

*“Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation,
and argue with people in the best manner.” (Holy Quran, 16:125)*

The Light **AND** **ISLAMIC REVIEW**

**Exponent of Islam and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement
for over eighty years**

January – March 2005

In the spirit of the above-cited verse, this periodical attempts to dispel misunderstandings about the religion of Islam and endeavors to facilitate inter-faith dialogue based on reason and rationality.

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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

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The Light was founded in 1921 as the organ of the AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT ISLAM (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Islamic Review* was published in England from 1913 for over 50 years, and in the U.S.A. from 1980 to 1991. The present periodical represents the beliefs of the worldwide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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The main object of the A.A.I.I.L. is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world — Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by grave misconceptions and wrong popular notions.

Islam seeks to attract the *hearts and minds* of people towards the truth, by means of reasoning and the natural beauty of its principles.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), our Founder, arose to remind the world that Islam is:

International: It recognizes prophets being raised among all nations and requires Muslims to believe in them all. Truth and goodness can be found in all religions. God treats all human beings equally, regardless of race, nationality or religion.

Peaceful: Allows use of force only in unavoidable self-defence. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

Tolerant: Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any creed or religion. Requires us to tolerate differences of belief and opinion.

Rational: In all matters, it urges use of human reason and knowledge. Blind following is condemned and independence of thought is granted.

Inspiring: Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a Living God, Who answers prayers and speaks to His righteous servants even today as in the past.

Non-sectarian: Every person professing Islam by the words *La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur rasul-ullah* (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be expelled from Islam by anyone.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad taught that *no* prophet, old or new, is to arise after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. However, *Mujaddids* will be raised by God to revive and rekindle the light of Islam.

About ourselves

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has branches in many countries including:

U.S.A.	Australia
U.K.	Canada
Holland	Fiji
Indonesia	Germany
Suriname	India
Trinidad	South Africa
Guyana	

Achievements:

The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, including French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic. The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world, including the first ever in Western Europe.

History:

1889: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founds the Ahmadiyya Movement.

1901: Movement given name *Ahmadiyya* after Holy Prophet Muhammad's other famous name *Ahmad*.

1905: Hazrat Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.

1908: Death of Hazrat Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.

1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam founded at Lahore as continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.

1951: Death of Maulana Muhammad Ali after fifty years of glorious service to the cause of Islam. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (d. 1981) becomes Head.

1981–1996: Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent medical doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution.

1996–2002: Prof. Dr Asghar Hameed, a distinguished retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, served as Head.

2002: Prof. Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha elected Head.

Ahmadiyyat — A Movement for Spreading and Defending Islam

By Hazrat Ameer,
Professor Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha

[On 24th September 2003, the Lahore Ahmadiyya Convention in Indonesia commenced with a one-day International Symposium at Yogyakarta with the theme of 'Islam and Civil Society'. This article is a transcript of the keynote speech, delivered by the Head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Ameer, Professor Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha. This article defines 'Ahmadiyyat, and examines in more detail its two chief characteristics, that is 'spreading' and 'defending' Islam.]

And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful.

And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear arguments and come to them. And for them is a grievous chastisement. (Holy Quran, 3:104-105)

The three key words used in the title are *Ahmadiyyat*, *defence* and *spreading*. In my talk, I will give an introduction of the Ahmadiyya Movement and highlight the role it has played in defending and spreading Islam.

The Origins of the Ahmadiyya Movement

Right in the beginning, I would like to clarify that *Ahmadiyyat* is neither a new religion nor a new sect in Islam. It indeed is Islam in its purest and original form. As its Founder (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib of Qadian) writes and I quote:

Our religion is the same Islam. It is not new. There are the same prayers, the same fasts, the same pilgrimage and the same zakat. But the difference is that these duties are now performed in outward form only, without any true spirit in them; we want to infuse in them the spirit of sincerity. We want these duties to be performed in such a way and manner that they are effective. (Talk on 12th July 1907, reproduced in *Malfoozat*, vol. 9, p. 312.)

In this context, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that as Muslims and Ahmadis we firmly believe that Allah Almighty has sent prophets for the guidance of mankind through all ages. With the Finality of Prophethood, no prophet will come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him. There will, however, remain the need to remove any deviations that have occurred in the religion as a result of misinterpretations or introduction of wrong traditions into Islam, especially those that are against its basic concepts and teachings. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be on him, foretold this.

We believe that the person who was chosen by Allah to present to the world the true picture of Islam, to defend it against the onslaught of propaganda, misrepresentations and misinterpretations; to rouse it from slumber and spread it again as a living religion was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. He did not bring any new religion or a new sect in Islam. This is apparent from the fact that Mirza Sahib did not give his Movement any name for about twelve years after it was founded. However, by this time many people had started referring to his followers as "Mirzaees". Since he had no desire to have any group of Muslims to be associated with his personal name, Hazrat Mirza Sahib issued an announcement giving his Movement the name 'Muslims of the Ahmadiyya Section'. The rationale for this name, he explained, was that 'Ahmad' was one of the two names of the Holy Prophet (the other name being Muhammad). The names 'Ahmad' and 'Muhammad' symbolised the inner and outward glory of Islam, respectively. Therefore, it was appropriate that the Movement, which believed that Islam's mission in the present age was to show the beauty of its teachings by gentle preaching, should be given the name Ahmadiyya. Founding of a Jama'at [Movement] also fulfilled the requirement of the Quranic verses I recited at the beginning. Ahmadiyya Movement are the party from among the Muslims *who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong*.

Distinguishing Characteristics of the Ahmadiyya Movement

Ahmadiyyat is a spiritual movement that believes that spiritual experiences are actual, objective realities and it stresses the necessity of man attaining nearness to God. Yet, it is also a rational movement, which applies the test of reason in understanding belief, and does not accept blind faith nor accounts of miracles and supernatural occurrences when these are unsubstantiated and without purpose.

It is a liberal movement in the interpretation of Islamic teachings and law, but it derives its liberal stance from the Holy Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Ahmadis firmly and totally adhere to the injunctions of the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

It is a modern movement in that it believes that Muslims must accept all the good that the modern world

has to offer and adjust to the new times and not to retreat into a closed world of their own. Yet it also preaches most emphatically that the modern world cannot survive unless it accepts Islamic principles for its moral and spiritual development.

It is a tolerant movement, which believes that Islam allows full freedom of thought, belief, religion and expression to all, non-Muslims as well as Muslims. It believes in developing dialogue, understanding and co-operation both between Muslims and non-Muslims and among Muslims belonging to different sects. At the same time, the Movement strives to the utmost to convince others that the truth, in its whole form, is to be found in Islam only, and that the mission of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the most effective and appropriate way for the progress of Islam in this age.

Having presented to you a brief introduction to the Ahmadiyya Movement I will move on to the second *key word* I have used and that is *defence*. I have used this word in the sense of protecting, guarding and securing. The question arises, was Islam ever in danger from any force or was there any danger to its existence and so needed to be protected. If that was true then did the Ahmadiyya Movement play any role in its defence? To answer this question, let me take you back in time to around 1876 when Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj and Christianity, the three great movements of the time joined hands to annihilate Islam. Following their lead other minor forces of the time both religious and political launched a full out attack on Islam.

Arya Samaj and its Attacks on Islam

Arya Samaj was an offshoot of the Hindus. This movement was formed to wipe out Islam and in accordance with its manifesto it leashed out malicious propaganda against Islam and the person of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The world was flooded with books, pamphlets and missionaries under the instructions of Swami Dayanand, the founder of Arya Samaj.

This was a time when the Muslims of the world in general and those of India in particular, were caught in great turmoil. The political condition of Muslims had hit an all-time low. All Muslim states were falling like dominoes to foreign occupation forces. The Muslim rule in India, Sudan and Egypt was lost to the British; that in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco was lost to France. Spain had occupied parts of North Africa; Tripoli (Libya) was taken by Italy; Zanzibar had been divided between the Germans and the British. Turkistan was taken by Russia and Afghanistan was reduced to the status of a native princely state of India, and was completely under British

influence. The Arabian Peninsula had no life left in it. The defeat of Tipu Sultan (1750-1799), Muslim Ruler of Mysore, India, who battled against the British rule in India, was the last nail in the coffin of Muslim hopes.

The religious position of Muslims was even weaker than their political one owing to their illiteracy and inability to cope with the challenges of the developing world. As they were not able to defend their religion logically, the scholars and preachers of other religions found them an easy target. They raised false accusations about Islam, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the Holy Quran. Millions of Muslims embraced other religions in sheer frustration. Such was the desperation of the Muslims that many poets had started lamenting the hopelessness of the Muslims in their poetry. The most renowned Muslim poet of the period, Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali very accurately depicted this condition of the Muslims in a long poem titled 'Mussadas-i-Hali'. The state of his desperation can be gauged from the very opening verses in which he says:

*If you want to see how the nations fall,
See the falling of a tree that stood tall.*

Witness Islam in its declining days,

It is unable to see the distant rays.

*It is convinced there will be no rise,
After the sun has set from the skies.*

In a few more verses that I have further translated for you, he goes on to say:

*You may liken this sleeping Nation,
To a sinking ship; in an ocean deep.*

*The shore is far; the storm is raging,
Those aboard see waves high and steep.*

*They make no effort to save their ship,
For they hate to wake from their sleep.*

*The dark clouds cover them from all sides,
Wrath of God is descending from the sky.*

*Death is approaching from all around them,
The calls of warning are approaching nigh,*

*'Why have you forgotten the glory of yester-years,
'Why this slumber, when will you open your eye.'*

*This Nation, takes no heed,
This Nation has accepted its fall.*

*This Nation, has fallen to the ground,
This Nation does not heed the call,*

*This Nation, has neither shame for its decline,
Nor envy for those that now stand tall.*

Christian Missionaries and their Revived, Reformed Crusade

The crusades that the Christian missionaries had started against Islam, at that time, were not like the crusades of the middle ages, waged with arms. These were waged with the pen. Their attack on Islam was four-pronged:

Firstly, it was based on exploiting the ascendant position ascribed to Jesus through the wrong interpretations of the Quran and the *Hadith* [Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)] by the Muslim '*ulama*' [clerics]. This made Jesus not only look superior to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, but also endowed him with a touch of divinity.

Secondly, they collected a horde of mythical and fabricated sayings and wrong interpretations by the Muslim clergymen of the allegorical verses of the Quran.

Thirdly, they used objections raised by the atheists and the materialists against, religion in general, and Islam in particular.

Fourthly, they published numerous books based on fabrications implicating the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Many pictures like the one showing the Holy Prophet worshipping the sun and another showing him holding the Quran in one hand and a sword in the other were distributed to defame Islam.

The '*ulama*' of the time were unacquainted with the English language, sciences and the Western philosophy, so they were unable to respond to the allegations. They responded by issuing *fatwas* or decrees of *kufr* [heresy] on those who challenged Islam. As Maulana Hali says, and I translate for you his statement:

*Once they declare the day to be night,
They insist on it with all their might,
Till everyone agrees they are right.*

This then was the situation when Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian claimed to be a *Mujaddid* [Reformer in Islam] and stood up to defend Islam.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Defender of Islam

Hazrat Sahib wrote eighty-three books in order to show the real face of Islam to the world. The first and the most renowned of these books, *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya* was published in 1884. In this work the truth of the teachings of Islam was established by forceful arguments, and the objections against Islam by Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj and Christians were powerfully refuted. This book was widely lauded and Mirza Sahib was acclaimed as the defender of Islam. For example, after going through this book, Maulvi Muhammad Hussain Batalavi, a top scholar

and a leading figure of the *Ahl-i-Hadith* party of the Punjab, wrote the following review and I quote:

In our opinion this book, at this time and in view of the present circumstances, is such that the like of it has not appeared in Islam up to now, while nothing can be said about the future. Its author, too, has been so constant in the service of Islam, with his money, life, pen and tongue, and personal experience that very few parallels can be found in the Muslims. If anyone considers our words to be an Asian exaggeration, let him show us at least one such book which so vigorously fights all the opponents of Islam, especially the Arya and Brahma Samaj, and let him name two or three persons who have supported Islam, not only with their wealth, lives, pen and tongue, but also by personal spiritual experience, and who have boldly thrown the challenge to all the opponents of Islam and the deniers of Divine revelation, that whoever doubts the truth of God speaking to man, he may come and observe it for himself, thus giving other religions a taste of this experience (*Isha'at as-Sunnah*, vol. vii, no. 6, pp.169-170).

All the books that followed were filled with irrefutable arguments in favour of Islam and also contained answers to the questions and objections raised by opponents of Islam. He delivered lectures, entered into debates and wrote and published thousands of pages in support of Islam. He created a Jama'at, the sole purpose of which was to propagate and defend Islam. He firmly believed that the Quran is not dependent on the reason of anyone, but it contains its own reasoning within its covers. So he declared that the reasons presented by him are no other than the reasoning and arguments of the Holy Quran. Any philosophy, which agrees with the Quranic philosophy, is true, and any philosophy that is opposed to the Quranic philosophy is false, whether it be the philosophy of Aristotle or Plato, or whether it be the philosophy of Europe or America. He was highly successful in fulfilling his holy mission within a period of less than thirty years. The Muslims now had in their hands valuable literature and solid arguments contributed by the Reformer and Defender of Islam, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani. This reversed the situation and the Muslims not only started coming back to their religion but also started converting people to it.

Spreading of Islam through Arguments – the True Jihad of Modern Day

Having thrown light on how the Ahmadiyya Jama'at has defended Islam, I come to the third key word of my speech and that is '*spreading*'. I have used this word in the sense of propagation, increasing in number and presenting it anew in its true beauty and grandeur. Having had success in

India, he turned his attention to carry the message of Islam to the other countries of the world, especially the West. He was convinced that the sun of Islam would rise from the West as was foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Born, brought up and educated in a small village, Qadian, in Punjab, India, he had no formal education in English and had no access to the modern books on philosophy. He was in communion with Allah and was chosen by Him to defend the religion and reform the Muslims and defend them against the onslaught on their religion. As he wrote:

God has illuminated my heart with His Light and He talks to me and has appointed me so that I should declare to the world on the basis of my own observation and experience, that God exists and He is a Living God. Even today He discloses Himself to His chosen servants and answers their prayers and converses with them.

The Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman undertook this *Jihad* [religious strive] of spreading and defending Islam. His able disciples like Hazrat Maulana Noor-ud-din, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig, and many other revered and knowledgeable members of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at fulfilled his belief and carried out the *Jihad* to propagate Islam.

Much is heard these days of *jihad* and of militant Islamic parties in Muslim countries, and elsewhere, calling on the faithful to put this teaching of Islam into practice in order to overthrow "man-made" or "satanic" systems of government and replace these with what is called Islamic rule and government. What is less in the public eye is the *jihad* which the Ahmadiyya Movement has been engaged in throughout the twentieth century, of peacefully disseminating knowledge of Islam in the world and striving to prove its truth, doing so particularly in Western countries. The battlefield of this *jihad* is not any territory on earth but the hearts and minds of human beings, and the weapons with which it is fought are not the guns and the bombs but arguments and evidence. This form of *jihad* is not merely a metaphorical or secondary interpretation of this well-known Islamic teaching, but it is, in fact, the real, the permanent and the greatest form of *jihad*. The repeated exhortations of the Holy Quran to the believers, to strive (do *jihad*) with their lives and property, all apply to the *jihad* of the peaceful propagation of Islam as much as they did to the battles which the Muslims had to fight in self-defence during the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

When in today's materialistic environment it is held, by non-Muslims and Muslims alike, that success can only

be achieved by means of political, military or some other worldly form of power, how can one believe that Islam, of all religions and ideologies, shall spread in the world without the support and backing of some power or state? This is the question we now explore.

The task was carried out through the strategy of translation of the Holy Quran into several languages including English, Urdu, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian and Javanese. Translation into several other languages is presently under progress. The Jama'at has also produced a treasure of Islamic literature, which has attracted thousands of truth seekers to the fold of Islam. Added to this is the creation of missions and mosques in several countries of the world.

The Jama'at has kept pace with modernisation and has fully made use of the electronic media. The Jama'at and its branches are operating several websites in many international languages to provide access to users all over the world. Most of our literature is now available on-line. In my address to you today, I have given you information about Ahmadiyya Jama'at and thrown light on its role in defence and propagation of Islam. I have also told you how Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad gave back Islam its strength and identity and made it a religion of the global village he envisaged in the future.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by asking myself a question and then trying to answer it. The question is, 'Why the rejection of a man who defended Islam when it was facing pangs of death and presented it as a religion of peace?' In the brief time at my disposal if I was to choose one reason only, it would be the claim of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib that the Promised Messiah and the *Mahdi* were to be raised from amongst the Muslim *Ummah* and their mission would be to spread Islam by knowledge, reason, argument and spirituality; the only way open being the pen and the personal example of a practising Muslim. This disappointed and disgusted the Muslims who were under the mistaken notion that the mission of the Promised Messiah and the *Mahdi* was to convert infidels at the point of the sword and establish an Islamic kingdom. This wrong notion was a major reason why the Muslims at large saw no great benefit in accepting a Messiah and *Mahdi* who was not going to fight and win them a kingdom. Thus the Promised Messiah had the same fate as the Messiah who was crucified because he could not deliver the Kingdom of God to the Jews in the sense they had perceived it.

Let us pray together for the progress and success of Islam and spread of its teachings in their true form and spirit as envisaged by the reformer of the time. *Amen* ■

Islam and Democracy

By Fazeel S. Khan

[This article was presented at the Symposium on 'Islam and World Peace', held in conjunction with the AAHL(USA) Annual International Convention in Columbus, Ohio, July 2004. In an attempt to answer the question of whether the religion of Islam can be compatible with the democratic values accepted by western nations, this article defines the two principal basis' of democracy, that is 'majority rule' and 'minority rights', and examines its equivalence to established Islamic doctrines. Please note that an article on 'Islam and Human Rights' by Ayesha Khan supplements this article and will be published in the next issue of the Light and Islamic Review].

Due to the present state of global affairs, a great debate is being engaged in: is Islam, the religion with over 1.1 billion adherents in the world today, capable of being followed in a manner that is consistent with the democratic ideals accepted by the modern, civilized world? Governmental policy-makers, scholars of religion and the general public all appear to be divided, not being able to come to a consensus on this issue. The dismal track record of Islamic states adopting a democratic form of government is proof enough for those who contend that Islam and democracy are incompatible. Others explain this phenomenon as having more to do with historical, political, cultural and economic factors. A study of Islam as presented in the Quran and Sunnah, however, reveals that not only is the principles of Islam compatible with "democratic" values, Islam is the very religion of democracy. Therefore, notwithstanding the validity of the above-mentioned factors, it is the departure from a correct understanding and implementation of Islamic principles that is, in essence, the primary cause of the creation of autocratic regimes in the Muslim world.

Defining Democracy

Diane Ravitch, former U.S. Secretary of Education, describes the general concept of democracy as commonly understood in the western world, by relating:

When a representative democracy operates in accordance with a constitution that limits the powers of the government and guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens, this form of government is a constitutional democracy. In such a society, the majority rules, and the rights of minorities are protected by law and through the institutionalization of law [<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm2.htm>].

Hence, the definition of democracy, in its basic sense, is rooted in two fundamental principles: *majority rule* and

minority rights. Looking to the religion of Islam, one finds a system of governance provided therein in which both majority rule and minority rights are clearly established.

Majority Rule

The establishment of majority rule in a society requires the institutionalization of certain practices, such as: 1) having a system in which the public participates, 2) requiring representatives of the people to be elected, 3) applying the principle of rule of law, and 4) enforcing limits on governmental action.

Participatory System

The issue of public participation in the political process is clearly defined in Islam. The Holy Quran advocates for the people to actively engage in forming a governmental structure that will enable them to live in a state of peace. This may be witnessed by the following Quranic verse: "O you who believe, enter into complete peace" (2:208). This command includes the spiritual state of "peace" (or *Islam*) each individual is to strive to attain as well as a system of peaceful cohabitation with others that a society must create. Furthermore, the Quran specifically states: "Allah changes not the condition of a people, until they change their own condition" (13:11). In other words, a peaceful state of existence cannot be achieved without whole-hearted participation of the public at large. It can even be argued that it is a duty, as per the Quran, for the people to have an awareness of the political system, political parties and political ideologies, as it commands: "And follow not that of which thou hast no knowledge" (17:36). The implication being, one is not to abide by the rules and conventions of a society without an understanding of their purpose and effects.

The form of government that Muslims are to strive to achieve is that based on "consultation" (or *shura*); this also reveals the participatory nature of an ideal Islamic form of government. The following Quranic verse lays the basis for this as it states: "And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and whose affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them" (42:38). Between the oft-repeated duties of prayer and charity, in this verse we find a doctrine that lays the basis for *government by counsel*. The people are not to be ruled by the whim of one person, but rather are to be consulted, or have their representatives consulted, as to the conducting of affairs of public life. The strict adherence to the system of consultation in Islam is illustrated by an incident in which the Holy Prophet had gone out to meet a warring tribe for battle as a result of a consultative decision, and against his own inclination for he sided with the minority opinion of not meeting the enemy in open field. It was at this juncture that the revelation was

received: “*and consult them in important matters*” (3:158). If the Holy Prophet himself accepted the majority view despite his own opinion, how can Muslims today question whether a government based on a democratic decision-making process is acceptable for them?

Elected Representative

The most important function of a participatory system of government is the election of the people’s representative(s). This right is clearly established in Islam in the following Quranic verse: “Surely Allah commands you to make over (positions of) trust (in government or affairs of the state) to those worthy of them” (4:58). Thus, it is the people that possess the authority to make an individual their representative. The granting of power to the first four successors to the Holy Prophet further reveals that the system by which such a determination is to be made is by *election*. *Hazrat Abu Bakr*, *Hazrat Umar*, *Hazrat Uthman* and *Hazrat Ali* were all democratically elected heads of State. *Hazrat Abu Bakr*, the first successor to the Holy Prophet, was chosen by the agreement of all parties, after a resolution confirming that one person only shall be head of state. *Hazrat Umar*, the second successor to the Holy Prophet, was nominated by *Hazrat Abu Bakr* as the second successor after consultation with the leading representatives of the Muslim community and was thereafter confirmed by agreement of all parties. *Hazrat Uthman*, the third successor, was appointed by an elective council comprised of six eminent persons who were all qualified to hold this position. *Hazrat Umar* had decided that these six representatives should choose one person as the head of State from among themselves, the mantle falling upon *Hazrat Uthman*. In the case of *Hazrat Ali*, again, he achieved leadership status by being selected by the majority of the people.

Islam’s endorsement of a representative form of government is also revealed by its condemnation of compliance to evil autocracies. Pharaoh’s dictatorship is a prime example. We read in the Quran that Pharaoh exceeded all limits as a ruler (89:11) by subjecting people to severe torment (2:49), oppression and tyranny (10:83), while living a posh lifestyle of finery and riches (10:88). He was accountable to no one and had vested supreme, god-like authority in himself (7:123). As people are to be responsible for their own socio-political condition, as mentioned earlier, not only is Pharaoh condemned, but those who “followed the bidding of Pharaoh” (11:97) are also deemed in the Quran as “transgressors” (43:54). It is, therefore, quite clear that it is the duty of the people to establish a peaceful society by denouncing unjust rulers through active opposition and by facilitating the granting of authority to those who represent their interests.

Fitness to rule, moreover, is not to be determined on

the basis of temporal power, but rather on qualities that ensure proper decision making capabilities and stable health to sustain the stresses accompanying the performing of such duties. The Quran clarifies this point by stating:

And their prophet said to them: Surely Allah has raised Saul to be a king over you. They said: How can he hold kingship over us while we have a greater right to kingship than he, and he has not been granted abundance of wealth. He said: Surely Allah has chosen him in preference to you, and He has increased him abundantly in *knowledge and physique* (2:247).

The mental and physical capabilities of administering the political duties in the best interests of the people is what is to be required of a leader. Additionally, Islam also requires the vesting of state authority in the hands of persons who are God-fearing. The head of State in Islam is called both an *Amir* (literally, one who commands) and an *Imam* (literally, a person on a high moral plane whose example is to be followed). The practice of the head of State leading the Muslims in prayer was performed by *Hazrat Abu Bakr* and continued with a long line of successors. Thus, the quality of righteousness, which entails fear of God and regard for other people’s rights, is a requisite qualification for fitness to rule in Islam. It had been recognized that only through spiritual force can man be enabled to control the powers which temporal authority gives him, and which in the absence of such a force are often in danger of being abused. This is not to suggest that the Islamic state is to be a theocracy. The head of the Muslim state does not consider himself a representative of God on earth, but rather a representative of the people who was chosen to serve them; an acute responsibility to God for every act that he did in the exercise of his authority, though, is not denied.

Limits on Governmental Action and Rule of Law

Once a person is democratically elected to be the leader of a people it is the people’s responsibility, according to Islam, to respect decisions of the leader and the laws of the state. Mere dissatisfaction of the majority choice of leader is no justification for rebellion. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: “Hear and obey though a Negro slave is appointed to rule over you” (Bukhari 10:54). However, it must be understood that the authority granted to the elected leader is limited; all actions must be consistent with the principles set forth in the supreme law of the land, the Holy Quran. The Quran sets forth this hierarchy of authority in clear terms:

Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you, then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger (4:58).

The supreme source of law is the Quran, which is signified by the phrase “obey Allah”. “Obeying the Messenger” refers to following the “*sunnah*” (the practices of the Holy Prophet which enable one to interpret the principles in the Quran) and is second in priority as to sources of authority. “Obedience to those in authority” is also a requirement, deemed necessary, but is conditioned upon a leader’s actions not violating the laws of Allah and the Messenger. This system of authority creates what is today accepted as a “constitutional democracy”, where governmental power is kept in check by reference to a supreme law outlining the rights of the people. This constitutional position of the head of State was explained by Hazrat Abu Bakr in his very first address after being elected *khalifa* (i.e. successor to the Holy Prophet); he said:

You have elected me as Khalifa (successor to the Holy Prophet as temporal head of the state), but I claim no superiority over you. The strongest among you shall be the weakest with me until I get the rights of others from him, and the weakest among you shall be the strongest with me until I get all his rights ... Help me if I act rightly and correct me if I take a wrong course ... Obey me so long as I obey God and His Messenger. In case I disobey God and His Messenger, I have no right to obedience from you.

Significantly, the head of State in Islam is also accountable for his actions in his private capacity; no leader is to be above the law. The enforcement of the “rule of law” is guaranteed to the people and the maxim “the king can do no wrong” is foreign to the Islamic system of government. A leader is to be a servant of the state who is paid a fixed salary for maintenance out of the public treasury, like all other public servants. He has no special privileges and can even be deposed for questionable conduct. Even the great *Hazrat Umar*, ruler of four kingdoms, appeared as a defendant in the court of a magistrate upon the complaint of a private citizen. The early Muslims understood the necessity of holding leaders to account, for it was the Holy Prophet himself who taught that to speak out the truth in the presence of an unjust ruler is “the most excellent *jihad*” (Msh. 17). Such a practical form of responsible government is, truly, yet to be seen in the modern world.

Minority Rights

As indicated earlier while defining the term *democracy*, along with majority rule must come the safeguards of minority rights for a system to be democratic. A state is not democratic, for example, if a simple majority of 51% of the people wishes to infringe upon the rights of the minority. To establish such safeguards, four essential principals must be implemented: 1) it must be established that all

people are equal before the law, 2) basic human rights must be guaranteed, 3) the administration of justice must be based on due process, and 4) an independent judiciary must be instituted. Again, all four components are entrenched principles of Islam.

Equality before the Law and Human Rights

The Holy Quran is clear as to the equal status of humans in relation to one another as well as to the civil rights each individual is to enjoy. These two aspects of minority rights will be dealt with in the lecture on *Human Rights in Islam* later in the program. I will, therefore, limit my discussion to the remaining two aspects, the due process of law and the independence of the judiciary.

Due Process of Law

The concept of due process of law is based upon general notions of fairness and justice. Specifically, it requires that a person who may be affected by the decision of a judicial tribunal be afforded a fair process of adjudication and an opportunity to present a proper defense.

The Islamic system of justice ensures that a defendant will receive a fair trial by establishing certain principles that must be present in the adjudicative process. The Quran stresses that a plaintiff (or the State in a criminal action) must “prove” his or her case, as is revealed by the repeated phrase: “Bring your proof if you are truthful” (27:64). Thus, a judgment may not be given by a decision-maker arbitrarily but must be proved, based upon the evidence presented. Similarly, the Quran provides: “Inform me of knowledge if you are truthful” (6:143). Here, aside from the procedural aspect of requiring evidence to be offered, the necessity of establishing the substantive elements of a claim is implied by the call for producing “knowledge” as to why one should succeed in their claim.

Furthermore, witness testimony in Islam is limited to those facts which one has first-hand knowledge of; opinion evidence is deemed unreliable. The Quran emphasizes this in the following words: “and we bear witness to only what we know, and we could not keep watch over the unseen” (12:81). More specifically, those who do not have first hand knowledge but who merely “make conjectures” are not appropriate witnesses, for the Quran states: “contend not in their matter but with an outward contention, and question not any of them concerning them” (18:22). The rules of admissibility of evidence in Islam clearly provide a defendant with a system in which only reliable evidence may be used against him or her.

Moreover, the judicial process in Islam is to be one based on transparency. The legitimacy of the system is ensured by demanding full disclosure of all evidence. The

Quran states: “and conceal not testimony; and whoever conceals it, his heart is surely sinful” (2:283). Accordingly, a defendant has the right to an open forum in which he has the opportunity to examine the evidence against him and, consequently, become aware of the case he has to meet.

Along with the procedural regulations ensuring a fair trial, a defendant must also be afforded the right to put forth a proper defense in order for due process of law to be satisfied. An Islamic system of justice provides for this in two ways. First, the Quran prescribes the calling of defense witnesses to rebut the evidence introduced against a defendant. The reliability of the plaintiff’s (or prosecution’s) evidence is tested by having it compared to testimony that is opposed to the plaintiff (or prosecution) and that favors the defendant. The Quran provides for this in the following verse:

If it be discovered that they (ie. plaintiff’s or prosecution’s witnesses) are guilty of a sin (ie. providing untrustworthy testimony), *two others shall stand up in their place from among those against whom the first two have been guilty of a sin*; so they shall swear by Allah: Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then surely we should be unjust (5:107).

The second way in which Islam allows a defendant to put forth a proper defense is by authorizing a defendant to cross-examine the plaintiff’s (or prosecution’s) witnesses. This process allows the decision-maker to assess the credibility of the witness who is offering testimony against the defendant. The Quran provides for this by stating: “Their evidence (i.e. witnesses’ testimony) will be recorded and they will be questioned” (43:19). Therefore, not only is a defendant entitled to substantiate their position by providing their own witnesses in their defense, but a defendant is also granted the right to have the testimony of the opposing party’s witnesses preserved so that they can be questioned regarding its validity.

Independence of the Judiciary

Minority rights are also protected in an Islamic democracy through the establishment of an independent judiciary. The formation of an objective forum in which grievances may be brought is an integral part to realizing the rights of those who are most vulnerable in society. Islam ensures the correct implementation of this safeguard in several ways.

The judiciary, or any other body that is granted decision-making authority, is to be an autonomous institution, separated from the influences of the parties involved. The Quran states: “...nor seek to gain access thereby to the judges” (2:188). Restricting associations between involved

parties and the judiciary preserves fairness of decisions by securing the process from conflicts of interests.

The judiciary is also to be a neutral institution, as the Quran states: “judge between men justly and follow not desire, lest it lead thee astray from the path of Allah” (38:26). All men are to some degree biased, whether consciously or unconsciously, having pre-conceived opinions on certain matters. Accepting that this is a natural phenomenon, the Quran warns judges to be aware of it when carrying out their duties, and to examine their determinations making sure it is not based on a personal inclination that may create an unfair or unwarranted decision. The natural desire to make someone accountable for the harm or loss caused to an innocent victim should not interfere with the legal and equitable protections guaranteed to each defendant nor the principles of fairness and justice that the process itself is to be based upon.

Likewise, prejudices of others is to be set aside when administering justice, the parties involved being regarded as equals, regardless of how distasteful they may appear to the decision-maker. The Quran states: “let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably” (5:8). The judiciary is to be impartial in the course of their business notwithstanding their personal dislike for what a party in a case may represent. One’s race, religion, color, social status, sexual orientation, prior conduct, for example, is not to detract from the merits of a case. A judge is to be blind to any unfavorable personal characteristics of a party, seeking only to bring about a just resolution to the dispute at hand.

Major Obstacle: Misunderstanding the Role of “Ijtihad”

Seeing the consistency between the ideals of democracy and the principles of governance prescribed in Islam, an obvious question arises: why does such reluctance exist on the part of the Muslim world to implement democratic systems in their countries? The major obstacle in the way of support for democracy appears to have a theological basis; it is argued by some Muslims that democracies are systems in which laws are based on human whim whereas Islam is transcendental and its principles cannot be undermined by the will of the people. This contention, however, is unwarranted, for the exercise of judgment (or *ijtihad*) by the people (or their elected representatives) is a fundamental source of law in Islam along with the Quran and the Sunnah. Islam does recognize the Quran and Sunnah as a source of authority higher than reason but at the same time expects exercise of judgment to be used to meet the always-arising new circumstances of life. This is comparable to the authority granted to the legislature in a constitutional democracy: reason is employed in creating law, but the law’s validity is conditional upon its consistency with the supreme law of the land, the constitution.

The Quran acknowledges the importance of the principle of exercise of judgment in the following verse:

But if any news of security or fear comes to them, they spread it abroad. And if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those of them who can *search out the knowledge* of it would have known it” (4:83).

The point being that it is necessary to *reason* in order to reach an informed decision about a matter. The Holy Prophet’s approval of one’s exercise of judgment in novel situations is illustrated in a tradition in which the Governor of Yaman, upon his appointment, was asked by the Holy Prophet as to the rule by which he would abide. He replied: “by the law of the Quran”. The Holy Prophet then questioned what he would do if he did not find any direction therein. He then replied: “then I will act according to the Sunnah”. The Holy Prophet further enquired as to what he would do if he did not find any direction therein either. He responded: “then I will exercise my judgment and act on that”. The Holy Prophet, pleased by the Governor’s answers raised his hands and said: “Praise be to Allah, Who guides the messenger of His Apostle as He pleases” (AD. 23:11).

The four great Jurists of Islam, *Imam* Abu Hanifah, *Imam* Malik, *Imam* Shafi, and *Imam* Ahmad, have further demonstrated the use of various methods of exercising judgment. The most important of these is “*qiyas*” (or analogical reasoning). When no explicit direction is found in the Quran or Sunnah, one is to find a case resembling it in the Quran or Sunnah and by reasoning on the basis of analogy arrive at a decision. When a deduction based on analogy is not acceptable, either because it will result in inequity to one or both parties or because it is not in the interest of the public good, one may use “*istihsan*” (or formulating an equitable result) by adopting a rule that is in consonance with the broader rules of justice and “*istislah*” (or deduction based on public good) by creating a rule conducive to the general societal goals. There is also the method of “*istidlal*” (or applying inferences from customs and usages) that may be employed. It was accepted that the customs and usages that prevailed before the advent of Islam, and which were not abrogated by Islam, had the force of law. Thus, customs and usages prevailing anywhere, and particularly to specific types of transactions, when not opposed to the spirit of the Quran and Sunnah, are permissible regulations. These four methods of exercising judgment clearly lay the basis for the creation of laws by a legislative entity, the only condition being that such laws conform to the principles of the Quran and the Sunnah.

The prime illustration of the legislative authority granted to Muslims is the formation of the *Constitution of Medina*. This compact, created in 622 C.E., was the first

written constitution of a State ever promulgated by a sovereign in human history! It stipulated a city-state in Medina, it acknowledged the various parties bound by the treaty, it granted equal rights to the participating parties and outlined societal rules of conduct that would ensure social welfare and designated one political leader to govern the community. Accepting that all governance and administrative decisions shall be judged according to a supreme law, the Quran, the treaty recognized the prevailing customs of the participating groups that did not conflict with the broad, equitable principles of Islamic law. The most significant aspect of the Constitution of Medina is the fact that it was an agreement catered to cover the needs of all participating parties in the community (namely, the immigrant Muslims from Mecca, the indigenous Muslims from Medina and the Arab Jews of Medina). The rights, conditions and leadership stipulated therein were all consented to by the party signatories. Consensual, participatory governance, despite the admission of ultimate authority resting in the word of God, was central to this historic, democratic, governing document.

Conclusion

The principles from the Quran, the lessons from the Sunnah and the facts evidenced from the early history of Islam show that democracy is not only compatible with Islam, it is essential to the formation of an Islamic state. The acceptance of democracy by Muslim countries, therefore, should not be viewed as the westernization or modernization of such states, but rather as the implementation of an Islamic form of governance. Muslims need to acknowledge this fact and apply pressure on the political leaders of so-called “Islamic states” to conform to the democratic ideals expected from adherence to the religion of Islam. Democratic entities in the west striving for democracy to flourish in the Muslim world need to support those organizations that exhibit democratic principles in their practices. What must be remembered, though, is that this does not amount to the allying only with “secular” groups, but rather bodies that reject autocratic forms of government based on an Islamic standpoint. For, any other initiative will fail, being viewed by the people as an attack on their religious identity, and therefore, its implementation, against the will of the people, will be a prime example of what the foundations of democracy are *not* to be. Islam, therefore, is not the problem; Islam is rather the solution to the creation of democratic governance in the Muslim world. Ironically, the success or failure of democracy spreading in the Muslim World is dependant upon the willingness of Islamic states accepting the authentic, entrenched principles of Islam. ■

Ten Misrepresented Quotations from the Writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Clarified

By Dr. Zahid Aziz

[This article comprises explanations to ten quotations from Hazrat Mirza's writings, repeatedly employed by his critics in an attempt to establish that he held objectionable, un-Islamic beliefs. Unfortunately, as with a critique of any writing, when these quotations are presented out of context or without the appropriate background knowledge of the subject being discussed, the criticisms appear quite valid. It is clear, however, that those critics today presenting these references have not retrieved them from their original source, whereby the context of the writings or a basic understanding of the underlying subject matter itself reveals the absurdness of the criticism presented. This article provides the lacking context and deficient subject matter background from the original sources required to interpret the ten common quotations presented by objectors of Hazrat Mirza.]

1. Jesus lacking certain powers

The first quote is presented as follows:

And just as thousands of worms are born automatically in the rainy season, and Hazrat Adam (as) was also born without mother and father, this birth of Hazrat Isa does not prove his greatness. Rather birth without having a father is an argument on deprivation of certain powers. (*Chashma Masihi; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 20, p. 356)

It is not clear exactly what is objectionable about this statement. One can only assume that as the anti-Ahmadiyya Muslims believe Jesus to be alive in heaven without eating, drinking or aging for 2000 years, they object to the statement that Jesus as a human mortal could have lacked some physical powers. They tell a baseless story about our Holy Prophet Muhammad that, as a mortal human being, he fell under a magic spell cast upon him by an opponent of Islam but they cannot tolerate any statement that places Jesus in the category of human mortals.

To explain this quotation, which occurs in the short book *Chashma Masihi*, it is necessary to understand why Hazrat Mirza wrote this book. A Muslim wrote a letter to Hazrat Mirza saying that he had read an anti-Islamic book *Yanabiul Islam* by a Christian priest and it had made him start to doubt the truth of Islam. So Hazrat Mirza, in reply, published *Chashma Masihi* in which he exposes the hollowness of the arguments of the Christian book and advises the worried Muslim that he need not be influenced by the

Christian criticism of Islam. It may be noted that *Yanabiul Islam* was written in Persian by a Christian missionary in Iran, the Rev. St. Clair-Tisdall, and was translated into English by Sir William Muir, a well-known hostile critic of Islam, under the title *The Sources of Islam*. Muir recommended that this book should also be translated into Urdu and Arabic and made accessible to Muslims everywhere. According to Muir this book proves “with marvellous power and erudition” that much of the Quran “can be traced to human sources existing daily around the Prophet”, and thereby “Islam falls to the ground”. He also adds:

Hitherto much labour has been spent in showing the **falsity and errors of Islam**, as has been ably done by Pfander and others. It has remained for our author ... **to prove its sources to be of purely human origin**; and that in so masterly and effective a way that it seems impossible for good Moslems to resist the conclusion drawn. And for all this the thanks of the Christian world are eminently due to the Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall. (Preface; bolding is ours).

This background shows what kind of anti-Islamic book Hazrat Mirza was refuting, which had even made Muslims start doubting the truth of Islam. How low have the present-day anti-Ahmadiyya propagandists stooped, that they ignore and suppress the fact that he was defending Islam against such hostile criticism, and pick out a line from his book to attack the very man who is fighting for the cause of Islam! Even supposing that his quoted statement were objectionable, shouldn't they at least acknowledge that he wrote the book to defend Islam against the vile allegation that the Holy Prophet Muhammad picked up knowledge from human sources around him and falsely claimed it to be revelation?

If we examine the context in which Hazrat Mirza wrote the above statement about Jesus, we find he was answering the charge that in the Quran Mary is mistakenly called the sister of Aaron and this human error proves that the Quran is of the Holy Prophet's own making. Within his reply he adds that these objectors “do not look at their own house and see how the Gospels are the target of so many objections”, and then mentions examples of objections to the Gospel account of the marriage of Mary with Joseph. Now he is putting forward these objections as not necessarily his own beliefs but as objections that an objector could justifiably raise, which the Christian missionaries must answer. On the next page, again answering the charge that the Holy Prophet copied material from earlier scriptures, he writes:

If these objections can be raised against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, even more objections can be raised against Jesus who learnt the Torah, lesson by lesson, from an Israelite scholar and had studied all the books of the Jews, and whose Gospel is so full of material from the (Jewish) Bible and Talmud that we only

believe in it because of the command of the Holy Quran.

It is clear he is saying that an objector could raise similar objections against Jesus that the Christians are raising against the Holy Prophet. Therefore his statement, “Rather birth without having a father is an argument on deprivation of certain powers”, may be in the same sense, that it is an objection that a critic may raise which Christians must answer, not that the objection is a part of our beliefs.

2. Being praised by God

The second allegation is as follows:

It will be an unforgiving impudence if someone claims that Allah does *Hamd* for him. The only man to have claimed *Hamd* from Allah is none other than Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. (*Haqiqat-ul-Wahi; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 22, p. 81).

The extract referred to is a revelation of Hazrat Mirza which reads: “Allah praises you”. It is not a statement by him. Some of the other quotes put forward by our critic are also revelations of Hazrat Mirza. Therefore we should make clear that his revelations must always be interpreted to conform to the Holy Quran and the principles of Islam, as he himself did. It is entirely wrong to give them meanings that are opposed to the teachings of Islam. He wrote as follows:

It is the most appropriate and the primary principle that non-Quranic sources must be put to the judgement of the Quran, whether it is a hadith of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*, the vision of a holy man (*wali*) or the revelation of a saint (*qutb*). (*Hamamat-ul-Bushra; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 7, p. 216).

I do not verify any revelation of mine until I have put it to the judgement of the Book of God. Know that whatever is contrary to the Quran is false, heresy and ungodly. (*ibid.*, p. 297).

The revelation of the true inspired ones cannot go against the Quran. Whatever I have been made to understand (by God) about the teachings of the Quran and whatever has been revealed to me by God, I have accepted it on condition of correctness and authenticity. It has been disclosed to me that it is correct, pure, and in accordance with the Shariah. ... If supposing there was something (i.e. some revelation) which was against it (i.e. against the teachings of Islam), we would ourselves throw all of it away like trash. (*A'inah Kamalat Islam; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 5, p. 21).

I myself admit that if my claim of being Promised Messiah is against the clear texts of the Quran and Hadith ... then even if my claim is supported by thousands of my revelations, and I show not just one but millions of signs in support of it, still all of these are worthless because no affair and no claim and no

sign can be accepted if it is opposed to the Quran and authentic Hadith. (*Majma' Ishtiharat*, v. 1, p. 242).

Even certain statements in the Quran can be misunderstood if they are not interpreted in conformity with the more fundamental passages (for example, this is how the words of the Quran “whatever *ayat* We abrogate or cause to be forgotten” in 2:106 are misunderstood as referring to the abrogation of verses contained in the Quran itself).

Therefore the above revelation of Hazrat Mirza cannot be taken to mean that “Allah does *Hamd* for him” in the manner in which humans are required to praise Allah. According to classical Arabic dictionaries, *hamd* means to praise, commend, speak well of, or approve of, someone or something. It tells us in the Holy Quran that the Holy Prophet Muhammad will be raised by Allah to the rank of *mahmud* (*maqam-an mahmud-an*, 17:79) because of his prayers, and in fact the same can apply to any believer. *Mahmud* means one for whom *hamd* is done. Commentaries of the Quran on this verse say that when, at the Day of Judgment, the Holy Prophet is established on the rank of *mahmud* then all people will praise him and Allah will also praise him. A human being can therefore have *hamd* or praise done for him. The name of the Holy Prophet, *Muhammad*, means not just a man for whom *hamd* is done but a man for whom *hamd* is done *very greatly*.

Dictionaries and commentaries of the Quran also tell us that an act similar to *hamd* is *shukr* which means to thank, praise and commend someone for some benefit received from them. (For the close relationship between the meaning of *hamd* and *shukr*, please see the following webpages for example:

<http://www.bogvaerker.dk/Bookwright/hamd.html>
<http://www.ahya.org/books/fatihah/sf05.html>

While the Quran, of course, requires people to thank Allah or do *shukr* of Allah, it also mentions Allah as *shakir* or the One who does *shukr* or the act of thanking (2:158; 4:147). The Quran mentions man as *mashkur* or one who is thanked for his efforts (17:19; 76:22). When the expression literally meaning that “Allah thanks people” is used, it is taken to mean that He rewards them. There is an expression in Arabic *shakarallahu sa'ya-hu*, meaning literally “Allah thanked him for his efforts”, and is understood to mean that Allah rewarded and blessed that person’s efforts. This expression has also been quoted by Hazrat Mirza as occurring in his revelation. Obviously it would be the height of misrepresentation if our opponents translated it literally when it occurs in his revelation and then complained that “Mirza says Allah thanks him”, when it actually bears a different, proverbial meaning.

There is a hadith in Bukhari in which the Holy Prophet related that when a man gave water to a thirsty dog as a good deed “Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him”. The translation “Allah thanked him” is the one given

by Muhsin Khan in his English translation of Bukhari (see Volume 3, Book 43, Number 646 in his translation). The words for it in Arabic are: *Shakar-allahu la-hu*.

According to the second of the webpages cited above, *hamd* also carries the meaning of *rida* or pleasure, so that the one doing the *hamd* is pleased with the one whom he is praising. According to the Quran, being pleased or *rida* applies both ways between the righteous people and Allah: “Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him” — *radiy-allahu ‘an-hum wa radu ‘an-hu* (9:100; 58:22). So Allah “praising someone” is equivalent to Allah being well pleased with him.

3. Moon and Sun

The following extract has been presented by our critic:

You (i.e. MGA) are moon and I (i.e. God) am sun.
And you are sun and I am moon. You are my ‘noor’.
I have come down for you. (*Tajilliyat-e-Ilahiyah*;
Ruhani Khaza’in, v. 20, p. 397).

The meaning of this revelation has been explained in the same place by Hazrat Mirza as follows:

In this revelation the first time God has called me ‘moon’ and Himself as ‘sun’. This means that just as the source of the light of the moon is the sun, in the same way the source of my light is God. The second time God has called Himself as the ‘moon’ and called me as the ‘sun’. This means that He will manifest His glorious light through me. He was hidden. Now He will be manifested through me. The world was not aware of His brightness but now His brightness will spread everywhere in the world through me.

The first symbolism mentioned here (God as ‘sun’, man as ‘moon’) is indicated in the Quran in the verses: “By the sun and his brightness, and the moon when she borrows light from him” (91:1-2). As to ‘sun’ being the man sent by God, this is indicated when the Quran speaks of the Holy Prophet as: “an inviter to Allah ... and as a light-giving sun” (33:46) and says: “A Book We have revealed to you that you may bring forth people from darkness into light” (14:1).

Hazrat Mirza explains the same revelation elsewhere as follows:

The fact is that as regards those persons who have a connection of personal love with God, He sometimes uses such expressions about them in a metaphorical sense, from which the foolish people want to prove their Divinity. There are more such expressions about me than even about Jesus, as Allah said addressing me: ‘O moon, O sun, you are from Me and I am from you’. Now a person may misconstrue these words in some other direction but the true meaning is that first God made me ‘moon’ because like the moon I came from that Real Sun, and then He became ‘moon’

because the glory of His light was manifested through me and will do so in the future. (*Chashma Masihi*; *Ruhani Khaza’in*, v. 20, p. 375-376).

Foolish are they, he says, who infer a claim to Divinity from such expressions.

4. “My destination and with Me”

A revelation is quoted in which God addresses him as follows: “You are My destination (*murad*) and you are with Me” (*Ruhani Khaza’in*, v. 22, p. 82).

The first part is also found in the writings of the highly renowned and popular saint Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind (d. 1624), who is famed throughout the Indian subcontinent by the name of *Mujaddid Alif Sani* or mujaddid of the second millenium of Islam and who lived under the reigns of the Moghul emperors Akbar and Jehangir. He wrote:

I am the disciple (*murid*) of God and also His intention (*murad*). My devotion to God is linked directly to Him without any intermediary. My hand is the representative of God’s hand. Glory be to Him! So I am the disciple of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as well as his spiritual brother. (*Maktubat*, Daftar III, letter no. 87, p. 209).

So our critics would also have to denounce Mujaddid Alif Sani as a claimant to being God if they wish to condemn Hazrat Mirza in this way. The expression *murad* of God simply means he has been raised to fulfil the mission of God or what God intends.

As to the words “you are with Me” (*anta ma’y*), Allah throughout the Quran tells us that He is with the righteous of one kind or another. For example, “Allah is with (*ma’*) the believers” (8:19), Allah is with (*ma’*) the patient (2:153), Allah is surely with (*ma’*) the doers of good (29:69), “Allah is with (*ma’*) those who keep their duty” (2:194), and Moses said: “surely my Lord is with me (*ma’iya*)” (26:62). If Allah is with such righteous persons, then conversely they are with Allah, and Allah can say of such a man: “you are with Me”. It may be objected that the meaning of Allah being with the believers is that He assists and helps them, but to say that someone is with Allah implies that that man is assisting and helping Allah, which Allah does not need from any human being. However, in the Quran Allah commands the Muslims to be His helpers: “O you who believe, be helpers of Allah (*ansarullah*)” (61:14). Obviously, the words *helpers of Allah* mean helpers in His cause. Are these helpers not *with Allah*?

We may quote here a most famous, often-quoted verse of poetry by Dr Allama Iqbal which, according to recent news, is on display on a mural at the new Lahore airport in Pakistan. It runs:

*Khudi ko kar buland itna ke har taqdeer se pehley,
Khuda bande se khud poochhe: bata teri raza kya hai?*

— Elevate yourself so high that God, before issuing every decree of destiny, should ask His servant: Tell me, what would you like?

Would our critic denounce this statement as being totally the opposite of the teaching of Islam that it is God Who decides upon the decrees of destiny as He likes and man's role is to accept without question whatever is decreed for him by God?

5. Seeing himself as God in vision

Our critic then gives two quotes from *Kitab-ul-Bariyya*, from which we give the essential part below:

“I saw in one of my visions that I myself am God and believed that I am Him ... in this condition I was saying that we want a new system and new heaven and new earth. Thus initially I created heaven and earth Then I said that now we will create human from the extract of earth.” (*Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 13, p. 103-105)

If the critic had actually read these pages he would have discovered that Hazrat Mirza is publishing these revelations in order to show that such a person does *not* claim to be God. He is responding to the Christian belief that certain statements of Jesus in the Gospels prove that he was claiming to be God, and in this connection he writes in the above very pages:

It should also be remembered that these ideas were not contained in the teachings of Jesus, and his teachings did not add anything to the Torah. He had said very plainly that he was a human being. True, just as the chosen ones of God receive titles of honour, nearness and love from the Exalted God, or just as those people themselves while absorbed in Divine love, utter words of love and union [with God], similar was his case. What doubt is there that, whether someone loves a human being or God, when that love reaches perfection, the lover definitely feels that his soul and that of the beloved have become one. At the stage of spiritual annihilation, many a time he sees himself as one with the beloved. As, for example, the Exalted God addressing my humble self in His revelations says: ...

Then after quoting many of his own revelations at length, he draws this conclusion:

Is it not true that if someone's Divinity can be inferred from such revelations and statements then from these revelations of mine my Divinity — I seek refuge with God — will be better established than that of Jesus? And more than that of anyone, the Divinity of our leader and master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad can be established. For, his revelation does not only contain the verse “those who swear allegiance to thee do but swear allegiance to Allah”, and not only that the Exalted God has called the Holy

Prophet's hand as God's own hand, and has declared each of his actions as God's own action, and by saying “Nor does he speak out of desire, it is naught but revelation that is revealed” He has declared all his words to be God's own words, but at one place He has called all the people his (the Holy Prophet's) servants, as He has said: “(O Prophet) say (to people): O my servants”. Hence it is obvious that the Divinity of our Prophet can be established so plainly and clearly from these sacred words that the Divinity of Jesus cannot possibly be established to the same degree from the statements in the Gospels. Let alone this chief of the two worlds, the Holy Prophet, whose status is so great, the Christian clergymen should consider with justice even these revelations of mine, and then be judges themselves and decide whether it is not true that if such statements can establish Divinity then my revelations are a much stronger testimony to my Divinity than those of Jesus are to his Divinity.

His whole argument is that such revelations do not establish the recipient's Divinity but rather his spiritual annihilation in his beloved God, and if there is anyone above all whose revelations can prove him to be God then it is the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Elsewhere he writes the following explanation:

Once in a vision I saw that I created a new earth and a new heaven and then I said, let us now create man. At this the foolish Maulvis raised a storm that look, he has now claimed to be God, but this vision meant that God would produce such a transformation at my hands that it would be as if the heaven and the earth had become new, and real humans would come into existence. (*Chashma-i Masihi; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 20, p. 375-376).

In another place where he quotes similar revelations of his, he explains in a footnote:

It must be remembered that God the Most High is clear of having any sons. No one is His partner and no one is His son. No one has the right to say ‘I am God’ or ‘I am the son of God’. These words here are metaphorical and figurative. In the Holy Quran God has declared the hand of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as His own hand and said: ‘It is the hand of Allah that is above their hands’ (48:10). Similarly, instead of ‘Say, O servants of Allah’, He revealed: ‘Say, O My servants’ (39:10), and also said: ‘Remember Allah as you remember your forefathers’ (2:200). So you must read the word of God with intelligence and caution, and accept these as allegorical matters, and don't try to determine their exact nature. Leave the actual nature to God and believe that God is clear of taking anyone as son although much is found in his revelation as allegory. Save yourself from following the allegorical matters and being destroyed thereby. Among the revelations about me which are in

clear words there is this one which is recorded in *Barahin Ahmadiyya*: ‘Say, I am a mortal like you. It is revealed to me that your God is only One God, and all good lies in the Quran’. (*Dafi’ul-Bala; Ruhani Khaza’in*, v. 18, p. 227, footnote).

He is referring in all these extracts to the concept of *fana fillah* which is a recognised doctrine among the great *auliya* of Islam. This concept is indicated in the Quran, for example in the verse: “(we take) the colour of Allah, and who is better in colour than Allah” (2:138). By taking the colour of Allah a man can reach the stage of being *fana fillah*. Perhaps our critics would like to answer whether they consider this verse as teaching that Allah is of a particular physical colour, which man can take on from Him as well!

This concept is also referred to in Hadith. For example, one report reads:

The Messenger of Allah said, Allah says: ... My servant keeps on coming closer to Me through performing *nawafil* (extra good deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him. When I love a man, I am the Hearing with which he hears, I am the Sight with which he sees, I am the Hands with which he holds, and I am the Feet with which he walks. (*Sahih Bukhari*, 81:38. In Muhsin Khan’s translation this hadith is at Volume 8, Book 76, Number 509).

Here the senses and limbs of a beloved of Allah are said to act as if they were Allah’s own. This report goes on to record that Allah says:

I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death, and I hate to disappoint him.

Would our critic raise the objection here: How can Allah hesitate to do what He wills, and how can He hate to disappoint a human being?

A well-known hadith in the collection of *Sahih Muslim* runs as follows:

The Messenger of Allah said that Allah will say on the Day of Judgment: ‘O son of Adam, I was sick and you did not visit to ask after Me.’ He will say: ‘O Lord, how could I ask after You when You are the Lord of the Worlds?’ Allah will say: ‘You do not know that such and such servant of Mine was sick and you did not visit him. If you had gone to see how he was, you would have found Me with Him.’

The same exchange is then repeated with Allah saying ‘O son of Adam, I asked you for food, but you did not feed Me’, the man asking ‘how could I have fed You when You are the Lord of the Worlds?’, and Allah replying: ‘Do you not know that such and such a servant of Mine asked you for food but you did not feed him’. This is again repeated with Allah saying ‘O son of Adam, I asked you for water,

but you did not give Me water to drink’, the man asking ‘how could I give You water to drink when You are the Lord of the Worlds?’, and Allah replying: ‘Such and such a servant of Mine asked you for water but you did not give him water to drink’. (*Sahih Muslim*, Book: *Goodness and good treatment and behaviour*, Chapter: *Visiting the sick*).

Here Allah identifies Himself with the sick and the hungry and the thirsty and says that meeting their needs is like meeting Allah’s needs. Would our critic object here that it is highly offensive to describe Allah as falling ill and needing humans to visit Him in his illness, and as being hungry and thirsty and needing people to give Him food and drink?

6. Abu Lahab

The next allegation is as follows:

“Mirza Ghulam Ahmad says that Abu Lahab means a Maulvi from Delhi.” (*Haqiqat-ul-Wahi; Ruhani Khaza’in*, v. 22, p. 84).

Here he is commenting on one of his own revelations, “Abu Lahab’s hands will perish and he will perish”, not on the same words as they occur in the Quran, as he writes in a footnote:

Here by Abu Lahab is meant a Maulvi of Delhi who has now died. This prophecy was made 35 years ago and was published in *Barahin Ahmadiyya*.

When he originally published his revelations in *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, some of which were in the words of the Quran, Maulvi Muhammad Husain Batalvi (later an opponent) commented on this in his lengthy review of this book. He wrote:

By claiming that these verses have been revealed to him, he means that he has been spoken to by God in the same words as were used to address various prophets in the Quran or earlier scriptures. When applied to him, the verses bear a significance different from their original one.

A Muslim saint in north-west India just prior to Hazrat Mirza’s time, by the name of Maulvi Abdullah Ghaznavi, also had many revelations consisting of passages from the Quran which were published in his biography. When someone raised an objection to this, his son Maulvi Abdul Jabbar Ghaznavi (who was an opponent of Hazrat Mirza) replied:

If someone receives a Divine revelation (*ilham*) which is some verse of the Quran addressed particularly to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the recipient of this revelation would take it as referring to himself, and would interpret it in the light of his own circumstances and draw a lesson from it. (*Asbat al-ilham*, pp. 142 – 143).

Thus the revelation to Hazrat Mirza about Abu Lahab refers to his own circumstances. It may be noted that the

Abu Lahab ('father of the flame') of the Holy Prophet's time was called by this epithet because of certain attributes of his, and it was not his personal name. This title can also be applied to someone else for similar reasons, as Hazrat Mirza has done to a Maulvi who fanned the flames of *takfir* against him.

7. Revealed near Qadian

The next allegations states:

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad reveals that it is near Qadian. (*Haqiqat-ul-Wahi; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 22, p. 91).

I assume it is being alleged that he is saying that the Quran was revealed near Qadian! The critic's reference is to the revelation: "Surely We have revealed it near Qadian. With truth We revealed it and with truth it has come. Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth and the will of Allah was fulfilled". Hazrat Mirza has elsewhere elaborated this revelation as follows:

It shows that God had indicated my advent in Qadian beforehand as a prophecy in the Divine scriptures. (*Izala Auham; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 3, p. 139, footnote).

The revealing mentioned here is not the revelation of the Quran but the coming of Hazrat Mirza with his mission of reform.

8. Called by names of prophets

The next quote presented is the following:

I am Maseeh-e-Zamaan, I am the Kaleem-e-Khuda (i.e. Moses), I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad Mujtaba. (*Tiryag-ul-Qulub*, p. 3; *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 15, p. 134).

Again, this refers to the recognised Islamic concept of *fana fir-rasul* explained by Muslim spiritual writers from ancient to present times. Hazrat Mirza writes:

Of all the leaders of *Tasawwuf* that there have been till the present day, not even one has disagreed with the point that in this religion the path to become the likes of prophets is open, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad has given the glad tidings for spiritual and godly learned persons that 'the Ulama of my nation are like the Israelite Prophets'. The words of Abu Yazid Bustami given below, which are recorded in *Tazkirat al-Auliya* by Farid-ud-Din Attar, and are also found in other reliable works, are on this basis, as he says: 'I am Adam, I am Seth, I am Noah, I am Abraham, I am Moses, I am Jesus, I am Muhammad, peace be upon him and upon all these brothers of his.' ... Similarly, Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani, in his book *Futuh al-Ghaib*, refers to this point, i.e. that man, by leaving his ego and annihilating himself in God, becomes the like, rather the very form, of the prophets. (*Izala Auham; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 3, p. 230-231).

Other examples of classical saints, apart from Abu Yazid Bustami and Abdul Qadir Jilani, who called themselves by names of prophets include Abu Bakr Shibli, Jalal-ud-Din Rumi and Muin-ud-Din Chishti. Among modern religious scholars we may give the following examples.

1. Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan of Deoband wrote a long poem in eulogy of his two spiritual guides, Maulvi Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d. 1905) and Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotavi (d. 1880), who founded the Deoband school in 1867. In it he says:

Qasim the good and Rashid Ahmad, both possessors of glory, the two of them were the Messiah of the age and Joseph of Canaan. ... I say that the two of them were like Moses and Amran. To be in their company and to serve them was, for the dead hearts, nothing less than (the dead) being commanded by Jesus to 'Arise'. (*Kuliyat Shaikh al-Hind*, pp. 14 – 17).

2. The famous Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, in his magazine *Al-Imdad*, published a letter from a disciple explaining a disturbing problem as follows:

I see in a dream that while reciting the *Kalima*, '*La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur Rasul-ullah*', I am using your name instead of saying *Muhammad-ur Rasul-ullah*. Thinking that I am wrong, I repeat the *Kalima*, but despite wishing in my heart to say it correctly, my tongue involuntarily says Ashraf Ali instead of the Holy Prophet's name. ... When I wake up and remember my mistake in the *Kalima*, ... to make amends for the mistake I send blessings upon the Holy Prophet. However, I am still saying: '*Allahumma salli ala sayyidi-na wa nabiyi-na wa maulana Ashraf Ali*' even though I am awake and not dreaming. But I am helpless, and my tongue is not in my control.

Maulana Ashraf Ali responded by giving the following explanation of this incident:

In this incident, it was intended to satisfy you that the one to whom you turn for spiritual guidance (i.e. Ashraf Ali) is a follower of the Holy Prophet's *Sunna*. (Monthly *Al-Imdad*, issue for the month of *Safar*, 1336 A.H., circa 1918, p. 35).

3. Allama Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal writes in a very well-known poetic verse regarding the perfect believer:

He is *Kalim* (Moses), he is *Masih* (Messiah), he is *Khalil* (Abraham),

He is Muhammad, he is the Book (Quran), he is Gabriel.

An interpreter of Iqbal, Professor Yusuf Salim Chishti, explains these verses as follows:

He (the perfect believer) is the heir to the spiritual qualities of Moses, Jesus, Abraham and Muhammad,

peace be upon them all. In him is manifested the image of the attributes of the prophets. He is potentially a prophet, but not actually a prophet because prophethood has come to an end. (*Sharh Jawa'id Nama*, Ishrat Publishing House, Anarkali, Lahore, 1956, pp. 1198–1199).

9. Holy Prophet's place of refuge

The next quotation is presented as follows:

And God chose such an ignominious place to hide/bury the Holy Prophet that is awfully stinking and dark and cramped and the place of excreta of insects... (*Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 17, p. 205).

There is no text in the original corresponding to "hide/bury". The "bury" has been added by the critic, or by his source, as a fabrication. The purpose of this deliberate fabrication is to create the false impression that Hazrat Mirza is speaking of the burial place of the Holy Prophet, whereas he is talking about the cave of Thaur in which the Holy Prophet hid with Abu Bakr during his *hijra*. What he actually writes here is that this statement is the implication of the beliefs of his Muslim opponents. In the above-quoted words he is expressing the result of the beliefs of our opponents, like for example our critic! I translate below the entire footnote in which this extract occurs:

I have written again and again that this great distinction that is given to Jesus, of going up to heaven alive, staying alive for so long, and then returning, is an insult to our Holy Prophet Muhammad from every aspect and it makes Jesus have such a close connection with God as has no limits. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad did not reach even the age of a hundred years but Jesus is alive even after almost two thousand years. And God chose such an ignominious place to hide the Holy Prophet that is awfully stinking and dark and cramped and the place of excreta of insects but He took Jesus to heaven which is the location of paradise and the vicinity of the residence of angels. Now tell us: to whom did God show more love, to whom did He accord more respect, to whom did He grant a place near to Himself, and to whom did He give the distinction of returning back? (*Tuhfa Golarwiya; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v.17, p. 205).

The underlined words above are expressed by him as the conclusion of the beliefs of his Muslim opponents and as an insult they are offering to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It appears that when his opponents were unable to refute his charge that their belief about Jesus constitutes an insult to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, they extracted this statement and quoted it to make the false and fabricated allegation that he was insulting the Holy Prophet in this way, when in fact what he wrote was: O my opponents, you are insulting the Holy Prophet in this way! This is pure, sheer and blatant fraud committed by our critic or by the sources he is relying upon.

The fact that he is referring here to the cave of Thaur during the *hijra* of the Holy Prophet is clear from his discussion elsewhere of the same point. For example, he wrote in another book about the same Muslim opponents:

...they consider that the negation of murder, denial of killing on the cross, and the word *raf'* prove only that Jesus, having escaped from the hands of the Jews, went to heaven with his physical body. As if, besides heaven, God the Most High could find no place on earth to conceal him. In order to protect our Holy Prophet Muhammad from the hands of the disbelievers, a terrifying cave full of snakes was enough. But enemies of the Messiah would not have left him anywhere on the earth, whatever plan God the Most High may have devised to save him here, so God having become helpless against the Jews — God forbid — was compelled to choose heaven for him! (*Kitab-ul-Bariyya; Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 13, p. 227, footnote).

It is clear from the description of the cave of Thaur in Hadith that it was indeed a terrifying, deadly place, inside which Hazrat Abu Bakr was bitten by a poisonous snake.

10. Seeing himself as God in vision

The last quotation presented is the following:

I saw in my dream that I am Allah and I believed no doubt I am the one who created the heaven." (*A'inah Kamalat Islam*, p. 564).

This point has been fully dealt with under extract number 5 above in connection with another quotation. It may be added that just two pages after the extract cited above he writes:

We do not interpret this experience according to the meanings in the books of the believers in *wahdat-ul-wujud* nor according to the beliefs of the Hulul. On the contrary, this experience is in accordance with the hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad contained in Bukhari explaining the rank of nearness to God that is attained by His righteous servants. (p. 566).

The doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujud* is that everything is a part of God and the Hulul believe that God can appear in human form. These are the concepts he is rejecting. The hadith he is referring to has been quoted above under point number 5 ("My servant keeps on coming closer to Me through performing *nawafil* till I love him. When I love a man, I am the Hearing with which he hears, I am the Sight with which he sees, I am the Hands with which he holds, and I am the Feet with which he walks.") Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes here that his vision is in accordance with this hadith in Bukhari. ■

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