for Prayer and asking Allah's forgiveness and to be prepared for departure from this world as a purified being.

I, therefore, draw the attention of our Jama'at (and advise all other Muslim brethren who are increasingly joining our *Khutba Juma'a* through Muslim Television Ahmadiyya, MTA) that five daily Prayers should be punctually offered in congregation where possible. This is the soul of the message of the Holy Quran and it should be conveyed to all believers. If all the Muslims fulfil this obligation, then with Allah's blessing a comprehensive system of reformation will be established to bring back the lost glory and greatness of Islam in this world. The outward glory and greatness are interconnected with the inner spiritual glory and greatness. If the inner glory and greatness is achieved then the outward glory and greatness will inevitably follow. Nothing can be achieved when all efforts are wasted in pursuit of outward glory and greatness and inner spiritual greatness and glory is not restored. Outward glory is just like a dead body without soul and has no value in the sight of God.

Therefore, you should seek inner greatness and try to develop your inner self first. May God grant you that greatness for which He Himself says: '*the most honorable and the greatest of all persons among you is the one who is the most righteous, the most God fearing.*' This '*Taqwa*' (righteousness) can not be achieved without fulfilling your obligation of worshiping God Almighty I am hopeful that with

Allah's help you will pursue this objective in life, *Insha Allah*.

I shall now present a Hadith narrating the blessings related to the day of Friday. This Hadith is taken from *Sunnan Ibne Maja*, the chapter related to the Blessings of *Juma'a*, and is narrated by Abu Lababa son of Abdul Manzar.

'The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said that Friday is the chief of all days and it is greatly ranked in blessing by Allah. Its sanctity is greater than the day of *Al-Adha* and day of *Alfitr*.'

The fact is that the two *Eids* and *Juma'a tul wida* are all highly sacred days but every Friday is declared to be the more sacred day by Allah than both the *Eids* and it has five prayers.

On Friday God grants His servants all their prayers provided they do not ask anything prohibited. There is a special moment on every Friday when God does not refuse any legitimate request made by His obedient servants. This is a message for those who come to *Juma'a* Prayer regularly, they should specially pray for every goodness for this life and for the next life. They should recognize the importance of *Juma'a* Prayer and should keep praying to Allah for making it easy for those who are not able to come for *Juma'a* Prayer.

There is no mention of *Juma'a tul wida* to be found anywhere that one should keep waiting for or to be the last *Juma'a* when one can ask for anything from God once every year. Strangely enough this concept has become now a custom in the entire '*Umma*' and even those people who never say any Prayer throughout the year come to the Mosques with great zeal on '*Juma'a tul wida*'. Mosques begin to overflow with worshipers and many are accommodated under tents in the streets, which are temporarily closed to traffic. One may feel affected by the great scene presented by such huge gatherings of worshipers who apparently have come to seek Allah's blessings through worship. But the most painful aspect of this custom is that they have come to bid farewell not only to the last Friday of Ramadhan but also to all the Fridays that will follow! They have now to take leave not only of Friday Prayer, but also of all Prayers. The following Friday you will see not only the streets are

empty, the Mosques are empty too.

One wonders where those people had come from and where have they gone? Their claim was that they were gathered like moths around a candle. Moths come every night when the candle is lit and their love is proven by the fact that they sacrifice their life for the candlelight. They burn to death but the candle of their love remains alight. It has always been like that and it will remain like this forever!

But what kind of love for Ramadhan and *Juma'a tul wida* is this that they come and go in such a manner that shows no relationship was ever established between them and Ramadhan. This seems to be an impulsive act and apparently very impressive. It was a great Friday, even all the streets were overcrowded. But think of the next Friday too when Mosques will be empty. Only a few worshipers who used to come before *Juma'a tul wida* will come or the number of worshipers may even be smaller as some may think that they have worked hard for a full month and they can rest for a few Fridays!

The Holy Quran and *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), as I have said before, make no special mention of *Juma'a tul Wida*. Special emphasis is placed upon the whole of Ramadhan and worship during the night. Today is *Juma'a tul wida* (farewell *Juma*) but I want to make it a *Juma'a tul istiqbal* (*Juma* of welcome): I must clarify the difference between these two terms. I wait for the whole year to welcome this Friday. But there are many, or at least a large number, who also wait for this Friday but come to bid it farewell. They would like to take leave of all the future Fridays and all goodness. They bid farewell to Friday to take leave of Ramadhan and remembrance of Allah. Most people or at least a large number who attend this Friday with this intention are those who seldom offer their five daily Prayers or *Juma'a Salat*. They never have time for *Juma'a* or other Prayers, they never have time to remember Allah, they never like to sit in the company of the righteous nor do they ever listen to talks related to goodness in life. They keep the company of their own kind where they feel relaxed and do not come under any pressure of those who call others to goodness. They continue wandering with their group, away from Allah.

Only on *Juma'a tul Wida* they are forced by their innate goodness to join the righteous. They are among the righteous today listening to good things but their hope is that after all this is just one Friday and it will pass away. It is *Juma'a tul wida* and they have come to bid it farewell just as children say 'ta ta' to the departing guest, I on the contrary have been waiting for this Friday to welcome them because this is a welcome Friday for me. I welcome those people and from this point of view it is a welcome Friday for me. I wait for the whole year for them to come and listen to good things and open their eyes to other realities in life. There is no contradiction in these two concepts of farewell and welcome, it is the way you look at things. For them it is an occasion for farewell and for me it is an occasion to welcome.

WRONG CONCEPT OF JUMA'A TUL WIDA

If a person truly believes in the existence of God and considers Him to be the Greatest of all, then how can he turn away from God when he can not behave like this towards those whom he thinks to be great in this world. Lost in the worldly pursuits, how can one keep one's faith in God Almighty and turn away from Him when the time for daily Prayers comes? This will be a lie and a life of deceit. One must pay attention to this fact that ultimately our return is to Him. God Almighty has created us and has sent us in this world and all the blessings we have received are given to us by Allah, the Creator of the entire Universe. Being ungrateful for all His rewards is indeed a very undesirable kind of life.

You continue to fawn at the door of an important person in this world when you think he can bestow something on you. Often he does not. How many politicians are there who have given anything to their followers? It is just a feeling of false pride of being important because your connection with a highly placed person although he does not actually give you anything.

Why are you not ever so grateful to God Almighty who is the Creator and Sustainer of all the worlds and has provided you with everything you need in life? His obedience you think is a heavy burden and his worship you consider a calamity! You think you can please God by attending one *Juma'a* Prayer once every year

and remain a friend with little effort or sacrifice!

As a matter of fact, many so called Muslim leaders and scholars tend to mislead people. They say that God is Merciful and Kind with High Honor. So there is no need to undergo any hardship for His sake or to find Him. If you come to *Juma'a tul wida* and pray till *Asr* (afternoon) Prayer, you will be forgiven all your sins not only of that year but also of your entire life. Thus they narrate (and dwell on) the blessings and greatness of *Juma'a tul wida* to the ignorant masses and whatever good sense they may have is further depleted. They talk in total contradiction to the teachings of the Holy Quran.

You must remember that it is stated in the Holy Quran that if you come to God just for a short time, He will listen to your prayer. However, it may mean absolutely nothing if you do not establish a permanent relationship with Allah. Your selfish motive would not benefit you as you came and left and did not establish that lasting bond with God. God will certainly inform you when you finally appear before Him what you used to do on earth. As a consequence of your sinful life here, you will be nothing but a fuel for hell fire in the hereafter. Here God is giving the true picture of your life as a consequence of your actions, in the hereafter. However, the deceitful mullahs are telling you that you do not need to worry about anything if you just say with your tongue that you love the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), then you are permitted to do anything. And those of your sins which God can not forgive, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) would get those forgiven! The people who are given such concept of religion lose everything, their *DEEN* and their *DUNYA* i.e., their life on earth is wasted and

consequently they will suffer in the hereafter.

“Therefore, wake up Ahmadi Muslims! If you have not been punctual in your Prayers, let this Friday welcome you and help you to undergo a complete change and you begin to be nearer to God. Giving yourself completely to God is a tall claim but you can not be His unless you start on this journey. You should move in His direction a few steps then He will guide you and take care of you by coming closer to you. It is not that hard to get closer to God. You should begin praying for yourself on this Friday. You should set your goals with a plan on how you are going to continue to receive the blessings of this Friday through the rest of the year.

MOVE TOWARDS THE CITY OF GOODNESS

You should try to understand the message carefully and make a decision that this year you will depart from the city of evils and begin moving towards the city of goodness. If you do so, you have then the assurance of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) that you will meet a noble end in the sight of Allah wherever you give your life in your journey towards Allah. You must move towards goodness, even if you have to crawl. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) has given the example of a person who is near death, who has little strength left in his body but continues his struggle to move forward on his knees and elbows to give his life amidst the righteous people of God. It is impossible that God will not forgive after observing this scene. When you experience this kind of change in you, then *Juma'a tul wida* will have a different meaning for you. It will be a farewell to all evils while its blessings will continue. You will continue to have blessings of other Fridays too (*Insha Allah*).”

COMMITMENT

Commitment is what transforms a promise into a reality. It is the words that speak boldly of our intentions and the actions that speak louder than our words. It is making time when there is none. Coming through time after time after time, year after year after year. It is the stuff character is made of – the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism.

THE LAST TEN DAYS (ASHRA) OF RAMADHAN

(Translated by Dr. A. M. Shamim from *Monthly Khalid*, Rabwah)

Many bounties have been associated with the last of the Ramadhan. Come let us see the Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.) Sunnat on how we should spend these last days of Ramadhan.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV has said:

“Hazrat Ayesha (r.a.a.) (God be pleased with her) has related: “In the last *Ashara* of Ramadhan the Holy Prophet would strive to increase the time spent in worship to far exceed that spent thus in ordinary days.”

The accounts which we have from Hazrat Ayesha (r.a.a.) by the ordinary practice of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be on him, is such that it inspires wonder and awe that a human being could spend so much time and energy in the worship of God. He would sometimes spend the whole night in supplication before his Lord. He would become so involved in his supplication that it would seem as if there were only empty garments thrown on the ground, not clothing anyone. Hazrat Ayesha (r.a.a.) would at times find the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) absent and suspect that he had gone to another wife's home.

She would hurry out to look for him and find him engrossed in prayer. She would hear him praying so fervently that he sounded like the furious bubbling of a kettle. When she found the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) thus and returned home, what could be her state? What had she suspected? And what had she actually found?

These occasions that I have presented are an account of his ordinary habits. During the last ten days, Hazrat Ayesha (r.a.a.) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) would come home at unprecedented late hours from prayer and his state was indescribable by any person, she could not describe it, nor could anyone else. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) has himself described his condition, somewhat. He has attempted to explain his experiences and his state during these days. I will present this Hadith before you but I would like

to make some clarification. I do not agree with the translation and commentary commonly ascribed to this Hadith. The familiar translation has been abridged but I will elaborate it to its full meaning:

The last part of the Hadith is usually misrepresented. It's this part to which I wish to draw your attention. Ordinarily the word “*ajud*” is taken to mean that he freely spent on the poor, and “*kher*” is translated as worldly wealth (goods). And it is said the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) gave so generously, the way a high wind increases in intensity until it becomes a storm. This is a very pleasing interpretation but on this occasion it does not apply.

Gabriel used to descend to earth every night and find the Prophet (s.a.w.) there thus, alone. On this occasion to imply that Gabriel used to find Muhammad (s.a.w.) busy giving to the poor is wrong, this time of night is not appropriate to go out and look for the poor and assist them. These nights were devoted between God and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). How is it possible that on this night when Gabriel came with the Holy Quran that he would find Muhammad (s.a.w.) employed in almsgiving. This is impossible. The meaning of “*ajud*” given in scholarly dictionary as Imam Raghīb's, and the meaning of “*kher*” according to these is different. It contains other meanings also.

“*Ajud*” is employed for a person who exceeds all others in righteousness. And “*kher*” means good deeds, not only charity. Every good thing, which a believer expects and prays to God for, is termed “*kher*”. When we examine this Hadith with these meanings then a new scenario will emerge. Whenever Gabriel used to find the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) on these nights he found him engaged in this work exceeding all others. So much so that the ordinary man cannot conceive to what height he had

reached.

In these nights he was “*ajud*”. In that, he completely lost himself in *zikare-ilahi* and he was so far gone in all aspects of “*kher*” apart from wealth that it was as if a storm was blowing. These are the true meanings and by the dictionaries. This is not the time to go into details about these dictionaries but you can be rest assured that I am presenting this commentary after exhaustive research, that whenever Gabriel saw Muhammad (s.a.w.) he was engaged thus. He was engulfed in *zikare-ilahi*, and he completely annihilated himself in the oneness of God.

So from this angle follow the actions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and discover how difficult and essential that devotion is. This is difficult because it is a lengthy process. For an ordinary person it is improbable that he will even be able to imagine the final steps of *Suena* journey. But there are few days when God Himself comes nearer to us. These are the days when following of the Prophet of Allah is made easy. Just take advantage of these days and welcome them properly. Do not work to hasten these last days but spend the whole of

Ramadhan preparing for them. Open your hearts and minds to the blessings of Ramadhan and open your minds as if to receive the dawn. (*Khutha Juma* of 1/23/98, ref. *Al-Fazl International London* 3/13/98)

He also said concerning another Hadith from *Masnad Ahmad bin Humble* (v. 2 pg. 75 printed in Beirut) has mentioned that Hazrat Ibn Umar (*raziallanho*) states, “the Prophet of Allah said “as far as observance is concerned, these 10 days are the most high and beloved in the sight of Allah. As far as observance is concerned, these days contain the most blessing”. Just be glad that some of these days are before us still, and have not completely passed us by. Welcome them and they might stay in your homes and this is the true measure of righteousness. The piety, which comes and stays with us is true piety. In these days particularly the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) has emphasized the remembrance of *Allah (la-illa-ha-illala)* and *takbir (Allah-Akbar, Allah-Akbar)* and *tahmid (Alhamdo-lillah, Alhamdo-lillah)*. These are 3 simple phrases that anyone can easily recite in daily life, so we should lay emphasis on these.

LAILATUL-QADR

(Translated by Dr. A. M. Shamim, Maryland Jamaat)

About *Lailatur-Qadr* Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV says:

Now I present a tradition from *Bukhari* which has been narrated by Hazrat Ibne Umar. *Lailatul Qadr* was shown to some of the companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) in a dream in the last seven days, which meant that the special revelation of the night on selected person was to be on one of the seven last days of Ramadhan. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said that if you all have seen such a dream, then look for it in the last seven days of Ramadhan. Now at this time, only six days are left, and in the

light of this tradition, this happening can occur repeatedly, meaning that the days can be switched. Sometimes it may happen to occur on the 21st -and sometimes on the thirtieth. But usually this happens on the 21st, 23rd, 25th or 29th nights. So we have some days left to hope for its occurrence. Its not impossible that this will happen at the end of the month this time. So for the persons who have wasted the last Ramadhan, there is glad tiding for them. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) has said that all of you are agreed on the last seven days in your dreams, so look for it in the last week of Ramadhan. This was the practice of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.)

that he used to wake at night, that it was a blessed awakening, that with each awakening new attributes used to unfold upon him, which was ever increasing with each occasion. This was ever increasing experience as the beneficence of God is limitless so is the comprehension associated infinite.

Hazrat Ayesha (r.a.a.) says that when Ramadhan arrived the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) would gird up his loins. He used to wake up at night and he used to awaken his family, so I have used the same words of awakening that Hazrat Ayesha (r.a.a.) used for him.

There was not a single night, which was lifeless in his life, but especially in Ramadhan. He used to make alive the night, even more because he used to bring his family to life also.

Here to wake up the family was a physical act which the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) used to perform this also, and to forced upon us, that we should draw the attentions of our family toward getting up at night in order to worship Allah.

But when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) used to waken his family, then I think that he must be granting new treasures in regard to Ramadhan. From this angle, the way that the Messenger of Allah used to revitalize his nights he would also inspire his family. Hazrat Aysha (r.a.a.) stated that I once asked, 'Oh Messenger of Allah, if I am sure that I am experiencing *Lailatul Qadr*. What should I pray at this?' He replied ".....O my Lord, you are the most forgiving, you love forgiveness, therefore forgive me."

It is remarkable that he did not advise a prayer concerning material gain. It is apparent that only a negative aspect has been asked for, all old transgression should be forgiven but he also did not say what you should ask for after this fundamental prayer. It is a fact as I have said before, the effect of *Lailatul Qadr* is such, that if you are forgiven then dawn will appear and this is a positive happening

which will never transform into darkness. This means that the rest of his life, the person will be enlightened, this is the subject of *Istagfar*, and this is what the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) was teaching us.

It is said; "if you have firm faith in *Lailatul Qadr* then that is enough, and you should ask for forgiveness and be satisfied. If Allah erases all your past sin and draws the veil of forgiveness over them than you need nothing else in order to be completely forgiven. Just this is necessary to give emphasis in the asking of forgiveness from God except to pray. It is not probable that you pray for forgiveness and yet insist on committing sins. So this negative aspect of insistence of sinning is hidden in one's minds, conscientiously or unconsciously. People know what type of sins they have committed all year round, what follies they have indulged in even then, people ask for forgiveness, this means that in their minds they cling to this idea that they can continue to commit sins and God will continue to forgive them. These are only sentimental which have no relationship with reality.

If such people are forgiven, their life after Ramadhan will tell whether they have been forgiven or not. If God has forgiven them, there should be a great revolution in their lives. The life following Ramadhan will be testament to this one night of Ramadhan.

However, as far as Jamaat Ahmadiyya is concerned, we are passing through another *Lailatul Qadr*. Hazrat Masih Mau'ood's (a.s.) age, as is proven from the Quran is one in which the great believers of the former times are joined with the believers of the latter age. If Muhammad's (s.a.w.) character would not have enlightened Hazrat Masih Mau'ood (a.s.), it is impossible for this to occur. Just keep in mind that the time of *Lailatul Qadr* is ongoing for you. In this *Lailatul Qadr* it is possible that the promise in the Holy Quran is fulfilled in your favor.

AETEKAF (SACRED SOLITUDE)

The Honor of the Universe the pride of the worlds his reflection upon the *Aetekaf*:

In the last ten days of the Ramadhan, which is signaled by the happening of the *Aetekaf* (sacred solitude). How the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) used to observe these days has been described by Huzoor in his Friday Sermon. He says:- I present one tradition which has been narrated in *Masnad Ahmad bin Hamble* Volume 2 page 67, printed in Beirut. In the tradition which has been narrated by the son of Hazrat Omar. How the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) used to sit for *Aetekaf* and what kind of environment used to be in those days. When Ramadhan was at its peak he used to get: *AJUD*: which means the environment we see is that kind of situation. In *Aetekaf* some people want to recite the Quran slightly loud in the Mosque creating a kind of hum, this was very pleasing to the heart but this also caused some disturbance in the solitude of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). His solitude was solitude between him and his Creator. Which was kind of disturbed.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) did observe *Aetekaf* in the last ten days, for him a small hut of dried leaves of dates was made. You should also remember about the capacity of the Mosque for the purpose of *Aetekaf*. People ask me about the capacity saying that there is enough capacity in the Mosque. Which is not true. The Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.) made for the purpose of *Aetekaf*, there was a tent around it also, which occupied some space, there was some space to isolate him to give him some solitude, this should be kept in mind also. We emphasize in filling the space but the real enjoyment is in as much privacy and solitude as possible to fully supplicate with Allah. This time there was some demand from women for more space, we could not allow for special reasons, which is all in

accordance with the practice of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). There was plenty of space in the *Masjids Nabwi* for it was not pack full. A night fell when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) went out and looked and found the worshipers busy in their prayers quietly, so you should not recite so loudly that it may disturb the solitude of others. The worshiper should contain his voice so that it does not go out of his cabin. So much so that even the recitation of the Holy Quran should also not be audible to the other worshipers, though the worship and recitation of the Holy Quran is one and the same thing but this also has its limitations and constraints. What the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said has been narrated by Biasi, which has been recorded in *Masnad Ahmad bin Humble*, he narrates that, he came walking out of his cabin, now there must be distance between the cabins that is why he walked out, the people who were busy in worshipping their voices were loud at which the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said that the worshiper is busy in his secret communication with his Lord which must not be disturbed.

These were the secret communications between the person and his Lord, this is evident. What was its pleasure? This is clear from other traditions, I could not bring these traditions but the subject matter is clear in my conception, that is the worshiper is so much engrossed deep in his worship that all the veils in between were lifted and you attained such a bliss and pleasure that it is impossible to describe it. Any ordinary person when attains pleasure in worship he cannot describe in clear words, the deep contemplation of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) has been explained already, one should be mindful of others around him, lest we disturb their application and solitude.

RAMADHAN AND TRUE EID

True happiness is found in relationship with God. This is the philosophy of *Eid*. This is the lesson we learn from Ramadhan that is followed by *Eid-ul-Fitr*. We abstain from all lawfully allowed things for the pleasure of Allah and we remember Him much day and night. As a result of this devotional worship, Allah declares that He is the reward for the devotee who observes fast. The day of *Eid* is an expression of happiness for believers. True *Eid* is for those who belong to Allah and not for those who run after the world. Believers discover true happiness by helping the poor, praising and glorifying Allah aloud. They offer *Eid* Prayer in congregation demonstrating love and brotherhood with one another. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) lays great emphasis on the congregational *Eid* Prayer.

“Hazrat Umme Attiya (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) used to tell us that everybody should join in both the *Eids*, including children and women. Even the women who were not well enough to join the Prayer were directed to come to listen to *Eid* Sermon and participate in the collective prayer.” (*Sahi Bukhari, Kitabul Eidain*)

Let us now review how the *Eid* was celebrated during the time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.)

DRESSING UP NICELY ON EID DAY

The *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) support wearing of a good dress and use of fragrance on *Eid* Day. It is reported that Hazrat Umar (r.a.) sent a beautiful *Jubba* (dress) for the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) for wearing on the *Eid* Day.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS ON EID DAY

“Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) came to her house on *Eid* Day at a time when two young girls were singing songs. He did not stop them. Hazrat Bakr (r.a.) rebuked them but the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) told him to leave them alone. Also, on that day, the people from Habsha displayed their traditional games and skills at arms for entertainment. Huzoor (s.a.w.) asked me if I would like to see their performance. I said, ‘yes’, Hazrat Aisha (r.a.) stood behind the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and watched the games. After a

while, he (s.a.w.) asked if she was tired. She said, ‘yes’, and was let go.” (*Sahi Bukhari, Kitabul Eidain*)

HOW TO OFFER EID PRAYER

It is narrated by Hazrat Ans bin Malik (r.a.) that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) used to eat a few dates before leaving for *Fidul Fitr*.

Hazrat Abu Saeed (r.a.) narrates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) on the days of *Eidul Fitr* and *Eidul Adhya* used to start with *Eid* Prayer at the *Eid Gah* (special site designated for *Eid* Prayer). He (s.a.w.) would then stand up before the people to deliver the sermon containing admonition and advice. (*Sahi Bukhari, Kitabul Eidain*)

AN IMPORTANT TEHRİK ON THE DAY OF HAPPINESS

Eid is one of the greatest days of happiness for the believers when most of them are gathered together. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), therefore, used to initiate appropriate projects according to the need of times.

It is mentioned in the Hadith that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) after the sermon visited the women’s side. Hazrat Bilal (r.a.) went along with him (s.a.w.). Huzoor (s.a.w.) urged the ladies for *Sadqa* (financial sacrifice in the way of Allah). The ladies showed an unparalleled example of compliance by offering whatever they had. Hazrat Bilal (r.a.) collected the contributions in his cloth, including the ornaments donated by many women. (*Sahi Bukhari, Kitabul Eidain*)

After the moon was sighted, all believers recited *Takbira’at* in a loud voice on the way to and from *Eid* Prayer.

Allaho Akbar Allaho Akbar La Ilaha Illallaho Wallaho Akbar Allaho Akbar Wa Lillah Hil Hamd:

Allah Is the Greatest, Allah Is the Greatest; There Is No God but Allah, and Allah Is the Greatest; Allah Is the Greatest and All Praise Belong to Allah.

They used to embrace and wished each other ‘*Eid Mubarak*’. They used to return home by a different

route from the one they used for going for *Eid* Prayer. The Day of *Eid* passed in joy and happiness.

God, to enjoy the true happiness of *Eid*. We should also try to fill the houses of the poor with happiness to obtain the pleasure and acceptance of Allah. May Allah enable us to do so. *Ameen*.

Therefore, we must fill the Mosques, the houses of

A DIFFERENT KIND OF EID

LET US KNOCK AT THE DOOR OF A POOR FAMILY TO SAY EID MUBARAK AND SHARE OUR JOYS WITH THEM

(An important directive about Eid from Hazrat Khalifatul Massih IV (a.b.a.). Translated from Urdu text in *Tash-heet-ul Azhan*, Jan. 1999 by Dr. Rasheed S. Azam)

Huzoor (a.b.a.) said:

“I advise you that today the rich should visit their poor brethren and share their gifts with them. Those who are comparatively well off in life should take some gifts and sweets to the poor and their children. Gather all the chocolates and toffees you had collected for your children. Tell your children that you are going to knock at the doors of some of the poor to say ‘*Eid Mubarak*’ and share your good fortunes with them.”

If you visit the poor and learn how they live, as I

have suggested, I assure you that some of you will feel so happy that all other joys of life will appear trivial in comparison to it. Some will return with tears in their eyes asking Allah’s forgiveness for their ingratitude because they had not realized how the poor live on. They will experience greatest joy in their tears, much more than to all other enjoyments and pleasures. They will gain unlimited and everlasting joy. This is the *Eid* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). In fact, this is the *Eid* of a true religion.” (From Friday Sermon of Hazrat Khalifatul Massih IV (a.b.a.), *Al-Fazl*, July 26, 1983).

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BENEFITS OF ZIKR

Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad (r.a.)

The greatest benefit of *Zikr* (remembrance of God) is that it leads to the pleasure of God—not just like any other good deed, but in a special way. God Almighty says about *Zikr* that it is the greatest of all affairs. At another place in the Holy Qur'an. He says:

“Allah has promised to 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 is greatest of all.” (9:72)

The greatest reward is the pleasure of Allah. The greatest of all rewards can only result from the greatest of deeds, which is *Zikr*. Hence the reward of *Zikr* is the pleasure of Allah. In the above verse God Almighty distinguishes the pleasure of Allah from other rewards. This shows that it is something different, and is the greatest of all.

Indeed, for a true believer there can be no reward higher than receiving the pleasure of his Lord. Allah has clearly indicated that if you carry out *Zikri-Ilahi*, the greatest of all deeds, you will receive the pleasure of Allah, the greatest of all rewards.

1. Remembrance of Allah can lead to the comfort and peace of the heart. Allah says:

“Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that the hearts can find comfort.” (13:29)

The hearts find comfort in *Zikr*. Why? Because anxiety is caused by the fear of an impending calamity. If a man believes that there is a remedy for every ailment, he will not be worried. When someone remembers Allah and realizes that with His unlimited powers, He can remove all types of difficulties, his heart comforts him by saying, Why do I need to be concerned? I have an All-Powerful God. He will surely remove my troubles. Such thoughts provide peace of mind.

2. Allah befriends him who spends his time in His remembrance. He provides him a place in His audience even when he is still in this world. As He says:

“Therefore remember Me, and I will remember you; and be thankful to Me and do not be ungrateful to Me.” (2:153)

Just as the worldly kings invite people to their royal audience when they are pleased with them so does Allah.

3. Remembrance of Allah saves one from sins. God Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

“Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book, and observe Prayer. The Prayer surely restrain one from indecency and manifest evil, and remembrance of Allah indeed is the greatest virtue. And Allah knows what you do.” (29:46)

Prayer saves you from indecency and evil. As I stated earlier, Prayer (*Salaah*) is a form of remembrance of Allah. Hence remembrance of Allah guards against sins, *Zikr* is weighty. When it falls upon the head of Satan, he will be crushed to death and will no longer incite you towards evil.

4. Remembrance of Allah strengthens the heart, and promotes the spirit of fighting evil. As God Almighty says:

“O ye who believe! When you encounter an army, remain firm, and remember Allah much that you may prosper.” (8:46)

According to this verse the way to encounter a strong enemy is to remember Allah in abundance.

5. A person who remembers Allah will be successful in all his affairs. This is proven by the verse which I recited earlier. Allah says,

“Remember Allah much that you may prosper” (8:46)

6. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, says that on the Day of Judgement, seven types of people will be granted the shadow of Allah's Mercy. One of them is the people who remember Allah. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, adds that it will be a grievous day. Nobody has ever seen the like of it. Allah's wrath will be great that day because all mischief-makers will be presented before Him.

The Sun will draw near. Anyone who is granted the shadow of Allah's Mercy that day will be lucky indeed.

7. Allah accepts the prayers of those who remember Him. The prayers mentioned in the Holy Qur'an start with *Zikr*, i.e., *tasbeeh* and *tahmeed*. The first prayer is contained in *Surah Al-Fatiha*. It starts with verses consisting exclusively of *Zikr*.

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Ever Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, The Most Gracious, Ever Merciful Master of the Day of Judgement." (1:1-4)

Then comes the part which is partly for God and partly for man:

"Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone we implore for help." (1:5)

In the end comes the supplication:

"Guide us in the right path - The path of those on whom Thou has bestowed Thy blessings, and not of those who have incurred Thy displeasure, nor of those who have gone astray". (1:6-7)

Surah Al-Fatiha is a prayer. But God Almighty starts it with remembrance and ends it with the supplication. We observe the same phenomenon in the world. When a beggar comes, he first praises the master of the house and then submits his plea. Similarly, when a man goes to beg of Allah he should first acknowledge the authority of God and admit his own weakness. Prophet Jonah did the same when he cried in the depth of darkness saying:

"There is no God but Thou, Holy art Thou. I have indeed been of the wrongdoers." (21:88)

He first expressed the Glory of God, then he stated the condition in which he found himself. Moreover the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, attributes the following statement to Allah: *He who remains busy in My remembrance, receives more from Me than those who merely keep asking.* This Hadith does not mean that you should not pray to God. *Surah Al-Fatiha*, which is the Mother of the Book, combines *Zikr* with prayer. Both the Holy Qur'an and the hadith teach us many prayers. The hadith only means that one who does not perform *Zikr* but only submits pleas and requests receives less than the one

who keeps praying for what he needs and additionally takes the time to perform *Zikr*.

8. *Zikr* is a means of receiving Allah's forgiveness from sins. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, says that a person who performs *takbeer*, *tahmeed* and *tasbeeh* is forgiven all his sins even if the sins are innumerable like foam in the sea.

9. *Zikr* sharpens the insight. One who remembers Allah discovers verities and points of wisdom with which he himself is surprised. God Almighty says: *"In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: 'Our Lord Thou hast not created this in vain, 'nay, Holy art Thou, 'save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.'"* (3:191-192)

10. Remembrance of Allah leads to righteousness. There is a *hadith* in which the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, attributes the following statement to God Almighty'. When a servant of Mine remembers Me in his heart, I remember him in private and if he remembers Me in public, I remember him in public.

This Hadith shows that when, for example, a man says, *'Holy art Thou O' Allah'*, Allah returns this with a blessing. May you also become holy and purified. When Allah says that, purification is surely attained. Similarly when a man glorifies the name of Allah among others, Allah raises his good name among people. The world acknowledges him as a righteous man.

11. It is human nature that if you associate with someone often, your love and affection for him increases. People even begin to love the village or city in which they live. When someone remembers Allah day and night and mentions His name, his love for Allah will gradually increase.

These, in short, are the benefits of remembrance of Allah. I pray that Allah may make them beneficial for me and for all of you. *Ameen!!*

A PROPHECY FOR OUR TIME

(Taken from *Review of Religions*: September 1999. 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 nationalities, 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 a session held in London in August 1995.

Questioner:

Does not your claim that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement is the Messiah, promised to both Muslims and Christians as well as other faiths, have an element of myth about it? I agree with you that it is merely a romantic fantasy to believe that Jesus Christ (a.s.) will return in full glory from the sky but it seems to me that the real second coming of Jesus Christ (a.s.) is in the experience of every person who has faith in him and who follows him – the experience of Christ relived in them. So, my question is that is it not more realistic to believe that the second advent of Jesus Christ is by his spirit in the community of believers in him, whether they belong to the Christian Church or not, rather than claiming that it applies to one particular person?

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

This is a very important question for me to answer because I relate this 'experience philosophy' to exactly the same human psychic tendencies that have been displayed by the Bishop of Durham in his case of escaping a logical criticism which he must have realized all his life. For instance, if one accepts the resurrection of Jesus Christ (a.s.) in a physical form then numerous logical objections arise and an escape from the biblical views is not always in the direction of truth as such – it is a defense policy. The Christians say, and they emphasize this these days far more than they used to, that the return of Jesus (a.s.) would be in the form of an experience of

acceptance in one's life of the attitude of Jesus (a.s.). This is what I understand from their 'experience philosophy'.

This, however, is not acceptable logically or historically because after the death of Jesus (a.s.) he returned immediately, far more intensely and widely than ever after that during the entire history of Christianity. Every follower, every disciple of Jesus (a.s.), everyone who had come close to Christianity was so moved by that experience of the presence of Jesus (a.s.), through that great tragedy he had witnessed, that he was motivated strongly enough to offer any sacrifice. Whereas previously, during the life of Jesus (a.s.), they were not motivated to that extent. At the time when Pilate was investigating the religion of Jesus Christ (a.s.), and Jesus (a.s.) was having to explain his beliefs, he was surrounded by a hostile crowd and the 12 disciples were missing. It is a blemish on the quality of their faith that they were missing at such an important time. I have tried to find out from different books whether there was any evidence that the disciples may have been present at that time but I have found none. There are, however, some books that are not of any historical importance which do state that there were some people present who were in general support of Jesus (a.s.). They may have been the same disciples but they were hidden in the crowd. They should, of course, have come forward as a body in support of Jesus Christ (a.s.). However, shortly after (having been crucified), Jesus (a.s.) did return in spirit, in the sense that he motivated them as the shock of his loss aroused them all.

The prophecy of his return in the latter days, however, cannot be related to this experience at all because this experience died down gradually with time until it reappeared here and there – only at the time of suffering not otherwise. Such experience is

witnessed in an individual and solitary manner when, for instance, a Christian suffers the agony of some disease such as cancer or from the shock of loss. At such times of deep suffering, he may psycho-logically believe that he is returning to Jesus (a.s.) and Jesus (a.s.) is there to console him but he forgets that this is a universal human experience – the experience of turning to God and godly thinking when peace and solace can only be found there at such moments. To single it out as a Christian experience of the return of Jesus (a.s.) is, therefore, falsified by the universal experience of man. Whatever his religion may be, every time a person undergoes deep suffering, he awakens to the reality of his spiritual life – not always but very often it happens that from then on he begins to move in the direction of God. Exactly the same is the experience of the Christian world. Not all of them return to God but some do. Some Muslims do, some Hindus do, some Buddhists do and so on..

The return of Christ (a.s.), as expressed in the New Testament, however, is a different event. It indicates a re-advent of Jesus Christ (a.s.) and that re-advent cannot take place in a subdued manner, as an experience of individuals whereby it is not observed as a great universal phenomenon by others. How can Christianity emerge morally victorious over the rest of the world until its return to Jesus (a.s.) becomes a global phenomenon, a phenomenon which is so overwhelming that it lifts the Christian nation as a far greater moral nation, in its practice, in its views and in its attitude to life than the rest of the nations. Only then can it be understood as the return of Jesus Christ (a.s.) to the world!

However, what I see is that there is a movement away from Christ (a.s.). Every year, every month, week and day the Christian society as a whole is moving away from Jesus Christ (a.s.) because they are getting more addicted to worldly life and to the worldly pleasures that Jesus (a.s.) denied himself and denied his disciples. This is a visible phenomenon. It does not, however contradict the other phenomenon of individual experience of Jesus

(a.s.) as it is a different type of phenomenon. The return to Jesus (a.s.) as a consequence of individual experiences and feelings of goodness is something that happens daily everywhere in the world. It cannot, however, change the fate of Christianity or the fate of the whole world. That phenomenon always unfolds in the same way and it has done so universally, everywhere in the history of religion.

When someone comes from God, as Jesus (a.s.) did, the whole society turns hostile towards him, despite the fact that his message is so attractive, so benign and loving and so gentle. In itself it does not pose any threat or danger to the society or its values so that one cannot conceive of any reason why the society should turn hostile towards it. Yet it does because deep inside they know that this message is a potent message. This message, they know is going to win even if it teaches one to turn the other cheek and that the message of raising the sword is going to be defeated – and that is, in fact, what does happen. Such an outcome is, in reality, the ‘return of Jesus’, that is, his reappearance in the same humble form, when to believe in him requires great sacrifice – sacrifice of one’s honor, property and reputation.

Questioner:

I agree with most of that, of course, but I have not fully expressed by question. I entirely agree with you that if Jesus (a.s.) was to return he would be a humble person, not the head of the Christian clergy. However, if he did return in that way, how would people know it was the same person? I would also like to raise the point that there have been corporate revivals in Christianity such as, for instance, the Quaker movement.

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

I agree with your observation that there have been corporate revivals in the Christian world but that, again, is not the experience of the Christian world alone. Collective experiences have been witnessed in other world religions and from time to time they came and went and subsequently, became part of history but still they did not change the face

of the world. The second advent of Christ (a.s.), according to me, is far more important than such stray occurrences here and there because they have failed to change the whole pattern of life on earth and they have failed to create a universal society based on the new experience.

This issue, however, can be resolved more easily if we first attend to the question of how the re-advent of Jesus (a.s.) is to be recognized? The best criterion we can formulate for ourselves could only be with the help of the first experience of the real Jesus (a.s.), not otherwise. As I suggested earlier, we must return to the real Jesus (a.s.) – the historical fact of Jesus (a.s.).

In what way was Jesus (a.s.) different from all the other Prophets of Israel who were not referred to as the 'Messiah'? Why was Jesus (a.s.) alone singled out to be referred to as the 'Messiah'? What did he do specifically in the area of religious reformation that won him this distinctive title – that is the question? I understand, and I believe my understanding to be correct, that Jesus (a.s.) came to revolutionize the attitude within a religion – not the teaching but the attitude.

Questioner: I agree

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

Once we have identified the distinctive features of the Messiahhood of the first Jesus (a.s.), then the second coming of Jesus (a.s.) would require exactly the same. Jesus (a.s.), first of all, revolutionized the attitude regarding the response to crime or the response to cruelty perpetrated against people or against society. The Jewish society that Jesus (a.s.) had inherited had become addicted to vengeance so much so that it had become their habit to go far beyond the scope of revenge into the area of cruelty. The Jewish people, taking advantage of the teaching of 'a tooth for a tooth' and 'an eye for an eye', went for ten eyes for one, or even a hundred eyes for one, or the whole set of thirty-two teeth for one tooth even if it was only partially damaged. Jesus (a.s.) reversed this attitude completely. This was Messiahhood never before witnessed in the

history of the Jewish experience!

Secondly, Jesus (a.s.) transferred the emphasis from form to spirit but without rejecting form, as St. Paul misunderstood to be the case, I believe. Jesus (a.s.) never rejected form. As he said, if you have empty vessels without any spirit or substance in them, they will be of no avail to you. A drop of substance or spirit in you is better than having a large physical form empty of spirit and substance. That was the second change of attitude that he brought about but such changes were initially not brought about collectively – they were brought about individually. It was a course of reformation that began in the form of a movement started by a single person. It gathered momentum as it grew further and more and more individuals joined it, offering sacrifices, around a single person who claimed to be the Messiah.

The second advent also requires these features to be present. It requires that a person should be born in a religion, appearing in the form of a single person who goes on to transform attitudes. Just as, for instance, a single drop of yogurt working in a container full of milk, gradually turns all the milk into yogurt. So the reappearance of Jesus (a.s.) should gradually transform and reform people in ever increasing numbers. This is what I believe would be the second advent of Jesus Christ (a.s.). Moreover, this should happen in a region which has appeared after Jesus Christ (a.s.), fulfilling his own prophecy. If that has not happened then Jesus (a.s.) will not appear again because I believe it to be a prerequisite for that great event of the return of Jesus (a.s.). The question then becomes as to where he would return and in what form? Some people may wish to leave this question open by stating that Jesus (a.s.) may have appeared anywhere in the world. This, however, is not an acceptable response as the reappearance of Jesus (a.s.) has to be a phenomenon of world-wide proportions and one from which the whole world benefits.

Jesus (a.s.) himself prophesied the advent of another Reformer who was not the son of God. This is highly important and I draw your attention

to the parable of the vineyard. In that parable Jesus (a.s.) specifically mentions his own coming by using the symbol of the son of the Master of the vineyard and he says even the son was rejected by the people who rebelled against his authority and ran away with the fruit of the orchard. Then the Master came himself in person and from then on things began to change when the rights of ownership of the Master were returned to him. This parable is of pivotal importance. It needs to be studied carefully in order to understand the prophecies of Jesus (a.s.) contained within it in real, significant terms otherwise any people can think, in philosophical and psychological terms, that Jesus (a.s.) has come to them.

The question is, how was this parable fulfilled? I believe that this parable reached its ultimate realization through the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). Between Jesus Christ (a.s.) and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) we find no other founder of any religion anywhere in the world. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) came and he claimed to be the symbolic manifestation of God, but yet not God, in the same sense as we accept Jesus (a.s.) to be the symbolic son of God and yet not the real son of God. The claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was a symbolic manifestation of God is well supported by the Holy Qur'an and it is a claim not made in such specific terms for anyone else anywhere in the world. The Holy Qur'an identifies in the clearest terms the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) with the 'coming of God'. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) however, never misunderstood the implied symbolism. He explained that previously people had been misguided through the misinterpretation of spiritual symbolism and were consequently led away from God rather than towards Him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) did not teach his followers that they should take him as the manifestation of God in person.

Referring to the time when the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) threw a handful of pebbles

towards the enemy, the Holy Qur'an states:

And thou threwest not when thou didst throw, but it was Allah Who threw. (8:18)

Again, referring to the time when the companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) were swearing allegiance at his hand, the Holy Qur'an states:

Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee indeed swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands. (48:11)

Anyone who stood for glorifying himself could have quoted these verses to claim that he was the real representation of God on earth. This, however, was not the case with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). He explained that it was nothing more than metaphor. The true meaning behind it was that he had lost his identity in the superior identity of God and if a slave is left with no identity of himself and all the authority which governs his life and motivates him is the authority of his master, then there is no difference between master and slave. There is no difference in action and direction because the slave always acts according to the wish of the master, always in the same direction that the master would have taken. As the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) explained, it is exactly in the same way that Muhammad (s.a.w.) is symbolically identified with 'God', not in any other way. In no way does this identification involve an equality of status or anything of that nature whatsoever.

It is only after such a grand manifestation of the glory of God that one can contemplate the return of Jesus (a.s.), not before. The question is where has that noble historical event taken place other than in the religion of Islam so that we can contemplate the return of Jesus (a.s.) (within Islam). It so happens that it was the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) himself who prophesied the coming of Jesus (a.s.), as his representative, to save the world. To my mind the story is so logical, so well connected, evolving into an ultimate theme, that I have no doubt about its validity at all.

MY ROLE AND RIGHTS AS A MUSLIM WOMAN

(Text of a speech delivered at Southern California College, Costa Mesa, by Mrs. Aziza Rahman. It appeared in the *Review of Religions*, September, 1999)

For too long the teachings of Islam have been viewed with doubt and misunderstanding by the West. The views of a few prejudiced writers have for a long time clouded the views of the general public. Lately, due to world events, much attention was focused on Islamic countries, but still the media and press have done little to really understand the philosophy that lies behind the customs and way of life of those countries. So it is very heartening to find that intelligent young people as yourselves, who are the future of this great nation, are interested in the truth and want to better understand why one billion of the earth's inhabitants are such devoted followers of this religion.

The topic which I am going to discuss today is one that I think is still very much in the dark, and that is the role and status of women in Islam. As this is something which applies to half the world's population, I think it is of vital importance that some light should be shed on it.

Let me first ask you, what comes to your mind when you think of a Muslim woman? Is it a figure draped in black from head to toe, dominated by her husband, without any liberty and freedom to do as she wishes? I really would not be surprised if you do, because that is the image of a Muslim woman as currently portrayed in the media. The words most commonly associated with the image are 'suppressed', 'deprived' and 'backward'.

I would like to tell you that nothing could be further from the truth. I consider myself a typical Muslim woman, and believe me, there is no area in my life where I feel suppressed, deprived or backward. And the reason is that 1500 years ago, Islam handed me rights and status that women in other cultures are still desperately fighting for. My Muslim sisters and I do not have to raise a single voice to get these rights; they were bestowed on womankind by Almighty God through His messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Before I begin the topic of what Islam did for the status of women, it is essential to understand what a woman's place has been in the history of mankind. So let me turn to that briefly. If you go back to ancient cultures, you will find that invariably, women was considered inferior to men. In ancient Greece, the virtuous, faithful married woman was kept totally secluded and untaught. She was completely under the authority of her husband and had very few rights. The other class of Greek women were the '*heterae*', who were high class courtesans. They enjoyed a little more freedom, but nevertheless were dependent on the whims of their masters.

The status of women in ancient Rome presents a more mixed picture. Women enjoyed greater practical, if not legal, freedom in Roman society than in Greek society. However, Roman religions often incorporated practices that greatly degraded women. An important feature of Roman society was the '*patria potesta*' - the absolute power of the father over his children, even to the power of life and death, extending right into adulthood. The result was infanticide, with the mother being totally helpless as to the fate of her children.

With the coming of the great monotheist religions, the lot of woman improved somewhat. For the first recorded time, a woman's role as a mother was accorded dignity; for example, the fifth commandment states, '*Honor thy father and thy mother*'. The Old Testament provided some safeguards for women. For example, that a husband had to provide a written 'bill of divorce' if he wanted to divorce her, that she could remarry after divorce; that female slaves had to be freed after seven years and penalties were set for men for sexual crimes. However, as far as Jewish society was concerned, woman was still inferior to man. In the spiritual sense, she could take part in religious matters, but was still considered a kind of appendix to her husband, who by his good actions could ensure salvation for her. In the Old Testament, we find what is perhaps the basis for the low esteem in which a

woman was held spiritually in Genesis, chapter 3, it is said that Eve tempted Adam into sin and thus caused man's downfall and was cursed by God.

Legally a woman's position was still very low, but practically she did enjoy a more dignified position, especially as a mother. The advent of Christianity did little to change this picture of a woman's status, although Jesus, may peace be on him, taught that men and women are equal. In the Gospel of John, we can read that Jesus' disciple were astonished to find him talking to a woman and actually inviting her to believe and become his disciple, just as he would to any man. He treated women with the same respect and dignity as he did men. However, after his death, his example was not widely followed, and women remained in a state of servitude and inferiority.

In the 6th century, things were even worse. Throughout the world, and in Arabia in particular, a woman was very much a second class citizen. Woman could not legally be the owner of property, she could not inherit from her husband on his death, she would be at the mercy of his relatives. She had no rights over anything left to her by her parents, it would automatically become the property of her husband. She had no rights over her children, no say in their upbringing, and yet was expected to assume the burden of their care. In domestic affairs, she had no privileges. In religion she had no status, she was to have no share of spiritual blessings. She had no recourse to divorce, though her husband could divorce her at a moments notice and turn her out onto the street. Being considered the property of her husband, he could ill treat her and abuse her, and she could do nothing about it.

In fact, women were considered so degraded, that female infanticide, burying female babies alive, was routinely practiced among the Arabs. For an Arab, the ultimate humiliation was to be the father of a daughter.

Just how did Islam erase centuries of abuse with one comprehensive teaching? As you know, the teachings of Islam are comprised of divine revelation, the Holy Qur'an, and the traditions, *i.e.* the actions and sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). Islam claims to be the perfect teaching that is for all

time, and includes doctrines of other scriptures. It does not deal with spiritual guidance only, but lays down rules for all aspects of life. At this point I would like to mention that as there are some 50-60 countries today following Islam, so there may also be 50-60 interpretations, according to the culture of each. What I am going to present to you is the basic philosophy of Islam, supported by the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.).

The real answer to the question lies in the purpose of man's creation. Islam teaches that the object of human creation was to bring into existence a being endowed with faculties that enable him to become a vicegerent of God and manifest in his person the divine attributes. This objective is common to all mankind – men and women.

The Qur'an says:

He created you from a single being; then from that He made its mate. (39:7)

and also:

O' ye people! Fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women. (4:2)

Islam teaches that man and woman are created equal; it does not blame woman for man's fall from the garden. A woman has been raised to spiritual equality with men. The following verse of the Qur'an beautifully sums this up in a way no other teaching ever has:

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.
(33:36)

In Islam, therefore woman enjoys equal status with man. The object of her creation is identical to that of man. But it also teaches that men and women complement one another and are the means of mutual fulfilment. It teaches that the complementary rights of men and women produce a harmonious whole, while emphasizing the equal importance of both sexes.

The Qur'an also states:

Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its proper form and then guided it to its proper function. (20:51)

God has created men and women equal, but with different functions and capabilities. Islam clearly assigns separate roles to men and women; roles for which they have been physiologically and emotionally designed by God. Women alone is the child-bearer, and has a unique bond with her child which makes her more responsible for its care. As wife and mother, her normal sphere of activity is the home. Man is physically stronger, and has been given the responsibility to be the breadwinner. Thus his normal sphere of activity is outside of the home.

At this point, any feminists out there amongst you will be thinking, 'This teaching takes women back a 100 years!' You are right! It goes back a thousand years, no 10,000 years as long as man has been on the face of the earth and lived in some kind of ordered society. A society is made up of basic units, that is the family. And there is no doubt that the traditional family unit, of father (the breadwinner), mother (the caretaker) and children, has been around for thousands of years, and something that has been around that long must be something that works. But still, you might say, 'So what? Things are different now. We have single parent families, role reversal families, all kinds of families.' But please consider this. Throughout the history of mankind, when the basic family unit crumbled, great cultures and empires came to an end. When men and women try to do what they are not well equipped to do, order turns to disorder. Islam is a perfect teaching which provides guidance not just for individuals but for entire nations! So when Islam

assigns specific roles to men and women, it takes into account the larger picture, the good of society. Muslim women are aware of this and so willingly accept the responsibilities God has given them. And because Islam has accorded them much honor and dignity in the roles of daughter, wife and mother, they do not feel any lack of fulfilment in themselves.

Now let me turn to what rights Islam has given to women. First and foremost, Islam gave a daughter the right to live. The custom of killing daughters for fear of humiliation or fear of poverty was completely abolished. Once a Muslim father had allowed his daughter to live, he was then exhorted to treat her in the same way as he would his sons. In fact, taking good care of his daughters opened the way to paradise for him. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: 'He who brings up two girls through their childhood will appear on the Day of Judgement attached to me like to fingers of a hand.' This was indeed a revolutionary teaching for the time it was revealed in.

Islam gave woman the right to education 1500 years ago. Islam teaches that education of men and women is of equal importance. The Holy Qur'an tells us that only the learned can understand the signs of God and His wisdom and can come closest to Him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) has said: 'It is the duty of every Muslim man and every Muslim woman to acquire knowledge.' He was so concerned about their education that when he felt a group of women could not hear his words he would go over to them and repeat himself.

Even though the two sexes are assigned different roles in life, the command to seek knowledge is made compulsory for both of them. In fact, education of the woman is more important because she is responsible for the upbringing of the next generation. At the time of this teaching, no society existed anywhere in the world which allowed its females to be educated. In Europe, in the Middle Ages, women displaying any kind of extra knowledge were burnt at the stake on the basis of being witches.

As I have already pointed out to you, Islam considers the home to be the primary sphere of woman's activities. So the rights accorded to her as a

wife are of utmost importance for her satisfaction and happiness. Marriage is a sacred institution in Islam. Celibacy or a single way of life are not approved of in Islam. The ultimate purpose of marriage in Islam is to win the pleasure of God through chastity, fulfilment, contentment and procreation. The Qur'an puts this relationship between man and woman in a beautiful way:

They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them. (2:188)

This verse sums up the nature and scope of the relationship between man and woman. It points out that there are many dormant aspects in the life of man which can only be activated and enlightened by the woman. And so many areas of woman's life remain incomplete without man. Completion and thence perfection is attained through love, affection and cooperation between them, not through anger or competition as is pointed out in the following verse:

And one of His signs is this, that He created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are signs for a people who reflect. (30:22)

Although men and women are made equal partners in marriage, the Qur'an says that Allah has appointed men as guardians over women (4:35). This verse is often wrongly taken to mean that the husband can dominate the wife. Not so; for the word guardian means one who takes care of or protects. Previous teachings have allowed man to dominate woman. The Old Testament says, 'and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee.' Islam provides a gentler and more acceptable doctrine. Man is given that role because he has to spend out of his wealth to maintain the family, whereas a woman is under no obligation to spend anything out of her property. In return, she is expected to obey him and act in the best interest of the partnership. Again the reasoning behind this follows basic Islamic philosophy: to maintain the good of the whole. Every nation has a president, every corporation a CEO (chief Executive Officer), every college has a principal. In the same way every family needs a head who can be depended upon to provide

leadership, especially in times of trouble. This system works – in every day life and in the home. The proof lies in the fact that divorce in Muslim society is uncommon, marriages last a lifetime, whereas the average duration of a marriage here is seven years.

Moreover, the sayings and the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) repeatedly show the believers that they should be kind and considerate to their womenfolk if they want to gain Allah's favor. He said, 'The most perfect of believes in matter of faith is he whose behavior is best. And the best of you are those who behave best towards their wives, and I am the best amongst you in that regard.' Indeed it was his own example that totally changed the mentality of men and women. If chivalry originated in the court of King Arthur, then it was the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) who perfected it. He always showed kindness and consideration towards women. In his home, he would help with household chores. Once, when a camel carrying his wife Hazrat Aisha (a.s.), started to run too fast he became alarmed and told the driver, 'Mind the crystal'. He also said, 'Let no Muslim man entertain any rancor against a Muslim woman. Should he dislike one quality in her he would find another which is pleasing'.

The role of the mother has been given honor by previous scriptures also, but Islam takes it to a far loftier level. Whereas the Old Testament exhorts its followers to honor first their fathers then their mothers, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) when asked whom one should honor most, replied, 'Your mother'. When asked whom to honor next, he again replied, 'Your mother'. After being asked a third time, he said 'Your father'. A Muslim woman bears the key responsibility of her children's upbringing. She is expected to make it her primary concern, because according to Islamic tradition, 'Paradise lies at the feet of the mother'. This also means that a Muslim's treatment towards parents must be of the highest level throughout their lives.

Another unique aspect of Islam is that it is the only scripture that laid down rules to ensure a woman's economic independence, thus further securing her rights within the marriage bond. First, at the time of contracting marriage, the husband must make a financial settlement on the wife, proportionate to his

means, and this must be paid to her not to her family. This is known as the dowry. Once again, the husband has no claims over it, the wife may do as she pleases with it. If at the time of his death it is still unpaid, it ranks as the first debt to be paid out of his estate. If the woman has an income of her own, she is under no obligation to share it with her husband. He has absolutely no rights over her property. I would like to remind you that up to this time women had no rights over property, rather they were considered to be the property of their husbands. Let me also remind you that it was not until the 19th century that women in Britain and America were given these rights by law, and even then after considerable struggle and effort on their part. Furthermore, Islam gave women automatic right of inheritance from their husbands, parents and even from their children.

While on the subject of marriage, let me say a few words about arranged marriages. The common misconception in the West that arranged marriages are forced unions holds no validity. For a marriage to take place, public consent of both parties is necessary. Forcing a girl into marriage is contrary to Islamic teachings. The common Muslim practice of parents arranging their children's marriages has been conducted successfully for hundreds of years. According to Islam, a mate should be selected not just for looks, wealth and status, but for good and pious character. Parents are better equipped to make such judgements. In accordance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), the prospective bride and groom are allowed to see each other. Such marriages are not founded on superficial romantic love, but mutual respect and understanding of the purpose of marriage, and this evolves into a deeply satisfying and loving relationship. I find it interesting to note that the West is following this custom in its own way through the services of computer dating agencies and newspaper advertising.

Another area in which the rest of the world is now catching up with the teachings of Islam, you might be surprised to learn, is in the matter of divorce. Fifteen hundred years ago, Islam gave women the right to seek divorce. This was the most extraordinary and revolutionary teaching for the men of the time to accept and nowhere in the world at that time did any

teaching or law exist, which allowed women such independence. Even in the civilized world, laws permitting women to seek divorce on grounds other than adultery have only been passed in the last 100 years.

Islam permits divorce, although it does look on it as the most hateful of all lawful things in the sight of God. The Islamic procedure for divorce is designed to allow every opportunity for reconciliation and to safeguard the rights of the woman. The woman does not have to leave the family home during the procedure, or for a term after it. If the man is divorcing his wife, he cannot take back anything that he has given her, including her dowry, and is instructed by the Qur'an to send her away in kindness. If the woman is seeking the divorce, she should return the dowry, although the husband is encouraged to let her keep it. In either case, the father is still responsible for the financial welfare of any children until they come of independent age.

The subject of polygamy is the base of much criticism of Islam's attitude to women. It should be well remembered that Islam is the only religion which has actually restricted polygamy. The scriptures of no other religion have put any limits on the number of wives a person can have. Some of the Prophets of God mentioned in those scriptures took an unlimited number of wives. Only Islam has imposed a limit of four. Furthermore, Islam does not enjoin polygamy, but simply permits it under special conditions only involving heavy restrictions. The Qur'an says:

And if you fear that you will not deal justly, then marry only one. (4:4)

How easy do you think it would be to deal justly with more than one woman? Or to set up two or more complete households with two or more mortgages, doctors' bills, etc.? Islamic polygamy simply cannot be embarked upon for merely lustful purposes coupled with selfish indiscipline.

However, it is important to understand why Islam did not abolish polygamy completely. Knowing the nature of man, Allah has provided an important safety valve for the good of society. The maintenance of high moral standards required by Islam does not permit its

followers to indulge in the kind of 'unofficial polygamy' which is practiced in the West today where a man is legally married to one woman but may have any number of extramarital affairs and even illegitimate children. Islam says that if a man cannot control his desires within a monogamous union and looks elsewhere, it is better for all concerned that he should make it a legal marriage, and assume full moral and financial responsibility for the other woman and children. Secondly this teaching provides a very important safeguard for women during times where there is a scarcity of men, especially at times of war. The absence of polygamy after the two world wars led to moral degradation and promiscuity in Europe and America. Islam provides means to ensure the guarding of moral and spiritual values of the whole society.

This leads me to my next topic, and nothing appears to create as much confusion in the West as this teaching of Islam. And that is purdah or the veil. As I just said, Islam provides teachings to ensure the guarding of moral and spiritual values of the whole of society and it recognizes that 'prevention is the better part of a cure'. Islam says, do not allow a situation to develop which you cannot control afterwards, and so teaches segregation of the sexes to promote self restraint. Modesty, sobriety and purity are the hallmarks of Islamic society and to maintain these standards free and unrestrained mixing of the sexes is barred. There is no doubt that today's society with unrestrained mixing of the sexes has led to the terrible erosion of moral values with increased incidence of broken homes, broken marriages, teenage pregnancies and worst of all, diseases such as AIDS.

Most people do not realize that the teaching applied to both men and women; in fact men are addressed first. The Qur'an says:

Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely Allah is well aware of what they do. And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts and that they disclose not their natural and artificial beauty, except that which is apparent thereof. (24:31-32)

The verse goes on to instruct women to 'draw their head coverings over their bosoms' and not to disclose their beauty except to close relatives. The casting down of eyes is part of purdah but it is important to emphasize that this practice is not enjoined on women alone. Men should avoid staring at women in a derogatory way. The further instruction to women only, *i.e.* to cover themselves, does not mean that they are being restricted or deprived in any sense. It is simply an outer expression of an attitude of heart and mind, and it has been enjoined on women because it is much easier for them to observe it in their normal sphere of activity that it would be for men. Also as women are definitely the 'fairer sex', hiding their beauty helps men to avoid temptation.

Thus Muslims women should dress modestly and not display their physical charms, which calls for the wearing of an over garment and a head covering (which can cover the face). You may have noticed that in different countries different kinds of veils are worn. One of the beauties of Islam is that while providing guidelines and limits it can be flexible. It does not wish to impose any hardships on its followers. Purdah was never meant to, nor does it, stand in the way of education or prevent women from playing their full and appropriate role in society. Women have been able to adapt the principles of purdah according to their needs. Basically, purdah is meant to protect society from the results of unnecessary and frequently dangerous, or at least, risky encounters between members of the opposite sex. Western society has allowed such risks and is now looking for answers to its problems. Finally, many people are beginning to realize that teaching teenagers about sex and birth control will not prevent the spread of AIDS. The only effective way is to separate the sexes and avoid the problem altogether. And there is no doubt that Islam succeeds fully in that goal. Break-up of marriage because of adultery is unusual in Muslim society, as is teenage pregnancy and the spread of diseases such as AIDS solely through promiscuity.

These are the moral and legal reforms instituted by Islam in the 6th century and implemented by the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). One man, in one time, totally changed and elevated the status of woman. Muslim women attained the highest place of honor and

advancement materially, intellectually and spiritually, in both religious and secular spheres. Hazrat Aisha (r.a.), one of the wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.) said about her, 'Half the knowledge of the faith of Islam can be learnt from Aisha'.

After his death, scholars came from far and near to learn from her.

Muslim history shows that many women fought alongside of men in early Muslim wars and showed no less courage than the men. In the heyday of Islam, women participated fully in the fields of medicine, arts, literature and science.

One of the ironies of history is that these rights and reforms that were introduced by Islam so long ago were mostly ignored or ridiculed by Western civilization for hundreds of years; yet their women have been struggling till the beginning of this century to get the same rights. In the United States, it was not until the beginning of the 1800s that a 'Women's Movement' was created by some dedicated and courageous women, who demanded the right to vote, the right to keep wages that they had earned, rights to property, right to enter higher education and equal rights in divorce.

I have given you a brief survey of the rights which the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and the teachings of Islam have given women. But how do these teachings translate into practical terms? How does Muslim society actually function? As a Muslim woman, based on my own experiences, I can tell you that the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) provide a very satisfying way of life.

I know that the Islamic form of dress and observance of purdah is very difficult for women in the West to accept. They think of it as repression and a restriction. But I see it as a protection of my freedom and a means of dignity. First of all, I have the satisfaction of knowing that I am following God's command. Secondly, living within the rules of purdah gives me freedom from a whole host of problems that bother women in this society today. I have noticed that girls here, even at a very young age, five or six years old, are concerned with their looks, because even at

that tender age they are aware of the fact that one day they have to attract a mate and that their chances of being successful depend heavily on their physical attractiveness. This awareness then produces tremendous pressure by the time they are in their teens, and may even lead to psychological disorders such as anorexia or bulimia. Or they may consider plastic surgery at great expense. I have read articles recently stating that many more teenagers are having surgery to improve their self image. Teenagers in America appear to spend an inordinate amount of time worrying about their 'attractability'. Muslim girls, on the other hand don't have this pressure on them. Knowing that their parents will do all the worrying about finding a husband for them, they are free to concentrate on their studies and enjoy life and they don't have to worry about their physical appearance in the same way. Now you might argue that they are missing a lot of fun: dating, romance, parties, etc. Maybe – but I would argue that they are missing the risk of getting AIDS, of pregnancy, of abortion, of being the victim of date rapes, of being under the emotional stresses which go with personal relationships. The Islamic way provides protection and peace of mind.

Again, in the area of marriage, purdah provides peace of mind. At religious, social and other gatherings, men and women are separated; thus women do not have the concern that other women may be making advances at their husbands, and of course, the other way around. Apart from that segregation allows women to form closer friendships with other women without feelings of competition or jealousy that may arise with the presence of men. In my opinion, it is a much healthier and less stressful way of life.

Most Westerners believe that a woman who observes purdah cannot be emancipated. This is utterly untrue. The followers of a religion, which encourages education and provides economic independence cannot be called unemancipated. Islam does not prevent a woman from pursuing a professional career, a business or other kind of profitable activity. Many Muslim women in the world today hold positions of high responsibility such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, diplomats and they reached the highest levels of public service. A recent Prime Minister of a Muslim country

was a woman. However, it lays stress on the fact that marital or domestic obligations cannot be sacrificed for it. The assignment of specific roles for men and women actually makes life easier for a Muslim. When I came to that point in when I had to decide whether to stay home with my child or to pursue my career, there was no question that it was the career that had to go on hold, until family needs were met. For a Muslim woman, it is simply the right thing to do. I firmly believe that the caring and security that a mother provides through her natural instincts cannot be substituted by anyone, no matter how well trained they are. In this society, where almost half the mothers have left the home for the workplace, problems that did not exist before, such as adequate day care, child molestation, teenage crime, gang activity, drug abuse, high drop out rates from school, to say nothing of the stress and guilt feelings of the mother, are now on the rise, and can be attributed to this fact. The prevailing trend in this country is to consider a woman staying at home with her children as being incapable of improving herself. Islam does not allow its followers to feel this way; the basic functions of womanhood are accorded honor.

As I stated before, Islam considers education for women to be essential and in most Muslim societies, women are well educated. In Pakistan a very large number of women obtain degrees and then go onto further education. However, there are still some societies in the Muslim world where education and training of women is very much neglected. This may be due to political reasons or due to the fact that some of these societies live in abject poverty, and thus women are deprived of their rights to education. Lacking this tool, they are unaware of the status Islam gave them and are still submitting to conditions that are similar to the time when Islam was born. The misconceived image of the Muslim woman as suppressed and backward, is usually based on such societies. Unfortunately, there are Islamic countries in the world where the teachings of Islam are not really being practiced in the way that the Holy Prophet

(s.a.w.) directed in some cases this includes women's rights. Some countries have tried to become Westernized and have watered down the essential teachings of Islam to suit themselves; others have turned Islam's teachings into rigid laws and penalties in order to keep political control. Some have totally abused the name of Islam causing it to become synonymous with terrorism and violence.

But I can tell you that there is one community which claims to practice Islam the way it was practiced by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), the way God meant it to be practiced. And you will find this community all over the world. This is the community known as Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, of which I am a member. The unique character of this community is that it has recognized the Second Coming, the advent of the Messiah of the Latter Days. I would like to mention that women's status in this community is as highly regarded as it could be. The women, as members of the Lajna Imaillah, are active in every sphere, while maintaining their dignity through Islam. This organization ensures that no Ahmadi woman is left illiterate, wherever she may be in the world; that she understands the teachings of the Qur'an and is able to fulfil potential in every way. In fact, a very high percentage of Ahmadi women hold degrees in higher education.

I hope that everything I have said has helped to give you a clearer picture of the status and rights of the Muslim woman. She is a person in her own right, free to make the most of the faculties God has given her, and an equal being in the sight of God and man.

At the end, I would like to say that we women owe a great debt of gratitude to the Holy Prophet of Islam, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who was untiring in his efforts to bring about changes in the status of women and made us the equal of, nay in some respects better than, men.

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the Worlds.

BEAUTIFUL, ATTRACTIVE, SIMPLE AND INFORMAL

AHMADIYYA CULTURE

(by Dr. Parvez Pervazi, Sweden)

(This is the English translation of the article appearing in the Urdu section of this issue of the Ahmadiyya Gazette. This is the first instalment of the translation. More will follow later. Translated by Dr. Safee Ullah Chaudhri, NJ.)

The customs and habits which become a part of any society as a result of their collective living and social interaction is called the "Culture" of that nation. When Hindus and Muslims were living together in the undivided India their social system developed into an admixture culture, commonly known as Hindu Muslim culture. During the long period of Muslim rule over India, a peculiar type of culture had developed. This culture had some part of Islamic traditions and had some part of Hindu customs as well. Due to this compromised culture, while greeting each other instead of saying *Assalam-o-alaikum* and hand shake, it transformed into a new cultural habit using *Adab Arz or Tasleemat*. The lotus flower was and is considered very sacred in Hindu culture. Due to such compromises the embossment of lotus was introduced into our heritage and Muslims also started the embossment of the lotus flower on their mosques and shrines. Instead of hand shaking the traditions of bowing as generally the professional singers do indicating their humble salutations, it culminated into a new cultural habit. So on and so forth, there were many cultural customs which became a part of a new culture.

Example of Informality:

A well known scholar and physician whose name was Maulvi Noorud Din and belonged to Bhera, Punjab and later became Sayyadana Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I (r.t.). After the demise of Hazrat Masihe Maud *Alaihis Salato Wassalam*. He was famous for his simple and informal life style.

On his arrival in Lucknow (India) for securing higher education in medicine, he went straight to meet his teacher Hakim Ali Hussain sahib. At that time a great incidence happened and is recorded in the Ahmadiyyat literature. Our new generation is generally not aware of its cultural importance. When he arrived,

Hakim sahib was sitting in his drawing room over a clean, plain white and highly expensive carpet with his audience who were sitting on their seats according to their ranks. Every action in the environment reflected a complete cultural heritage, values and mannerism of Lucknow where everyone bowed and used the words of "*Adab Arz or Tasleemat*" in a very formal way. Our *Sayyadana* Noorud Din, unaware of the formalities of this setting he entered in the meeting, his feet were showing some dirt due to the long walk of his journey. Entering into in the living room, he said in a very loud voice "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*". In that culture it was not considered very appropriate to talk in a loud voice and more so to use the word "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*". Everyone in the audience was stunned. Whereas our *Sayyadana* Noorud Din kept on-proceeding to his great teacher. Due to the dirt on his feet, some foot prints were left on the carpet. One of the people in the audience, who was considered very formal in formalities, asked the entrant "From which civilized country have you come from? And from where have you learnt this style of saying *Salam*?" He said without any hesitation that this style of saying *Salam* and this informality has been taught by our lord and the master prophet Rasool-e-Arabi, the unlettered (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The person who was critical of the behavior of Maulana Noorud Din was astonished and became highly ashamed of himself. At this point, Hakim Ali Hussain sahib advised the critique that you have been in the courts of various kings, but have you ever heard such a stunning reply? It may seem very surprising to the readers that why these formalities were strictly adhered to in that court. In reality this was the culture of Lucknow at that time. Generally the Delhiites were not very formal but still they also called the house as *Mehal Sra* and the drawing room was called *Diwan Khana*. During the course of conversation it was their way to bow and offer salutations repeatedly. Now the

word *Mujra* may sound strange to our new generation, but to salute by bowing was called *Mujra* in those days. The current understanding of *Mujra* represents bowing in a way as the professional singing girls do.

Beautiful Environment of Qadian and Rabwah:

The purpose of the current article is to present some features of the culture which were witnessed in Qadian and Rabwah. It is a matter of observation and conception that whether the culture was really any different from the common culture or was it just a fancy notion.

The principality of Qadian was awarded to the scholarly Muslim family of Mirza Hadi Baig on their migration from Turkistan to India which consisted of ninety villages.

The population of Qadian and its surroundings was comprised of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims and up to the period of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Murtaza sahib (father of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of Ahmadiyya Movement) it was the same old chieftain style of living and Mirza Ghulam Murtaza sahib was the last chieftain of the principality. It was common practice that all the others except the family of the chief were considered as subjects. In the definition of subjects were all those other than the chief's family. All those who were small landholders or the other dignitaries were accounted as the subjects, however, the chief was not supposed to order them in anyway. In this case, the chieftainship was only reduced in the name. It can only be imagined that when this family had reign over ninety villages, what type of living style they would have? By the time this chieftainship came to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah *alaihissalam*, it was also diminished. This was the heavenly design to raise the Imam Mahdi as a spiritual prince and for this reason Almighty Allah Ta'ala wanted to abolish this worldly estate and lay the foundation of a spiritual community. Who can understand His expedience and design. The entire life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Murtaza sahib was spent to recover the lost family estate, but he did not gain the results according to his expectations. In the very life of the Promised Messiah *alaihissalam*, the apparent signs of this regimen were slowly vanishing. Even though there were no signs of family riches but

even then in Qadian at least the apparent signs of the family estate remained for sometime. For a long period of time the publications made by the Promised Messiah *alaihissalam* the word Chief of Qadian was printed after his name. The society of Qadian was an average Islamic society. Everyone living in that society seems to have a harmonious living. Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs living together helped each other regardless of religious affiliation. Even Hazrat Promised Messiah *alaihissalam*, had a few Hindu admirers and friends and on various occasions Hindu friends of Hazrat the Promised Messiah *alaihissalam* has given the witness about his pious life including providing testimony to the fulfillment of some of his prophecies known to them. This has become a part of the Ahmadiyya literature.

Saying of Assalam-o-Alaikum:

Basically, Islamic teachings are the basis of Ahmadiyya culture and is practiced by Ahmadis. Whatever we have read about the social structure of Qadian, it appears that there was no custom of saying "*Adab Arz*" in Qadian. Even whenever Hindus and Muslims met together they used to say only "*Salam*". We have only observed the time of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (r.t.a.) At that time even Hindus and Sikhs used to say "*Salam*" for greetings. Our father, Maulana Ahmad Khan Nasim had a friend who's name was Hazara Singh and he used to visit our family on a regular basis and whenever he came we used to say '*Salam* uncle' and he used to reply with the normal greetings and prayers. Similarly, we saw that his Hindu friends and shopkeepers used to say "*Maulvi ji Salam*" to our father and he would reply "*Lala ji Salam*". These cultural conditions in Qadian and the culture which we call Ahmadiyya culture were significantly different, as there is no population of Hindus and Sikhs in Rabwah. In Qadian and Rabwah not only was it customary to say "*Assalam-o-alaikum*" but it was also emphasized to say "*Assalam-o-Alaikum Warahmatullah-e-Wabarakatohu*". It was my second habit and nature that when I went for education to Lahore I used to say "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*" to anyone who ever met me in the way, because of this habit of upbringing. As a matter of fact one time a person stopped me and said "*Walaikomus Salam*" and inquired that he did not

recognize me. At this I smilingly told him I had said "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*" considering him a Muslim. Obviously we do not know each other, so how could you recognize me. As result he became a friend. He was also fond of walking like me and so we saw each other on a daily basis. Afterward I learnt that he was Mr. Badiuz Zaman Kaykaoos and was a retired high court justice.

My dear friend Mr. Khalifa Sabahud Din narrated a story about one of his friends in Islamabad, Pakistan that he used to see an individual who was a government official on a daily basis and he used to "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*" to this official. One day this official asked him that you have said this "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*" so many times and it is now time for you to tell me that if I could do anything for you? As a matter of fact usage of the word "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*" has become a second habit and natural for our children. Muslims have been taught the use of "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*" by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but it is a basic cultural feature of Ahmadiyya culture to say "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*". But ironically if any Ahmadi says "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*", he is legally charged with a crime under the penal code of Pakistan.

This very item of Ahmadiyya culture used to astonish the newcomers to Rabwah and Qadian. In other societies there is no custom of saying "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*" publicly and aloud with the same degree of consistency as Ahmadi do.

Saying of Alhamdulillah:

Similarly in response to inquiring about someone's health the saying of *Alhamdulillah* is also associated with Ahmadiyya culture or with some of those who have deep interest with religious values. When I was a professor of Urdu at Osaka University of Foreign Studies, it was a part of the curriculum to teach the manners of the Pakistani culture to the students. In this connection the audio video lesson we prepared for the students was as follows:

Question: "How are you?"

Answer: "*Alhamdulillah* I am fine."

My students used to reply in the same fashion all

the time and some of the students went to Pakistan and one of such student when he came back from Pakistan told me that 'Sir I am sure that you must have taught us the right language, but I have not observed the common Pakistanis saying *Alhamdulillah*, they only say "I am fine"'. I told this child that my dear son, I have taught you the language of nobility and the noble people use this very language. Currently another Pakistani who was teaching the same class and he is using the same audio which was prepared by me. Once I met him coincidentally and he asked why had I initiated this *Alhamdulillah* with these Japanese students? I inquired what's so wrong about this? He said you are right but I myself did not have the habit of saying *Alhamdulillah*. He said that it took him a long time to get himself accustomed to saying *Alhamdulillah*. However, in Ahmadiyya culture it is neither strange nor unusual to say *Alhamdulillah*.

Insha-Allah Masha-Allah:

In our culture the words *Insha-Allah* or *Masha-Allah* are used not being formal and it is not observed by the other Muslims. However, when someone uses the word *Insha-Allah*, it is normally meant that he does not intend to do the task. One of my Japanese students Ms. Haji, who is now a high official in the police department, once came back after visiting a foreign country, she told me that *Insha-Allah* I will not be able to come to school at 9:00 but I will be there at 11:00. I criticized her by saying that from where have you learnt this new usage of the word *Insha-Allah* and she replied that in the country where she visited they only used the word *Insha-Allah*, when they do not intend to do something.

Covering of the Head:

Regarding the Ahmadiyya culture, we witnessed in Qadian that everyone had covered their head. During the early period when modest houses were built in Rabwah, we had seen the words of wisdom written on the wall in bold letters "Walking with uncovered head is a sign of vagrancy". In our culture it was considered improper and inappropriate to walk around with an uncovered head and no one would dare to go in front of the elders with an uncovered head. A special feature of our Hindu-Islamic culture was to keep the head covered. Ladies used to cover their

heads whenever they came across their parents and even close relative. The men covered their heads with a turban or cap. The straw woven caps which are found in the mosques these days, were never seen at that time. Anyone who came to the Mosque for praying, he used to come with a turban or cap from ones home. The importance of head covering has been and still is a part of Ahmadiyya culture..

Visiting of the Sick:

It is a basic Islamic instruction which should be observed by all the Muslims throughout the world as advised by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Accordingly the Ahmadi observe this teaching sincerely and consider it as a divine duty. Visiting of the sick receives divine reward, but the others do not want to benefit from it. In Ahmadiyya culture like the rest of the divine commands, visiting of the sick is also considered a divine duty. The writer felt very envious of the ailment of some sick people who were visited by then Hazrat Khalifatul Masih. At one time he observed that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III, came to visit our sick friend, Mr. Abdus Salam Akhtar in the hospital. Accordingly Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV has been seen many a times when he goes to visit the sick people, because visiting the sick is considered a part of the religious obligation.

Unfortunately some formalities has been added with this harmless and sympathetic obligation and some people have started feeling it was a burden instead of a useful Islamic tradition which include that whenever you visit the sick person they should not go empty handed. This happens practically everywhere in the world, but to make it mandatory to carry something while visiting the sick has resulted in a very formal tradition losing its beauty, simplicity, importance and usefulness.

When Professor Naseer Ahmad Khan had his first heart attack, the doctors prohibited him from seeing visitors. A register for visitors was kept outside the room of the hospital and a note was placed like this "Visitors may please write their names in the register, *Jazakomullah Ahsanuljaza*". When Naseer sahib was released from the hospital and went home, he was surprised to see that the register was empty. The reason was that those who could not see him, felt that

by writing their names would be belittling their love, sympathy and feelings with him. Those who were influential, could see him anyway and those who could not visit with him, left by imprecating the nurses. No one desired to print one's name. In reality the benefit of the patient was that no one should put him in harm. But who can make these people understand?

In Sweden, there is no restriction on visitation of the sick, but you are not allowed to get near the patient. The general practice about caring for the sick is to send flowers. A telephone call is made right from the home to such floriculture places and an order is placed that a gift of flowers be sent to a certain patient in a certain ward of the hospital. Whosoever gets such a gift is extremely excited. People do not prefer to go on condolence, instead it is considered sufficient to send flowers. Once the writer was in the hospital and the patient in the bed next to him passed away after being seriously sick for so many days. When the nurse came, I said the customary words of sympathy and she said that he was a very fortunate patient that his son had sent him flowers from a thousand miles away and they are still lying along side his body in the morgue.

Prayers and Request for Prayers:

Generally Ahmadiyya tradition emphasizes to pray and to seek help from Allah on every difficult situation. Along with the visiting of the sick, it is also very much Ahmadiyya way of life to pray and request for prayers. Prayer is a very important part of Ahmadiyya culture. On the surface the word *Dua* or prayer is filled in every walk of life style of our culture but it is only limited to uttering "*With your prayers*". Neither the person requesting for prayers is really asking for it nor the one being requested knows the depth of it. It is a sentence in the daily life of ordinary Muslims which is uttered without any significance or meaning attached to it. However, in Ahmadiyya culture, *Dua* is not only a word it is filled with seeking blessings of Allah with faith and enthusiasm.

It is read in the history books that the *Nizams* of Deccan used to have some people in their employment whose task it was to go to the anniversaries of saints through out the country and pray for the health and well being of the kings. The service of these professionals whose job it was just to pray was

transferred by inheritance. For the supplication, the Mughal empire was limited to the presentation of stipends at different occasions to saints and holy people. However, it was expected of these holy people to remain obedient to the rulers. A few of the Mughal emperors have visited some shrines to seek blessings. Ahmadis go to such places only to pray for the spiritual evaluation and higher status in paradise and they do not seek any blessings from these dead bodies. Jama' at Ahmadiyya believes in personal connection with the living god without any mediation. Everyone has ones own contact with the Almighty and seeks directly from Him. Contact with the living God is a part and parcel of Ahmadiyya culture. Even Ahmadi children are taught to develop personal contact with Allah directly. This is a central feature of Ahmadiyya culture.

Mostly the common Muslims have very little knowledge of the attribute of *Allah* and they think that He does not speak nor does He listen now as He used to do in the past indicating that He is not *Sami* or *Kalim* anymore. However, Ahmadis have a firm belief that He still listens, speaks and even answers their prayers. The acceptance of such prayers has led to

guarantee the effectiveness of these supplications. It is true that the members of the community do make request for prayers to their elders and to their *Khalifa* of the time. This is to reinforce their own prayers and keeping contact with *Khalifa*. Their prayers are not done superficially, but come from the bottom of their heart. Thousands of Ahmadis have in deed witnessed and experienced the divine power of tasting the favor of His *Raza* and *Liqā*.

The writer has witnessed the fact that he has seen or met thousands of such pious Ahmadis who had spiritual dialectical favor from Allah. Miracles do happen through prayers and Ahmadis believe such miracles will continue to happen. A dictator in Pakistan announced that miracles do not take place anymore and it is a matter of *passé*. Then it was this dictator who became the victim of this divine sign through a spiritual person of the time. Other Muslims do not have such strong faith and belief in the acceptance of supplications. They only know the word *Dua*, but the Ahmadis believe in the complete system of *Dua* and get rewards of accepting the *Dua*.

(To be continued)

THE EVOLUTION OF A PRAYER

(By Shafi Otto)

Did you ever stop and wonder why you chose your spiritual belief? Our parents most likely accepted the religion of their parents without question. Others married someone who asked them to change their faith. Still others picked a religion that was the latest trend. But many people today are deciding on a belief based on what it has to say. Some are exposed to another church or belief and decide they like it. Others may shop around a bit and accept one that is based on what they want to believe. And then there are those who actually study all of the beliefs so they can pick the one that has the most meaning and truth.

There is one more way that a religion comes to us – God decides it. I was not searching for another

belief as I was comfortable with mine but I was searching for a cure to my illness. The illness I had took everything away from me and made me feel weak and miserable. It humbled me enough that I began praying to God.

Now the ball really started rolling as I discovered one contributing factor to my illness after another through one synchronistic experience after another. I saw everything in my illness as having a deeper, symbolic meaning.

A woman I met through my doctor's office who had the same illness was another link in the chain of events. One day, she gently asked about my faith and explained hers to me. I've always been an open-

minded person so I was able to hear her without getting defensive. I've also always been a polite person so I was able to tactfully tell her that I wasn't interested. She told me that if I ever wanted to know if this was true or not, I should pray for a certain number of days and wait for an answer. Because I was so desperate to heal, I was willing to try anything. I started praying on this question which again started a strange sequence of events. I took long drives all over the state in pursuit of an answer. And then I found the answer in a book on the last day of my prayer.

God wanted me to know the religion of Islam. And more specifically, He wanted me to know the purest sect of Islam which is the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. After more research on Islam and other religions, I came to accept this as my belief. And then even more answered prayers and healings came to me.

Islam means peace and submission to God and it stresses the magnificence of God. We are all equal under the One God. Besides being a religion, it also teaches physics and the laws of the universe. Other religions, often contradict science but Islam helps to explain it. It also has infallible guidance on biology, psychology, politics, economics and ethics. It solves problems like war and hunger and reveals the secrets of life and death.

Islam was the last revealed religion. It was revealed 1400 years ago to Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). The Quran is the holy book of Islam. Islam helps us understand that religion was given to us in progressive stages, each one building on the proceeding one as our intellects, insight and needs evolved. That is why different prophets were sent in history. Though religion had to evolve from primitive practices and beliefs, it should also keep the original message to worship only God and to establish morality and peace. Because Islam recognizes that each religion was the truth for it's time, it then becomes the total truth as it combines them all and then adds to them.

Then in the late 1800s, the Promised Messiah (a.s.) came. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on

him) came (1835-1908) and fulfilled all the prophecies regarding the return or second coming of a messiah. The Jews, Christians, Buddhists and Muslims awaited such a person as predicted in their holy scriptures. This began the birth of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. It has been predicted that it will engulf the whole of mankind. Though Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) came to give us the last religion of Islam, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him) came to fulfill the role of messiah (also revealed to Prophet Muhammad – peace be on him). There is much scientific proof to back this up.

Islam teaches us to exalt God, be virtuous, be humble, pray, seek knowledge, be cheerful, practice the middle way and have a personal relationship with God. A good relationship would include thinking of God often, adoring and praising Him, asking for forgiveness, asking for help to be better, listening, obeying, trusting and fearing Him. And of course asking Him for what you need. Eventually you come to know God as you would another person. You develop a sensitivity to Him that allows you to communicate and work with Him. This becomes a true intimate relationship. The hardest lesson is learning that God is in control. We must submit to His plan when He asks. And we must understand that it's for our best.

Islam being the progressive religion that it is and God being the Merciful One that He is allows us to evolve at our own pace or when He communicates to us that it's time to make another spiritual step. We are not expected to be perfect but to work on our weaknesses the best we can. And the positive reinforcement comes when our prayers are answered even faster than they were before. It is said in Islam that for every positive thing we do, God will reward us 10 times that. In fact, doing good can even cancel out the bad. This is to give us positive reinforcement to do even more good.

It is important to seek knowledge in Islam. And it is very important to know and understand God's Master Plan. Trials are part of the plan and they have a purpose. We either create our own trials and

problems or they are forced on us (purposely allowed by God) for several reasons. Trials were designed to humble us, magnify our weaknesses, help us reach our potential, give us rewards on earth for working on these goals, give us opportunities to earn our way into paradise and so we can become even closer to God.

When confronted with a trial, It's difficult to see it as opportunity to work on our weaknesses. The trials which often start out in childhood, leave us feeling hurt, fearful, inadequate, etc. We develop distorted thinking to protect or cover our feelings. And then we develop dysfunctional or maladaptive behaviors to further protect and cover our feelings. We might try to control others or be ahead of them, better, right or have more. Or we may allow others to always get their way. By understanding the self, ego, id, superego and how they interact, we can see how we get in trouble. The ego was designed to help us survive, protect us and help us reach our potential. We, unfortunately often limit it's purpose to being a defense weapon – in other words we use distorted and maladaptive thinking and acting to keep ourselves and others from seeing our discomfort. By understanding the purpose and process that is part of God's plan, we can begin to allow ourselves to stay in touch or be mindful of our pain, fears and insecurities which lead to distorted, impure motives and dysfunction and sin. By staying in communication with ourselves, we can stay in communication with God. Though God's positive and negative reinforcement, we learn the bad consequences of hiding our discomfort and the good rewards for obeying Him. Instead of getting defensive, we become humbled and then we can face the problem and work on it. God increases His help with each step we take.

Islam is a living religion. It is pure nourishment which penetrates, feeds the soul and allows it to grow. All natural, fresh things have life in them. The more we practice a living, personal relationship with God, the more He produces fruit and fresh signs to guide us in the present and the future. An example is the Arabic language which the Holy Quran is

written in. Arabic is the original language of the world and all languages came from it. Only God could have developed it's perfectly inter-related and organized pattern of roots and addition. The parts of the words are so connected that each word is actually a sentence and describes the full meaning in physical, philosophic and spiritual terms and in such an order that it resembles a tree with it's roots, trunk, branches and fruit. The meaning is in the fruit. Arabic is dimensional just like life.

Christianity has survived because man is in denial. This belief takes the burden of sin, guilt and fear of punishment off of us. It's an excuse. But Christianity had it's place in history. Jesus (peace be on him) was needed to help us develop our ability to communicate and have an intimate relationship with a Higher Power. Eventually the masses will tire of waiting for Jesus to return in his physical form. Eventually the majority of people will have a direct relationship with God.

Christianity does not encourage us to question or study other beliefs but Islam does because it has no fear of being proven wrong. But Islam must never be forced or it is no longer peace, no longer Islam. Only God can chose this religion for us.

Every year the number of people who accept the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam doubles. In 1998, 5,000,000 more people embraced it. It is growing especially fast in Europe. You will be hearing more about it in the coming years.

I accepted Islam 17 years ago. And when I took my spiritual name of Shafi, an Arabic word which means God's attribute to heal, I had no idea that He would not only heal every one of the many physical problems I had but all the emotional ones too. But another blessing came when my personal healing gave way to a new career. The last 9 years of my life have been in the natural health field where I can continue to humbly carry out God's attribute to heal.

It was God's choice.

ISLAMIC ETIQUETTES OF EATING ACCORDING TO THE HOLY FOUNDER OF ISLAM (s.a.w.)

(By Anwer M. Khan)

Cleaning before and after meals

Hazrat Anas (r.a.) relates that Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) said:

“If anyone wants that his house becomes enriched with God’s blessings, he must wash his hands, gargle and rinse his mouth before the meals and also after the meals. This is the ablution for eating.” (*Ibn-e-Maja*)

At the starting and finishing of a meal

Hazrat Ayesha (r.a.) relates that Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) said:

“Whenever one of you begins to eat, he/she should first say, *In the name of Allah the Exalted. If he forgets to do so in the beginning, then, at the end of the meal, he should say. ‘Bismillahe Awwalehi wa akherehi, ‘In the name of Allah, do I begin and end.’* (Tirmidhi)

Hazrat Abu Saeed (r.a.) relates that whenever Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) would eat or drink, he would say:

“*Alhumdolillahil Lazi Atamana wa Saqana Wa Jaalna minal Muslimeen*”

“*All praise belongs to Allah who provided us with food and drink and made us Muslims.*”

On Not finding fault with Food and Praising it

Hazrat Abu Huraira (r.a.) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) never found fault with food. If he desired he ate it, and if he disliked it he left it. (*Bokhari and Muslim*)

On Eating together for special blessings

Washi ibn Harb (r.a.) relates that some of the companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said to him: Messenger of Allah, we eat but are not satisfied. He said: Perhaps you eat separately. They said: That is so. He told them:

“*Eat together and pronounce the Name of Allah over your food. It will be blessed for you.*” (*Abu Daud*)

How Much one should eat?

Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) has been reported to say:

“*There is no vessel worst for a person to fill than his stomach. A few mouthfuls should suffice to keep him on his feet. But if he must eat more, then let him fill one third of his stomach with food, one third with drink and one third for easy breathing.*”

Etiquettes of a Feast

Hazrat Abu Huraira (r.a.) relates that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

“*The worst feast is the one to which only the wealthy have been invited and from which the poor have been left out.*”

Etiquettes of Drinking

Hazrat Anas (r.a.) relates that when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) drank, he would stop three times for taking breath. (*Bokhari and Muslim*)

Hazrat Ibn-e-Abbas (r.a.) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

“*Do not drink in one breath like a camel, but in two or three. Pronounce the Name of Allah when you start drinking and praise Him when you finish.*” (Tirmidhi)

Hazrat Abu Qatada (r.a.) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) forbade breathing inside the vessel when drinking. (*Bokhari and Muslim*)

R.A.: *Razi Allahu Anho* (May Allah be pleased with him)

R.A.A.: *Razi Allahu Anha* (May Allah be pleased with her)

S.A.W.: *Sallalaho Alahe Wa Sallam* (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Sources: *Forty Gems of Beauty* – Hazrat Mirza Basheer Ahmad (r.a.)

Gardens of the Righteous – Ch. Zafrullah Khan (r.a.)

Hadeeqatus Saliheen – Malik Saifur Rahman Marhoom

HUZOOR ANNOUNCED THE NEW YEAR OF TEHRIKE-JADEED: 1,771,800 POUNDS CONTRIBUTED DURING THE PAST YEAR

Financial Sacrifice (Chanda) For God Reflects One's Love And Sincerity And Enhances The Quality of One's Faith

IMPORTANT ADVICE ABOUT FINANCIAL SACRIFICE IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR'AN, AHADITH OF
THE HOLY PROPHET (S.A.W.) AND THE WRITINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH, ALAIHISLAM

Namaz Janaza Gaib Offered for the Seven Martyres of Bomb Last in Khulna Ahmadiyya Mosque (Bungladesh) And For Hazrat Syeda Maryam Saddiqa Sahiba

(Summary of Huzoor's Friday Sermon of November 5, 1999, Based upon Urdu text from Al-fazl International Weekly, London, November 19, 1999. Translated by Dr. Rasheed Syed Azam, NC)

Syedna Hazrat Ameerul Momineen, Khalifatul Massih IV (a.b.a.) delivered this Friday Sermon in Fazl Mosque London. After *Ta'shahhud*, *Ta'awwuz* and *Surah Al-Fatiha*, Hazoor (a.b.a.) recited Verse 262 from *Surah Al-Baqarah*, second chapter of the Holy Qur'an and presented its translation.

"The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like the mautilude of a grain of corn which grows seven ears, in each ear a hundred gains. And Allah multiplies it further for whomsoever He pleases and Allah is Bountiful and All-Knowing." (2:263)

Huzoor (a.b.a.) also presented in this connection a Hadith of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) from the collection of *Tirmizi*

"One who spends for the sake of Allah, he is rewarded seven hundred fold."

Referring to the writings of the Promised Messiah *alaihislam*, Huzoor (a.b.a.) said:

"It is not possible for you to love God and wealth at the same time; you can love only one. He is fortunate who loves God. I am certain that one who loves God and spends in His way, his wealth shall be multiplied manifold as compared to others. Huzoor *alaihislam* has pointed out that 'chanda' was collected in the time of every Prophet because it is needed for the success of his mission."

"It is a great blessing from Allah for those who are given the opportunity to offer sacrifice in His way.

The time to spend is now because a cent given now for the sake of Allah is worth more than a million that will be given in the future."

Huzoor (a.b.a.) said that every person joining Ahmadiyyat should be asked to make a pledge for financial sacrifice for the sake of God from the very beginning. This would be a part of his training (*Tarbiyyat*) and prepare his heart for the love and service of God.

Referring to some directives from the Promised Messiah *alaihislam*, Huzoor (a.b.a.) said:

"Chanda strengthens one's faith and shows one's love for God and sincerity of purpose. A person's sincerity is recognized by the sacrifice and service he renders."

Huzoor (a.b.a.) said that 'Zakat' should be given to the Jama'at for distribution among the poor and needy and should not be distributed by the individuals themselves to their needy relatives. Names of relatives or other needy persons should be given to the Jama'at for necessary action.

Huzoor (a.b.a.) then announced the beginning of the 66th year of *Tehrike Jadeed*, first started by Hazrat Musleh Mau'ood (r.a.) on October 31, 1934. The first register for the contributors was opened in 1934 and the second one in 1944 during the life of Hazrat Musleh Mau'ood (r.a.). Hazrat Khalifatul Massih III started a third register in 1965. Huzoor (a.b.a.) Khalifatul Massih IV opened the 4th and current register in 1985. 'God willing another register will be opened after 20 years during my lifetime, *Insha*

Allah.' Huzoor (a.b.a.) said.

Huzoor (a.b.a.) said that *Tehrike Jadeed* is specially blessed by God Almighty because it is a voluntary contribution. The total service rendered under this scheme can be converted into millions of pounds. This Jama'at is a unique model of live and sacrifice for God.

Huzoor (a.b.a.) said that the collection for the last year, according to the reports received up till now is 1,771,800 pounds. Pakistan is number one in total collection. America continues to make progress and has offered 100,000 dollars more this year as compared to last. Burma has doubled its collection this year. The top ten Jama'at in order of their collection ranking are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Pakistan | 6. Indonesia |
| 2. Germany | 7. India |
| 3. America | 8. Mauritius |
| 4. England | 9. Switzerland |
| 5. Canada | 10. Palestine |

Huzoor (a.b.a.) said that the following eleven new member countries have joined in the financial sacrifice

for *Tehrike Jadeed* this year. Austria, Gini Conakry, Mali, Malawi, Togo, Nigeria, Bulgaria, Check Republic, Tunis, Slavic and Maqdoonia. Total participants in this scheme this year has reached 266,617 which shows an increase of 17,519 over the previous year.

At the end, Huzoor (a.b.a.) mentioned the incident of bomb blast in Bungla Desh at the Khulna Ahmadiyya Mosque and gave a brief account of the lives of seven Martyrs:

1. Mukarram Jahangir Hussain Sahib
2. Mukarram Nuruddin Sahib
3. Mukarram Akber Hussain Sahib
4. Mukarram Sublian Matural Sahib
5. Mukarram Mohibullah Sahib
6. Mukarram Dr. Abdul Majid Sahib
7. Mukarram Mumtazuddin Ahmad Sahib

Huzoor also gave a brief account of the life of Hazrat Syeda Maryam Siddiqa Sahiba, the wife of Hazrat Musleh Maood (r.a.), Khalifatul Massih II.

Namaz Janaza Gaib was to be offered for all of them after the *Jumah* and *Asr* Prayers. Huzoor (a.b.a.) announced

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TEHRIK-E-JADID NEW YEAR

(National Secretary Tehrik-E-Jadid)

Our Beloved Imam, Hazrat Khalifa-tul-Masih, has announced the commencement of the 66th Year of Tehrik-E-Jadid. All the brothers and sisters are requested to participate in this divine and blessed scheme by making a promise (pledge) as soon as possible

Hazrat Musleh Maud, May Allah be pleased with him, has said:

“Remember! This Tehrik is from God.....Blessed are those who try their utmost to participate in it to the maximum, because in the history of Islam, their names shall be remembered with respect and honor, and they shall have a special place of honor with Allah, The Almighty.” (*Five Thousand Mujahahideen*, Page 14)

Please contact your Jamaat President or Secretary Tehrik-E-Jadid for the registration of yours and your family members' promises.

AN EXEMPLARY FATHER'S ADVICE FOR HIS SON

And We bestowed wisdom on *Luqman* and said, 'Be grateful to Allah,' for whoso is grateful, is grateful for *the good* of his own soul. And whoso is ungrateful, then, surely, Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy.

And *call to mind* when *Luqman* said to his son while he admonished him, 'O my dear son! Associate not partners with Allah. Surely, associating partners *with Allah* is a grievous wrong.

And We have enjoined on man *to be good* to his parents – his mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years – *and said*, 'Give thanks to Me and to thy parents. Unto Me is the final return;

'And if they contend with thee to make thee set up equals with Me concerning which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not, but be a kind companion to them in worldly affairs, and *in spiritual matters* follow the way of him who turns to Me. Then unto Me will be your return and I shall inform you of what you used to do;

'O my dear son, even though it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and even though it be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will, surely, bring it out. Verily, Allah is the Knower of the most hidden secrets, *and* is All-Aware;

'O my dear son, observe Prayer and enjoin good and forbid evil and endure patiently whatever may befall thee. Surely, this is of those matters *that require* high resolve;

'And turn not thy cheek away from men in scorn, nor walk in the earth haughtily; surely, Allah loves not any arrogant boaster;

'And walk thou at a moderate pace, and lower thy voice; verily, the most hateful of voices is the braying of the ass.' (*Luqman*, 31:13-29)

From the Holy Qur'an:

O ye who believe! Fear Allah and be with the

truthful. (*Al-Tauba*, 9:119)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

One who had no compassion for our young ones and did not recognize the rights of our elders was not of us. (*Abu Da'ud*)

Respect your children and cultivate in them the best of manners. (*Ibne Majah*)

The Promised Messiah (a.s.) said:

As for me, beating of the children is an act that can be termed as a sort of *Shirk* (associating partners with God).

I wish that the people could pray for the children just as they are anxious to punish them. They should make it part and parcel of their duties that they pray for the children fervently; the prayers of the parents for their children are particularly accepted by God.

There are certain prayers that are a daily routine with me.

1. I pray for myself that God may let me do the kind of things that would manifest His Honor and Grandeur and that He may make me fully resigned to His Will.
2. I pray for my wife that He may grant me children through her, who may prove to be the coolness of my eyes and who may live their lives in perfect accordance with the Will of God.
3. I pray for my children that God may make all of them servants of His religion.
4. I pray for my friends by naming all of them individually.
5. I pray for all those who are connected with this Dispensation – whether I know them personally or I do not know them. (*Malfoozat*, Vol. II, p. 4)

OPENING ADDRESS OF REGIONAL PARENTS WORKSHOP NOVEMBER 7, 1999

Mr. Nazir Ayaz, President – Queens Jamaat Bait-ul-Zafr, New York

“Somehow, we get into so many tangles of life that we forget our principles, objectives, and priorities of life. The other day a child of about 12 years, a student of Tahir Class, told me that the last time all his family got together for dinner was on *Eid*. The father works 7 days a week and the mother works evening shifts. The child skipped school and classes 92 times last year and the mother is so naive that she doesn't know what's going on inside her home.

On the other hand, we have seen children growing up in this country going to Ivy League Colleges and at the same time they are very much attached with Jamaat and have created heaven in their homes. They pray, stay, and have fun together.

One can find girls at the Karachi University in tight jeans and smoking while others can find girls at the Queens College here in New York whom professors recognize as outstandingly impressing in their character.

We, at many times, blame the environment in which we live. I believe that it may be easier to climb Mount Washington, the highest peak on the East Coast, than attempting a peak of the Himalayas. But, where there is a hope, determination, and perseverance and the blessings of Almighty Allah, a peak of the Himalayas will be as easy as Mount Washington.

A good and strong character is based on good moral training. A notable member of the Jamaat, discussed his life with me. He said, “I have achieved the highest offices in the secular world. I have traveled everywhere in the world. I have sent my children to the best colleges and I have lived in the high society. Once, I told a muballigh that I found him unfit for even a clerical position in my own. I used to think so low of those who serve Jamaat.”

“As the muballigh passed away, I realized that there is no tranquility in my life, no peace of mind, and I saw my children going astray. I can not reverse the way of my life. I have lost my children, my generation. I had paid attention to wrong things and had based my objectives on worldly principles and I sit here today and see the world go by. My most precious treasures, my children, are gone. Alas, I wish I could turn back the clock and get my treasures back.”

We need to ponder over our lifestyle, children, community, and society. When I was a child, I used to play near a construction site and put bricks in long rows with some space between bricks. The game was to push one brick and watch as one by one all the bricks would go down, a sort of domino effect. This is exactly what can happen to our children. If we have one bad child, we can lose a whole generation, one by one.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPER TRAINING OF CHILDREN

From the Holy Qur'an:

Kill not your children for fear of poverty. (*Al-An'am*, 6:152)

And know that your possessions and your children are but a trial and that it is Allah with Whom is a great reward. (*Al-Anfal*, 8:29)

Wealth and Children are an ornamentation of the life of this world. But enduring good works are better in the sight of thy Lord in respect of reward, and better in respect of hope. (*Al-Kahf*, 18:47)

He used to enjoin Prayer and Alms-Giving on his people..... (*Maryam*, 19:56)

Enjoin Prayer on thy people, and be constant therein. (*Ta Ha*, 20:133)

Make my seed righteous for me. (*Al-Ahqaf*, 46:16)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

A father can not give a better gift to his children than good training. (Tirmizi)

Paradise lies under the feet of the mothers.

(*Nasai*)

Points to Ponder: (*Reader's Digest*, Oct. 1999)

Biologically, adults produce children. Spiritually, children produce adults. Most of us do not grow up until we have helped children do so. Thus do the generations form a braid of cord. (*George F. Will – Washington Post*)

PARENTS GUIDE

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>P Prayers for the Pure Hearts</p> <p>A Atmosphere Adorned with Allah's Attributes</p> <p>R Respect Rather than Ridicule</p> <p>E Education with Effective Example</p> <p>N Nourishment with Nutritious Food</p> <p>T Teaching Truth and Tolerance</p> <p>S Spirit of Service and Sacrifice</p> | <p>G Greatness is in Good Morals</p> <p>U Uproot Un-Islamic Undertakings</p> <p>I Independence with Intelligence</p> <p>D Discipline Develops Dynamic Durability</p> <p>E Enjoy Ever-Growing Emotions</p> |
|--|--|
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MISCELLANEOUS DO'S AND DON'TS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Be Courteous</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be Consistent 2. Control Anger 3. Be Sympathetic 4. Control Criticism 5. Be Polite but Firm 6. Show Compassion 7. Internet/Television 8. Know the Company | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Recognize Achievement 10. Compliment Good Behavior 11. Lead by Example / Walk the Talk
 <p style="margin-left: 20px;">“Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you.” (<i>Robert Fulgham</i>)</p> 12. Spend Quality Time with the Children 13. Explain the Whys than Dictate the Whats. |
|---|---|

RESPONSIBILITIES OF WAQF-E-NAU PARENTS

Khutbu Jum'a of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (a.b.a.), February 10, 1989

"With expertise in different disciplines, they (Waqfeen-e-Nau) would devote themselves entirely to serve and propagat Islam."

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Human soul is made beautiful by its love of Allah. Taqwa should be planted in their hearts at a very early age.
- WN children should display the best of all the morals expected from the Jama'at as a whole.
- Provide careful and calculated environment at home to promote the above.

LOVE OF TRUTH: WN children should learn to love the truth. They should abhor deception and falsehood in all matters.

QUALITY OF CONTENTMENT: WN children should be taught to be content with what they have. They should be able to resist material temptations and not envy what others have.

GENTLENESS OF HEART: WN children should be soft spoken. They should not use harsh words or display temper even when angry.

FRIENDLINESS AND CORDIALITY: WN children should maintain their cheerfulness and composure in arguments. They should display full self-control and discipline.

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD HUMOR: Good humor is important for sanity in face of difficulties and hard responsibilities. But the humor should be delicate and refined not crude or vulgar.

HONESTY: WN children should be honest in their words and actions. They should be taught to say only what is fact in their knowledge. They should be able to keep facts, opinions and guesses apart.

TRUSTWORTHINESS: Especially in financial

dealing, WN children should be taught to be very careful and meticulous.

RECITATION OF HOLY QURAN: WN children should recite Holy Qur'an everyday. They should learn quality recitation and proper understanding of what they recite.

IMPORTANCE OF SALAT: WN children should be punctual in daily prayers. they should learn all ancillary issues pertaining to Salat at an early age.

KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING: A broad base should be established both in religious and secular knowledge. Quality books, magazines, periodicals should be used to cover a variety of subjects.

INVOLVEMENT IN AUXILIARIES: WN children should be involved in Atfal, Nasirat, etc. They should be made used to a tough and demanding life. They should pay chanda and participate in Tehrik-e-Jadid and Waqf-e-Jadid.

RESPECT OF JAMA'AT: WN children should be taught to respect the Jama'at organization and all its officers. No resentment or criticism of Jama'at should be tolerated in the homes.

LOYALTY IN WAQF: WN children should be instructed and counseled from the very start that Waqf is a life-long commitment and pledge with God. Its breach has very serious consequences. Breaking the Waqf would be betrayal.

(Dr. Khalil M. Malik, National Waqf-e-Nau Secretary).

RESOLUTION

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in USA has heard with great pain and sorrow the news that Sahibzada Mirza Munir Ahmad passed away.

Inna Lillahi wa Inna Haihi Raji'un

The One Who has called back is the dearest

On Him, O heart, be thou a sacrifice

He was a grandson of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), son of Qam'rul An'bya Sahibzada Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad and younger brother of Sahibzada M.M. Ahmad sahib Amir Jama'at Ahmadiyya USA. One of the sons of the deceased is the son-in-law of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (a.b.a.).

Respected Sahibzada Mirza Munir Ahmad was kind, sympathetic, and good hearted. He was very helpful to the poor and was always eager to provide employment opportunities to them. He had been ill for a long time and had now been admitted in Fazli Umar Hospital Rabwah for treatment. But the decree of Allah was fulfilled and he departed to meet his Lord and Creator.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at USA offers its heart-felt condolences to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (a.b.a.), Respected Amir sahib, USA, wife and children of Sahibzada Mirza Munir Ahmad Sahib, and the rest of the family of the Promised Messiah. May Allah the Exalted grant him high station in Jannatul Firdous and may he be the Guardian and Protector of his loved ones.

SOME QUR'ANIC PRAYERS

For Parents:

My Lord, have mercy on them (parents) even as they nourished me in my childhood. (17:25)

For Family:

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

For Ourselves:

Noah: I am overcome, so come Thou to my help! (54:11)

Lot: My Lord, save me and my family from what they do. (26:170)

Moses: My Lord, I stand in need of whatever good

Thou mayest send down to me. (28:25)

Jonah: There is no god but Thou, Holy art Thou. I have indeed been of the wrongdoers. (21:88)

Pharaoh's Magicians: O our Lord, pour forth upon us steadfastness, and cause us to die resigned unto Thee. (7:127)

Talat: O our Lord, we have wronged ourselves and if Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, we shall surely be of the losers. (7:24)

My Lord, forgive and have mercy, and Thou art the Best of those who show mercy. (23:119)

Our Lord, let not our hearts become perverse after Thou hast guided us, and bestow on us mercy from Thyself, surely, Thou art the Great Bestower. (3:9)

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

A) TALENT AND NEED BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

The current budget of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, includes an amount of \$20,000 for the award of scholarships to the youth of the community for College education. From these funds, the following scholarships will be awarded:

- 1. The talent scholarships which are called
 - i. Fazl-e-Omar Scholarship
 - ii. Professor Dr. Abdus Salam Scholarship
- 2. Need based Scholarships

Interested Ahmadi students are requested to submit the attached application by April 1, 2000, to Dr. Karimullah Zirvi, National Secretary Ta'leem, at the following address:

14-21 Saddle River Road
 Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
 Tel. & Fax: (201) 794-8122

B) FUNDS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH

African American Youth may use the same application form for loans/grants from the fund for the development of Ahmadi African American Youth. Such applications should be submitted to Dr. Zaheer Bajwa, Secretary of the Board, at the following address:

Baitur Rahman Mosque
 15000 Good Hope Road
 Silver Spring, MD 20905

Certification by the President

This is to certify that.....s/o,d/o

Is a born Ahmadi / converted to Ahmadiyyat since

Any Jamaat / Auxiliary office held:

He/She is very regular / somewhat regular / irregular in attending Juma and meetings of he Jamaat

He/She is the category A / B / C / D in paying Chanda subscriptions:

Name of President

President's Signature

Date:

APPLICATION FOR SCHOLARSHIP

AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM, USA

Please fill out the application form for scholarship to the best of your abilities. You may attach any additional information that may be relevant to consideration of the application.

Applicant Information *Please provide the following personal information:*

Name of Applicant: _____ Age: _____

Name of Father/Guardian/Spouse (Please circle one): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Jama'at: _____ Jama'at Membership Code: _____

Educational History *Please provide the following information on your educational background:*

Last Educational Level Completed: _____

Educational Institution: _____

Date of Completion: _____

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) _____

Please attach a current official transcript for the last two years of your education showing CGPA (cumulative grade point average) and GPA in the major (i.e. major GPA).

Proposed Course of Education *Please provide the following information:*

Degree/Educational Program to be Pursued: _____

Educational Institution to be Attended: _____

Length of Course: _____

Please, describe briefly your objective for pursuing this degree: _____

Financial Information

Tuition Cost: _____ Books Cost: _____

Room & Board (If Institution is in a town other than hometown, give full details): _____

Other Costs (Please list by Item): _____

Total Annual Cost: _____

Annual Household and Personal income (including parents/guardians, etc.) _____

Other Financing Sources (resulting from family contribution and from efforts to seek Federal/State Grants/Loan: _____

How much money will you be able to earn during the course of your education: _____

How much of your educational expenses will be financed by your own work: _____

Total Shortfall in Educational Expenses: _____

Additional Information Please write a brief statement explaining how your educational plans, and the courses you are taking will help you to achieve your educational goals. Furthermore, how the financial assistance will help you to achieve your future goals. Please, also mention extracurricular activities, honors, and awards, etc.

I would like to be considered for: Talent Scholarships, Need Based Scholarships, Both Scholarships - **Please circle one of the choices.**

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE GRACIOUS, THE MERCIFUL

**AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM
TA'LIM DEPARTMENT**

خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ

*The best among you is the one
who learns the Qur'an and teaches it.*

(The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him - Bukhari)

**THE SECOND TA'LIMUL QUR'AN CLASS
WILL BE HELD**

**IN THE EAST COAST
ON
MAY 20-21, 2000**

AT BAITUL HADI MOSQUE, OLD BRIDGE, NJ

**IN THE WEST COAST
ON
SEPTEMBER 2-3, 2000**

AT BAITUL BASEER MOSQUE, MILPITAS, CA

OBJECTIVES

1. *Learn to recite the Holy Qur'an correctly*
2. *Learn split-word translation of the Holy Qur'an*
3. *Guidelines for the study of commentary of the Holy Qur'an*
4. *Develop trainers for training others*
5. *Develop love of the study of the Holy Qur'an*

*Karimullah Zirvi
National Secretary Ta'lim*