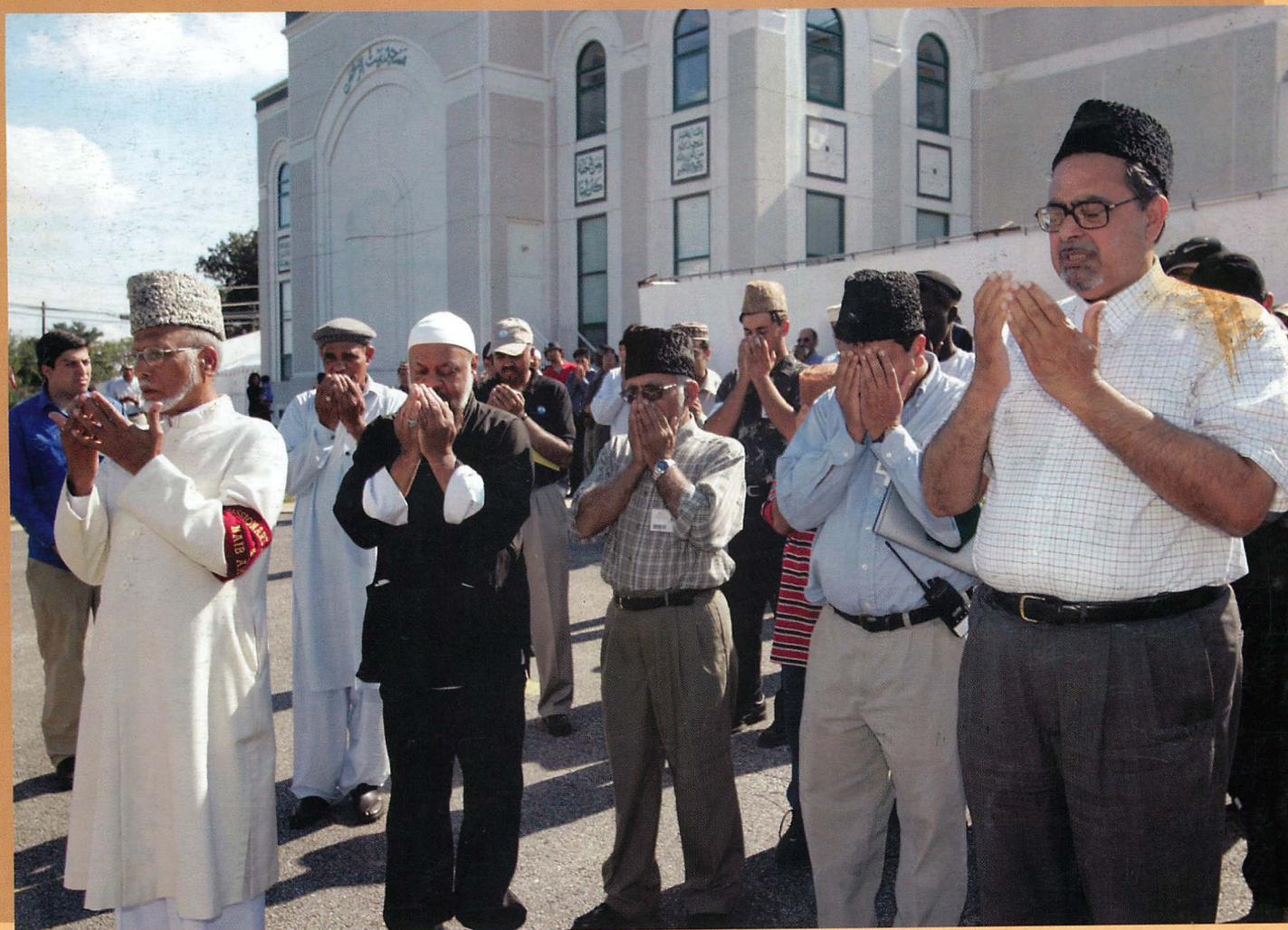


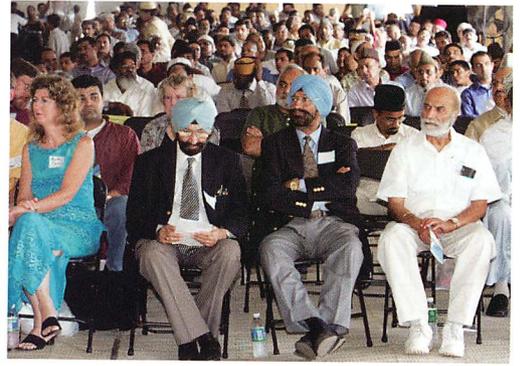
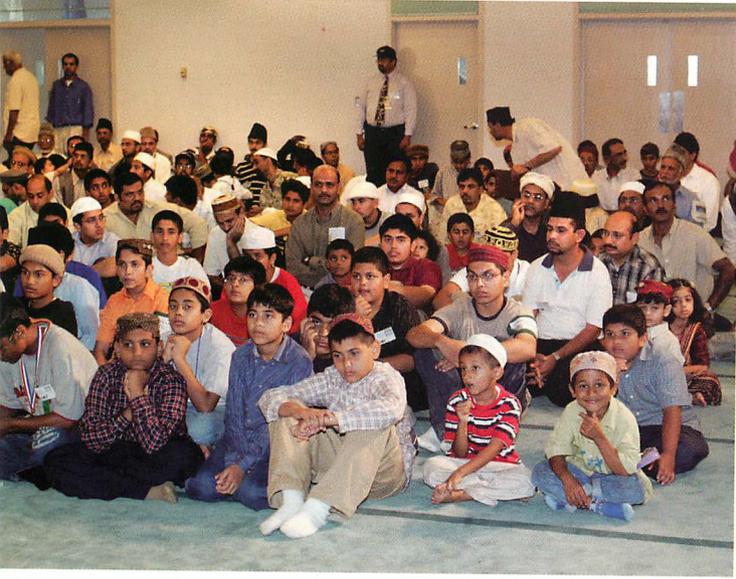
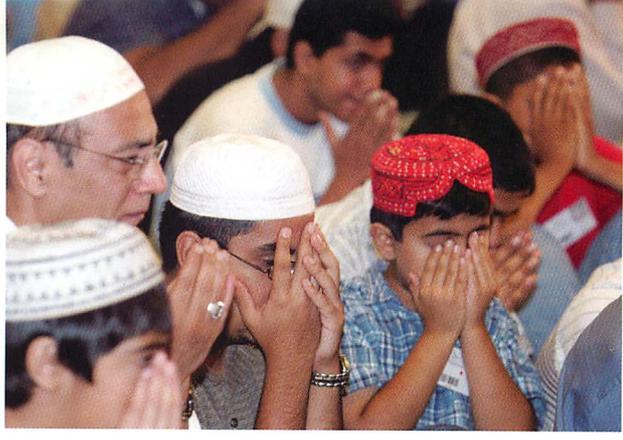
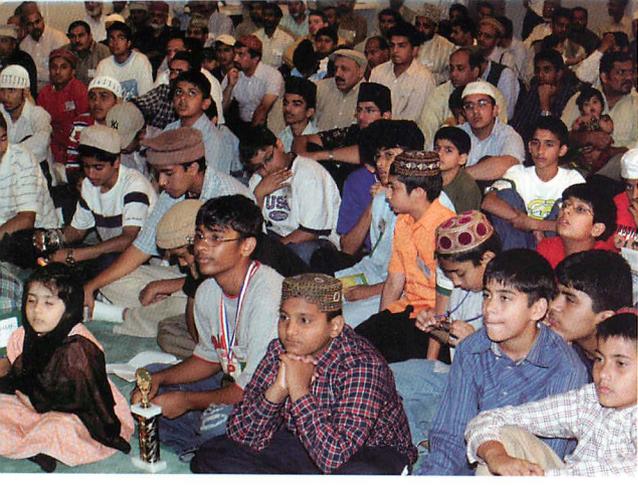
The Ahmadiyya

Gazette

USA



**Silent Prayers after the Flag Hoisting Ceremony
at the Opening of the 56th USA Annual Convention**
September 3, 2004-Baitur-Rahman Mosque, Silver Spring, MD



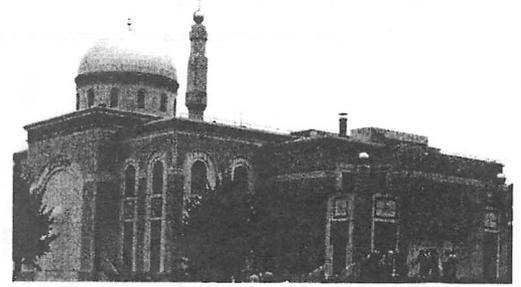
Scenes from 2004-USA Jalsa Salana

An educational and spiritual monthly publication

Ahmadiyya Gazette USA

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MOVEMENT IN ISLAM, USA

November-December 2004



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Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

saw:	sallallahu alaihi wasallam (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him)
as:	alaihissalam (Peace be upon him)
ra:	radi allah hu 'anhu (May Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	rahimahullahu ta'ala (May Allah shower mercy on him/her)
aba:	ayyada hullah ta'ala binasrihil aziz (May Allah strengthen him with His mighty help)
swt:	subhana wa ta'ala (Holy and Exalted)

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Al-Qur'an

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ۝ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً ۝
وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا
لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا ۝ أَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

O ye men, worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may become righteous; Who made the earth a bed for you, and the heaven a roof, and caused water to come down from the clouds and therewith brought forth fruits for your sustenance. Set not up, therefore, equals to Allāh, while you know (2:22-23)

Al-Hadith

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ الْبَاهِلِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
ﷺ يَخْطُبُ فِي حَجَّةِ الْوَدَاعِ فَقَالَ : اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَ صَلُّوا خَمْسَكُمْ
وَصُومُوا شَهْرَكُمْ وَ ادُّوا زَكَاةَ أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَ أَطِيعُوا إِذَا أَمَرَكُمْ
تَدْخُلُوا جَنَّةَ رَبِّكُمْ

Abū Umāmah Bāhili^{ra} relates: I heard the address of the Holy Prophet^{sa} on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage in the course of which he said: 'Be mindful of your duty to Allāh, observe the five Prayers and the Fast of *Ramaḍān*, pay the *Zakāt* duly and obey those in authority among you; you will enter the Garden of your Lord.'

So said the Promised Messiah

What is Ibadat ?

God Almighty says:

أَلَّا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ

You should worship none but Allah. (11:3)

The fact is that the object of the creation of man is that he should worship God. At another place God says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ۝

And I have not created the Jinn (chiefs) and the men (common people) but that they may worship Me (51:57)

Ibadat (worship) really means that one should do away with hardheartedness and crookedness and make the land of his heart so clear that it should resemble the land created by a farmer (to sow). The Arabs say, “*Moor moaddab*; to pulverize as the antimony fit to be used for the eyes”. Likewise, when there is no stone, or pebble in the heart and the land (of the heart) is so smooth as if it is nothing but the soul - then of course it can be called *Ibadat* (worship). If a mirror is cleaned like this, we can see our face in it, and if a piece of land is cleared like this we sow different kinds of fruit plants in it.

Thus, the man who has been created to worship God can see Him in his heart only if he cleans the heart and leaves no crookedness, ups and downs and stones, big or small, therein.

I say it repeatedly that the trees of the love of God will grow in it and they will flourish and give sweet and health-giving fruits and they will confirm the truth of the words:

أَكُلُهَا دَائِمًا

Its fruit is everlasting. (13:36)

This is the stage which brings the journey of the Sufis to an end and when they reach it, they find God all around and nothing else. The heart of the *Salik* (the one who walks on this path) becomes the *Arsh* (the seat of God), and God descends on it. All the journeys come to an end here. This is the stage where the act of worship is on the right lines; here the gardens of spirituality begin to flourish; one can see God as one sees something in the mirror. This is the stage where man finds the paradise in this very world and it is here that he enjoys:

هَذَا الَّذِي رَزَقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَتُوبُ بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا

This is what we were given before; and they were given their kind. (2:26)

In short, the real stage of worship is *Ibadat* (worship in the real sense of the word).

**A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE FRIDAY SERMON
OF
HADHRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V^{aba}
DELIVERED ON OCTOBER 22, 2004 AT BAITUL FUTUH, LONDON**

**For one's prayers to be heard, it is essential that he should do
good deeds, establish himself on virtue and be regular in his
Prayers**

Hazoor^{aba} spoke at length about the importance of prayers and the conditions which are necessary for their acceptance, in the light of Ahadith and sayings of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Hazoor^{aba} recited verse 187 of Surah *Al-Baqarah*:

And when my servants ask thee about Me, say, I am near. I answer the prayers of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way. (2:187)

Hazoor^{aba} said: "The Promised Messiah has elaborated upon this verse to mean: 'When My servants ask about the proof of My existence, the answer is that I am very near. The easy way to recognize Me is that when a supplicant prays to Me, I hear his prayer and grant him the glad tidings of his success through My revelation.'"

Hazoor^{aba} said: "Allah Almighty hears the prayers and answers them. He moreover assures us that He is All Powerful. But it is all the more necessary that people should cultivate righteousness and fear of Allah. They should fulfill their obligation to Allah Almighty and to His servants. It is then that Allah hears their prayers and accepts them."

Describing the condition of the acceptance of prayer, Hazoor^{aba} said: "It is essential to perform good deeds and do so consistently. One should live one's life like a true servant of Allah and must worship Him to the exclusion of everything else. It is essential to believe in Allah as the fountainhead of all the powers. Whenever you have to ask for something ask of Him. Nothing should distract you from His worship. You also have to obey the Holy Prophet^{saw} and follow his precepts and admonitions to letter and spirit. Rest assured that Allah hears the prayers, and a prayer offered with faith and sincerity never goes in vain. The Holy Prophet^{saw} has said that Allah hears the prayers of those who don't show impatience and do not say that we have prayed enough but Allah does not hear us. Such a thing is tantamount to disbelief and will carry one far from the faith. The signs of the acceptance of prayer

will appear only if you pray to Him while believing Him to be Omnipotent.

Furthermore, it is necessary to act upon the commandments of Allah. For example, He commands us to offer Prayers, therefore it is essential that we offer them regularly. By the grace of Allah, Ahmadies are far more established upon Prayers than other people, but more attention is still needed with regard to congregational Prayers. Allah has granted us another opportunity in this *Ramadhan* to bow before Him and try our best to worship Him as He deserve to be worshipped. Then he will answer our prayers. Let us, therefore, make a solemn pledge to keep our Prayers alive forever in the future. If we can do this, then Allah willing, we shall witness the great progress of the Jama'at in a matter of days rather than years."

Inviting attention to another important matter, Hazoor^{aba} said: "Pray yourselves rather than ask others to pray for you. Become a saint yourself rather than worship a saint. Every Ahmadi should pledge that he is going to bring about great transformation in himself and is going to taste the nearness of Allah through Prayers. The Holy Prophet^{saw} said: 'Allah is so Modest, Compassionate and Generous that when a man raises both his hands in prayer, He shies away from turning him empty-handed.' "

Hazoor^{aba} further said that regularity in Prayers is essential for the acceptance of Prayers. In the end Hazoor^{aba} prayed: "May Allah grant us the Knowledge which brings us nearer to Him than ever before and may our Prayers be of such quality that our souls melt and flow continuously at the threshold of Allah. May we become regular in our Prayers and may our mosques always remain full of worshippers so that we may continue to absorb Allah's love."

Ch. Hameedullah

Wakil A'la

Tahrik Jadid Anjuman Ahmadiyya Pakistan, Rabwah

Tahajjud Prayer

The Muslims are encouraged to acquire a habit of early to bed and early to rise. The Prayer which is performed at the end of the night is called *Tahajjud*. It is not obligatory, but it is a very highly emphasized optional prayer. *Tahajjud* is specifically mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as very beneficial for man's spiritual development and a method to gain nearness to Allah.

It is stated in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ ق

And wake up for it (The Qur'an) in the latter part of the night as a supererogatory service for thee. (17:80)

56TH JALSA SALANA, USA

Held at Masjid Baitur Rahman
Silver Spring, Maryland

(September 3, 4 & 5, 2004)

Report by: *Kalim bin Habib and Dr. Khaled Ahmed Ata*

Alhamdulillah, the 56th Jalsa Salana USA held at beautiful Masjid Baitur Rahman, Silver Spring, Maryland, from September 3 to September 5, 2004, concluded successfully. It was originally planned for June 25-27, 2004 at the Expo Center, Virginia, and the preparations were under way when it was learned that Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} very graciously accepted the invitation to attend Jalsa Salana, Canada, scheduled for July 2-4, 2004. It was the best opportunity for US Ahmadies to meet and greet Hazoor^{aba}. Keeping into view the sentiments and consensus of the Jama'at, respected Ameer Sahib re-scheduled the USA Jalsa for September 3, 4 & 5, 2004, with the approval of Ameerul Momineen, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}.

Mr. Abdul Shukoor Ahmed (*Afsar Jalsa Salana*), Mr. Shahid Saeed Malik (*Afsar Jalsa Gah*) and Mr. Zahir Mustafa Ahmad (*Afsar Khidmate Khalaq*) and their teams embarked on making arrangements at Masjid Baitur Rahman to facilitate the Jalsa with devotion and dedication.

The selection of topics and speakers were made very carefully for the Jalsa Program. All the appropriate arrangements were done in a timely fashion. Ameer Sahib had a keen eye on all the arrangements, and directed and guided various departments. He visited the Jalsa site, met with workers, encouraged and thanked them and even dined with them.

The flags of the 50 States were fluttering on the fence poles on both sides of the main gate. Two big banners reading: "Ahmadiyya Convention" and "Love for All, Hatred for None" hung there. On the vast grassy area of the Mosque there stood 4 huge marquees along with 14 small ones for men and women. For a close up view of the proceedings 8 large screen TV sets were installed in each *Jalsa Gah* apart from the Audio/Video set up.

Both main *Jalsa Gahs* were beautifully decorated with appropriate banners. The huge attractive backdrops enhanced the beauty of the stage. At the open space in between

the marquees some 50 flags of countries offered a captivating sight.

The information and registration package were sent to all well in advance. Apart from on line registration, an on site registration booth provided the cards with the identity bar codes to keep track of the attendance by the scanners at the entrance of the *Jalsa Gah* by Khuddam.

Transportation arrangements (to and from) the hotels and 2 airports were well in place. Some 450 rooms were reserved in 7 area hotels. About 700 guests were accommodated in various Ahmadi homes. Attendance was 3100. The parking arrangements were made across the road in a rented open land.

Stalls for Registration, Accommodation/Humanity First/First Aid/Tahrik-e-Jadid/Khidmate Khalaq/Rishta Nata/Waqfe Nau/Khuddamul Ahmadiyya/Book Store/Science Fair etc., were set up both in Lajna and men side. This year the Red Cross Mobile Blood Drive attracted some 80-blood

donors at the Jalsa Site. The *Langar Khana* team did an excellent job in providing delicious food. Water, tea and lemonade were plentiful at all times. Cleanliness was maintained throughout the *Jalsa Gah*.

On the Lajna side, in the Children's Tent about 150 kids (ages 4-8) were kept engaged by some 6-8 Lajna volunteers. An overflow tent was used for elders and ladies with the strollers as well. A separate special arrangement for milk for the babies was made adjacent to the Lajna dining marquee.

Dr. Col. Fazal Ahmad set up a very novel, attractive and informative exhibition in the basement of the mosque. The continuous display of the history of Islam/Ahmadiyyat on DVD was painstakingly prepared and was visited by a large number of guests.

Every year we invite guests from all walks of life, personal friends, well wishers, friends of the Mosque, State and Local Government Officials, Church Leaders and the Community Activists. Imam Shamshad Nasir took up this assignment. He came a week earlier to contact and remind our guests by invitation cards, faxes, emails and phone calls.

After *Jumu'a* Prayers Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, Ameer USA, Maulana Daud Hanif, Na'ib Ameer and Missionary-In-charge and Munir Hamid,

Na'ib Ameer hoisted the flags of Ahmadiyyat, USA and Maryland, respectively. After silent prayers everybody proceeded to the *Jalsa Gah*.

The opening session presided over by Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, Ameer USA Jama'at started with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Tariq Malik. and its translation by Mureed Zafar. Maulana Zafar Ahmad Sarwar recited a poem of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} on *Taqwa* in his melodious voice.

Opening Address by Ameer Sahib

After reciting verse 11 from Sura *Al-Hashr* and its translation, Ameer Sahib welcomed all the participants of Jalsa, and pointed out that the predictions of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} came out to be true that a large number of people will attend these Jalsas all over the world. It is not an ordinary gathering but a special act of the Divine, which will cause your prayers to be heard. There should be no rancor in our hearts for anyone. The purpose of these Jalsas is to remember the works of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}, and to mold our lives accordingly. He then read out the special message of Hazoor^{aba} sent for this Jalsa regarding the obedience to the institution of Khilafat and *Nizame Jama'at* and about observing the obligatory daily Prayers with all its desired requirements. He then led silent prayers.

(The whole text is reproduced in this issue)

The first speech was on "**Ibadat – The Purpose of Human Creation**", by Munir Hamid Sahib, Naib-Ameer. He read out the translation of verse 57 of Chapter 51, of the Holy Qur'an and pointed out that all say that they worship and pray to God. But in reality they don't know how? The Promised Messiah^{as}, has explained the real meaning and ways to become a real *Abid*. At the end he urged us to have a living relationship with a Living God and to be firm and steadfast.

The second speaker: Mr. Falahud Din Shams, spoke on "**The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} -'Al-Abid'- An Exemplar and Model**". He mentioned that *Ibadah* is the key component of any religion. Without worship and prayers nothing remains of a faith. There does not seem to be any tradition or history regarding the ways of worship of other Prophets, and as such, their followers find neither the crucial significance of worship, nor the substance to follow. But the Prophet of Islam has practically shown us who to worship and how to worship. Being a perfect model he established worship of One God throughout the world. He concluded his speech with a very forceful quote from the book of Promised Messiah^{as}, "*Barkatud Dua*".

Then a *Na'at* (a poem in

praise of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{saw}, written by Hadhrat Mir Muhammad Ismail Sahib^{ra} was recited in a Chorus by a few Khuddam in very melodious voices. The congregation of the *Jalsa Gah* repeated 'Alaikas Salato Alaikas Salaam' after them. The whole surroundings were charged with the blessings of this *Salaam*. Jalaluddin Abdul Latif Sahib read out the translation.

Maulana Daud Ahmad Hanif, Na'ib Ameer and Missionary-In-charge, spoke on "Al-Wasiyyat – The New World Order" – by the Promised Messiah^{as}. He read verses 119-120 of Chapter 20 from the Holy Qur'an and pointed out that Allah has laid the foundation of World Order from the very beginning of religion. To protect society from decay and ruin, Muslims have been enjoined to keep spending in the way of Allah as directed in 2:196. Islam was to be rejuvenated through the Promised Messiah^{as} in the latter days according to the prophecies. He perused the greatest Jihad of self-purification and formulated the ten conditions of Bai'at for this purpose. The Promised Messiah^{as} wrote *Al-Wasiyyat* – the Divine World Order and announced it in 1905. This divine scheme is the providence for all human beings. It is the final and highest stage for the righteous servants of Allah. It is achievable through complete submission to the will of God. He then explained at length the ingredients/

requirements thereof. In the end he stressed that Hazoor^{aba} desires that by 2008, when 100 years would be completed on the establishment of Khilafat-i-Ahmadiyya, at least 50% of all earning members of the world should join this great scheme, *Al-Wasiyyat*.

Friday Evening Programs

After the close of Jalsa, a few evening programs were arranged at various places on the Jalsa site, including the Ahmadiyya Association of Computer Professionals, the Ahmadiyya Engineers and Architects Association, the Ahmadiyya Lawyers Association, and the Ahmadiyya Scientists Association.

Saturday Session

The Saturday sessions were held separately for men and ladies.

On the men's side the program started with *Tahajjud* and *Fajr* Prayers followed by Darsul Qur'an by Maulana Inamul Haq Kauser.

The morning session of Lajna started with recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Nausheen Tehmina, translated by Shukoorah Nooriah. A poem was recited by Tayyiba Haneef and translated by Rizwana Haneef. Hena Malik delivered the first speech on "Remembrance of Allah". Then Khalida Ahmad read a

poem and its translation was presented by Hajja Naima Latif. Afterwards, "Hadhrat Maryam – A Model of Piety and Righteousness", was the topic of a speech delivered by Naureen Choudhry. The next speaker Bushra Bajwa expressed her thoughts on "The Role of Parents in Raising Moral Consciousness in Children". After a group poem, Shahina Bashir delivered a speech, and her subject was "Searching and finding Ahmadiyyat".

After two more group poems, one to welcome the New Ahmadies and the other in recognition of Nasirat for the 1st reading of the Holy Qur'an, the session ended with concluding remarks by the Lajna President.

The morning session of men was presided over by Maulana Daud Hanif, Na'ib Ameer and Missionary-In-charge. Mirza Naseer Ehsan Ahmad recited the Holy Qur'an and Mr. Nuruddin Mahmood Ahmad translated it. Afterwards Syed Muhammad Ahmad read out a poem of Promised Messiah^{as}, and Mr. Pir Ahmad presented its translation.

The first speaker, Dr. Wa-seem Sayed, spoke on "The Sanctity of Marriage in Islam". After reading a few verses of the Holy Qur'an, he pointed out that very little sanctity of marriage is left in the world today. The modern man defies all the moral and

spiritual teachings and edicts and values well established by the Prophets of God. Chastity, purity of conduct, modesty, shivery, and decency, all these values are under attack and all sorts of immoral acts are justified in the name of 'why not'? Islam likens the relationship between husband and wife as that of a garment for each other. The best of the clothing is *Taqwa*, according to the Holy Qur'an, which warns us that neither the laws of nature nor the spiritual laws can be defied with impunity. He then explained in details the concept of marriage in Islam.

The second speaker Mr. Khurram Fuaad Ahmad expressed his views on **"Raising Children in Western society"**. After reciting verse 16 of Chapter 46, he explained that in these rapidly changing times there is no universal standard for raising children, except the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. We should be their role modal. They are facing the challenges of modernization, namely: Media, Schools, lack of time, two family income pursuit, etc. thereby having a dire effects on our children. Though there is no guarantee of the safe upbringing of our children, yet the best tool within our reach is that of Du'a, daily Prayers and daily recitation of the Holy Qur'an in our homes.. He quoted many verses from the Qur'an and Ahadith and read out passages from the writings of the Promised Messiah^{as} in support of his conten-

tion. Homes can provide an antidote of these negative effects of the Western Society. A practicing Islamic atmosphere could be a panacea for all ills.

Then Mr. Amjad Mahmood Khan expressed his thoughts on **"Challenges of Muslim Youth in Western Society"**. After reciting verse 119 of Surah *At-Tauba*, "O ye who believe! fear Allah and be with the truthful", he pinpointed the multifarious challenges an Ahmadi youth faces on a daily basis. The basic one is "Identity". Ahmadi youths don't know who they are and to whom they belong? They face identity crises where they adopt the identities of those around them. They assimilate and accept the social norm as they see it. He enumerated that social interactions, information technology and material pursuits are the basic threats and pressures. They should remember that Allah has defined our identity as Muslims in Surah *Al-Hijr* and *Al-Baqarah* and as such they can overcome by taking refuge in Allah. He quoted a passage from Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV'sth address at Jalsa Salana in 1992 at Canada:

"O Ahmadies of America and Canada for how long will you remain in sheep's clothing?. Wake up! And divest yourself of that clothing. You are the Lions of Allah, and like lions with tenacity you must conquer the jungles ahead of you."

Here the shepherd is the Western society, he pointed out.

Then Dr. Khalid Minhas recited a poem, and Mr. Bilal Abdul Salam presented its translation.

The next speaker was Mr. Nasir Mahmood Malik, whose topic was **"The Holy Quran – The Perfect Guidance for Challenges of Living in Western Society."** He pointed out that as we try to progress in worldly life, so we should try to progress in our spiritual life as well. The higher goals set forth by the Holy Qur'an comprise of *Nabiyyeen*, *Siddiqeen*, *Shohada* and *Sualeheen*. The root cause of moral and spiritual decadence in the Western society is a Judeo-Christian Society. Their Holy Bible, having undergone interpolation over a period of time, has become irrelevant to cope with the problems of the modern society – and hence, became oblivious to the presence of a Living God. In essence a life without God and a sinful life has become a norm of the society. As the Holy Prophet^{saw} is the perfect example (*Khataman Nabiyyeen*) in the same way the Holy Quran is The Perfect Book (*Khatamal Kutub*). The learned speaker then exemplified the challenges and ailments prevalent in the modern society and their remedies in the light of the Qur'anic teachings – referring extensively to the writings of the Arbitrator (*Hakam*)

and Just (*Adl*) of the age – The Promised Messiah^{as}.

Saturday Afternoon Sessions

Separate programs were held for men and ladies.

The Lajna session started with the recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Husna Ahmad and its translation by Shafeeqa Rasheed. Sara Ammar recited a poem and its translation was given by Aiza Dawood.

The first speaker of this session was Suriyya Latif whose topic was "**The First Pillar of Islam**". The second speech was on "**The Islamic Concept of Marriage – A Garment for Each Other**" by Shazia Saeed. Then Aziza Ali recited a poem and Saba Ali read out its translation. Then Ateya Qureshi spoke on "**Islam and Cultural Diversity**". The last speaker, Bushra Butt expressed her thoughts on "**Khilafat: A Source of Continuous Spiritual Guidance**". A poem was recited by Tahira Khalid, which was translated by A. Rehman Ahmad. After the Annual Prize distribution the Jalsa concluded with presidential remarks and Du'a.

The Men's session was presided over by Mr. Munir Hamid, Na'ib Ameer, USA. The Program started with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and its English translation by Mr. Abid Haneef. Then Mr. Zafarullah Khan recited a

poem and Alhaj Dhul Waqar Yaqub presented its translation.

After extending peace to everyone, Maulana Daud Hanif, Chief Missionary and Na'ib Ameer, USA, recognized the distinguished guests by name present in the convention, representing our State and Local Government, Spiritual and Religious Leaders and many other well-wishers of our community. A few of them opted to address this august body.

1- **Rev. Richard Kukoski.** (*Episcopal/Anglican Church of Transfiguration*)

He pointed out that he has been in contact with the Mosque for the last three years and is very comfortable. He sees the faith of Ahmadies by the work they do. He thanked us for understanding and building good relations amongst the diverse people living in the neighborhood and is looking forward to working with Imam Daud.

2- **Becky Smith** - (*Regional Coordinator Eastern Montgomery County Depts. Health & Human Services*).

She thanked everyone and pointed out that her Department helps the low-income families. This Mosque has been providing various items on a

regular basis, and hopes this will continue.

3- **Sardar Bakhshish Singh** – (*Secretary, Guru Nanak Foundation of America*)

He thanked the Ahmadiyya Community and mentioned that he has been attending Interfaith Conferences arranged in this Mosque for many years. Good people keep on doing good things for the community, as Bava Guru Nanak Sahib has mentioned. A Plaque was offered to Maulana Shamshad Sahib for his services and he wished him success in LA.

4- **Mr. William C. O'Toole** – (*Assistant Police Chief, Montgomery County*)

He extended well wishes from Mr. Tom Major, Chief of Police and County Executive, Mr. Douglas Duncan for the cooperation extended by Imam Shamshad. He reminded Imam Daud that now the pressure is on him. He thanked everyone for making them a part of this function. At this remark, Imam Daud assured him of his full cooperation.

5- **Pastor Guy Carey** – (*Immanuel's Church of Christ*)

He thanked Imam Shamshad for approaching him

three years ago, and for the hospitality and kindness. We have traversed a long way and still have a long way to go. Justice, kindness, and humility are the message of Almighty God. The Ahmadiyya community has shown justice by their actions. Let us all stand together.

6- Chuck Floyd – (*Candidate –US House of Representative*)

He extended well wishes from different Government Officials. He advised the community to be involved in the political process so that good laws are introduced which could address the issues facing this society.

7- Mr. Gordon Aoyogi – (*Chief of Fire Dept. Montgomery County*)

He started with saying humorously that he is short and as such Shamshad and he can see eye to eye. He read out a letter of thanks and appreciation from the County Executive that Ahmadies are playing an important role in the fabric of our community.

8- Hon. Steen Silverman – (*President, Montgomery County Council*)

He expressed his thanks to the members of Baitur Rahman for help in building a tolerant community

in the area. He admired the topics of speeches, which were dealing with the challenges encountered in the present day society. Hatred, bigotry, distrust are all learned behaviors, while religious, racial, ethnic intolerance are taught in homes. People can be brought together if they are taught tolerance. We pledge to continue our great working relationship with the Mosque.

After hearing the comments from the guest speakers, the Chairman of the Session, Mr. Munir Hamid remarked: “We really appreciate the kind remarks and assure you that as members of this spiritual organization we will follow our motto: Love for all, Hatred for none. We are the champions of peace, and we mean what we say”.

Then Mr. Musa Asad spoke on “**Islam in the West, Commonalities and Challenges**”.

He recited Sura *Al-Asr*, and pointed out that it is the great wisdom of the Holy Quran that these very few verses provide the fundamental response to various question raised in this era, e.g., What is the real Islam in the West? Where do we find it? Who are the true followers of Islam? Despite great wealth and power family life is in great turmoil, which sure is a great loss. Despite this we find

rich traditions of religious freedom, tolerance, work ethics, charity and other righteous qualities as well. Many of the basic teachings of Islam are well in line with the fundamental tenants of American culture. In Islam all human beings are equal. The most honored in the sight of God is one who is righteous. The Prophet of Islam emphasized raising the status of minorities and the downtrodden, freed the slaves, and gave all the rights to women we now find in America. Only those who believe and do deeds righteous are true Muslims. American Muslims can integrate positive American values in their daily lives while maintaining their Muslim identity. Integrating the two however, requires a careful attention to implement. This process requires participation.

Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, Ameer Jama'at USA, in his address thanked everyone for the good remarks and sentiments and said we reciprocate the same. The world is in turmoil today. There is very little understanding between the large groups. The Prophet of Islam^{saw} converted a tribal society into a structured society with justice for all, care for the poor and the orphans and abolished slavery. There is no reason why Islamic values are not confluent with American values. As Ahmadies we spread the message of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Peace comes not just by human efforts but when God Himself

sends peace. He does it through His Grace and Mercy. The message brought by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} is a message of peace and humility and calling everybody to God. This is what we stand for and I trust that you would carry the same message and feeling when you leave this gathering today. He then thanked everybody and hoped that they will keep in touch with Imam Daud Hanif.

Reception for Guests with Q/A session

After the conclusion of the main program all the guests were escorted to a reception area in a separate marquee with befitting dining arrangements. During the Q/A session our guests asked multifarious questions regarding Islam, Jihad, segregation of women, and from the topics of today's speeches. Imam Daud, Imam Shamshad Nasir, Imam Inamul Haq Kauser and Imam Azhar Haneef answered all the questions. Mr. Ali Murtaza was the moderator.

Waqfe Nau Program

After the dinner, the Waqfe Nau Program was held in the Mosque, chaired by respected Ameer Sahib. After recitation from the Holy Qur'an, *Nazam* and *Qaseedah*, Ameer Sahib honored Mr. Daud Ahmad Khan from Detroit by presenting him a plaque for being the 1st Waqfe Nau from USA to en-

roll in Jami'a Ahmadiyya, Canada. Six Waqfeen were recognized for completing their first recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

Then the National Secretary, Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhry reminded the parents and secretaries to work together in achieving the *Waqfe Nau* goals. *Alhamdulillah*, in this session 215 Waqfeen and their parents were present. After general presentation by a few *Waqfeen* and *Waqfaat*, trophies and chocolates were presented and the program concluded with du'a.

Final Session

This was a combined session. The day started with *Tahajjud* and Fajr Prayers followed by Darsul Qur'an by Maulana Irshad Ahmad Malhi.

The morning session was presided over by Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, Ameer Jama'at USA, and started with the recitation from the Holy Qur'an and its English translation by Dr. Muhammad Ali Mumtaz. Mr. Mansoor Ahmad read out a poem about Khilafat, and Dr. Yusaf Lateef presented its translation.

Then Mr. Naseem Wa-seem, *Sadr, Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya*, came on the stage and declared the best three Chapters out of 50, who participated and competed in various activities throughout

the year, namely:

**Baltimore -
First in small Majalis.
Boston -
First in medium Majalis.
Houston -
First in large Majalis.**

Alhamdulillah, the Houston Jama'at stood first. Respected Ameer Sahib presented the "*Alame-Inami*" to the *Qa'id-Khuddamul Ahmadiyya*, Houston.

The first speech was on "**Khilafat – Divine Leadership**" by Maulana Azhar Haneef. After reciting and translating a verse of the Holy Qur'an (*Al-Nur 24:56*), he explained the meaning of Khilafat, the need and purpose and why it is necessary to accept and follow it? He pointed out that Khilafat is the continuation of the mission of a Prophet – to preach and teach *Tauheed* – Oneness of God. He quoted the glad tidings of the continuation of Khilafat from the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} claimed to be the light of Jesus^{as} as the Messiah of the Age. Catholics have this institution in the form of Papacy. The Pope is believed to be the agent of God for life. After some details, he mentioned the role of Khilafat in Islam, its need, importance and benefits. He then explored in detail the institution of Khilafat in Jama'at Ahmadiyya. How and why the designs of various people to become a Khalifa failed miserably. How the Khalifa

appointed by God always prospers. After giving some historical facts and figures, he closed his discourse with a quotation from Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood's^{ra} Jalsa Salana speech in 1960 about the pledge to safeguard the institution of Khilafat.

The next speaker, Mr. Zahir Mustafa Ahmad spoke on "Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{rh}". He poured out his heart in a few verses:

*"Remembering you is easy –
we do it every day*

*But missing you is a heart-
ache".*

Then he shed ample light on the life of the most loving and giving soul, his early childhood in the pursuit of knowledge, his youth in the remembrance of Allah and service of Islam/Ahmadiyyat. A detailed explanation was given as to how he steered the Jama'at through many difficult times and dire circumstances after he became Khalifa. How he led the Jama'at to greater progress in numbers, status and spirituality. How the quality and quantity increased during his tenure of 21 years. How this man of God gave us all he had until his last breath. A few of the narrations about him and some of the personal experiences were mentioned by the speaker in an emotional manner. We will be indebted to him for the wealth he has left for us. Many instances of the

acceptance of his prayers revived out faith and belief as well. His various schemes will ever remain fresh in our hearts and minds for a long time.

Then Mr. Bilal Raja recited a poem and Mr. Ibraheem Naeem presented its translation.

The next speaker Sahibzada Mirza Magnfoor Ahmad, great grandson of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} spoke on "Zikre Habib". He mentioned many incidents from the well-recorded history in such a humble tone and manner that it humbled the hearts of many listeners. It refreshed the memories and spiritually uplifted many souls.

These narrations depicted Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood's^{as} love of Allah, concerns about the betterment of the Muslims and humanity at large, his behavior in all traits of human life. May Allah enable us all to follow him in the real sense.

Concluding Address

In his concluding address respected Ameer Sahib pointed out that we all seek the Mercy and Blessings of Allah on all of us. Many of the financial demands should not be taken as a burden, rather as an opportunity to please Allah. Hazoor^{aba} is promoting the scheme of *Al-Wasiyyat*. In USA, 1,000 Moosies are to be added to the current number of 700. He then explained the

crux of *Nizame Wasiyyat*- humility, dedication and devotion.

Secondly, he delved into the issue of delivering our Afro-American brothers from their troubles, misery and poverty, and pointed out that the remedy lies in following the dictates of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}. By living a life as he desired. Holding fast to Khilafat. The solution will come from Allah. May Allah improve their lot.

Thirdly, he asked members to pray for humanity at large. May Allah open the doors of Mercy so that understanding and goodwill spreads and hatred and acrimony goes away.

Pray for the leadership in USA, May Allah guide them.

Fourthly, he reminded us to pray for the devotees, the Missionaries and workers and the women folk and young who are facing a strong drift in the society.

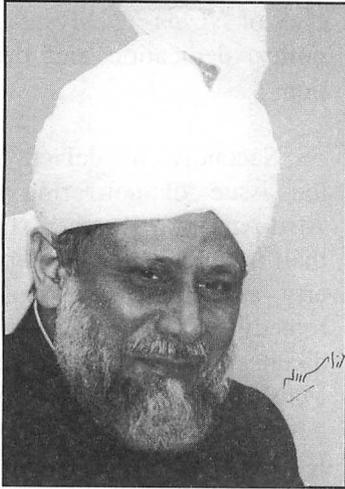
The Jalsa concluded with collective prayers.

HUMANITY FIRST

You can Help!

Needed:

- *Financial Donations*
- *Volunteers*



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ
وَعَلَى عِبْدِهِ الْمَسِيحِ الْمَوْعُودِ
خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ
هوالتاصر



Dated: 31-8-2004

Message for Jama'at Ahmadiyya USA
on its 56th Annual Jalsa

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

My message to the Ahmadies participating in the 56th Jalsa Salana of the United States of America is a reminder about obedience and respecting the institution of Khilafat and Nizam-i-Jama'at and also about observing the obligation of prayers. Through Friday sermons, I have been urging all members of the Jama'at to carry out a spiritual reformation in their lives and generally improving their relationship with God Almighty.

With regards to the first part of this message, there could be no better words expressed on Khilafat other than those words said by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra} during the Jalsa Salana in Qadian of 1911 because these words were said when Ahmadiyyat was in its nascent stage:

"Then combine all together, and with your combined strength take fast hold of the rope of Allah, and be not divided. In Islam the rope of Allah is the Holy Qur'an. ... Holding fast to it means that you should make the Holy Qur'an your code and your guide. All aspects of your life should be subordinated to it. All your affairs, every movement and stillness of yours should be regulated by the Holy Book of God, which is healing and light... Beware! Be not divided. Do you know what will be the consequences if you are divided? This rope will slip from your hands, and you will lose all strength, as Allah, the Exalted has said: Avoid dissension, lest you falter and your strength will be frittered away and your enemies will triumph over you.

"Hearken! I am Khalifatul Masih, and God has made me Khalifa. I had no desire at all to be Khalifa, but now that God has invested me with this mantle, I intensely dislike all dissension. I do not wish you to be involved in dissension... Keep well in mind that you have no authority to remove the Khalifa... It is God Who appoints a Khalifa; it is not the business of men. God made Adam Khalifa, and also David; then He makes Khalifa under Ch. 24; v.56; He has made all of you Khalifas also. If I have been made a Khalifa, it is God's doing in His wisdom and for your benefit. No one has the power to remove a Khalifa who has been appointed by God. Therefore, none of you has an authority or power to remove me. If God desires to remove me, He will cause me to die. You had better leave this matter in God's hands; you have not the power of removal. I am not beholden to any of you. He lies who says he has made me a Khalifa."

(From Hayate Noor by Sheikh Abdul Qadir and from its English version: Hadhrat Maulvi Nooruddeen Khalifatul Masih I^{ra} by Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, pp 160-163)

I have repeatedly urged the office bearers of the Jama'at to set a very high standard of personal moral conduct and justice. At the same time, it is equally important that all members of the Jama'at should listen and continue to obey such office bearers and follow the correct procedure in case of any complaint. *Alhamdulillah*, by the grace of Allah, we have a mature administration system far better than exists in any other organization or community. The only way to preserve it is to adhere to the institutions of the Jama'at. May Allah enable us to understand our responsibilities and discharge the trusts reposed in us. Amin.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said:

“The word '*Salat*' points to the fact that it is not sufficient to pray with words alone, rather it is necessary that words accompany feelings and a sense of anxiety and deep concern. God does not listen to any prayer until the person offering the prayer reaches a kind of death. Praying is a difficult task indeed but people are not familiar with its true nature. There are many who write to me that they prayed for such and such but their prayer had no effect and as a result they come to hold a negative view of God and are lost through their own sense of hopelessness. They do not know that unless prayer is accompanied with the necessary requirements, it cannot be of any benefit.

“It is necessary that the heart melts and the soul flows like water, falling with feelings of pain and anguish within at the feet of the most Noble Lord. A person should not, however, be impatient and seek quick results. On the contrary, he should persevere in prayer with patience and steadfastness. It can then be expected that the prayer will be accepted...

“Whenever the Holy Prophet of Islam faced some difficulty or problem, he immediately stood for *Salat* and our own experience and that of all the people of truth is this that there is nothing greater than *Salat* for taking one towards God. *(Malfoozat, Vol.9 pp 109-110)*

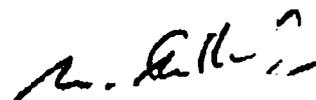
“We live in a world where there is a school of thought that believes that in order for Islam to triumph, Muslims should engage in a Jihad against the disbelievers. For them the following passage should be an eye-opener:

“A strange phenomenal event took place in the desert of Arabia, when hundred of thousands of the dead became alive within a few days, and those who had become corrupted through generations took on Divine color. The blind began to see, and the tongues of the dumb began to flow with Divine wisdom. Such a revolution took place in the world as no eye had seen and no ear had heard of before. Do you realize what this was? All this was brought about by prayers during the darkness of nights of one who had been wholly lost in God which created an uproar in the world and manifested such wonders as seemed impossible at the hands of the unlettered helpless person.

(Roohani Khaza'in, Vol.6: Barkatud Dua pp 10-11)

May Allah reward you with the blessings that the Promised Messiah" sought from Allah for all those who participate in the Jalsa Salana. Amin

واسلام



MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
Khalifatul Masih V

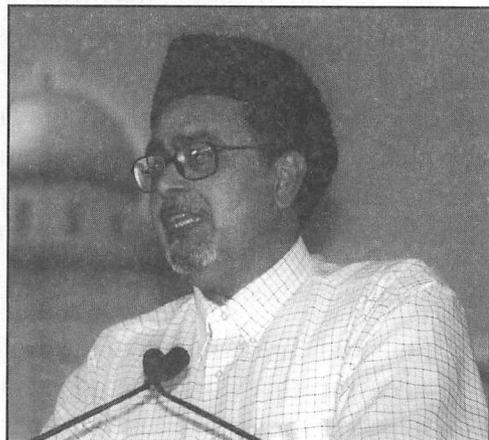
OPENING ADDRESS

At 56th Jalsa Salana, USA

By

**DR. AHSANULLAH ZAFAR,
AMEER, USA JAMA'AT**

(Kalim bin Habib)



After *tasha'hud* and *ta'awwudh* respected Ameer Sahib recited verse 11 of Surah *Al-Hashr*. And stated:

I want to welcome all of you, my brothers, to the 56th Annual Convention of USA Jama'at - and that includes ladies as well. I want to welcome each one of you the Ahmadies who are here to celebrate the tradition established by Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}. Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} has declared in no uncertain terms that this Jalsa, which he predicted would spread beyond Qadian and be held at different places throughout the world, and as such, is an extension of the Jalsa in Qadian. He projected that large number of people would be attending such Jalsas. He also gave us the news that this Jalsa is not an ordinary collection of people as happens at many other situations, but rather it is a special act of the Divine, which will cause your prayers to be heard, which will cause your hearts to be opened to the light of Allah, which will bring each one of you together, and may it happen so. *Ameen*.

The verse I recited is translated as:

And *the spoils are also for* those who came after them They say, 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in the faith, and leave not in our hearts any rancor against those who believe. Our Lord! Thou art indeed Compassionate, Merciful. (59:11)

This is a prayer again which reflects an item which was brought up by Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} that when we get together at these meetings once a year we should remember those who have passed away from amongst us and pray for their forgiveness. *Inshallah*, when we do collective prayers at the end then we will pray for those who passed away as well. The verse that I recited also reminds us that the existence of the believers over the ages is a continuum of sorts and is a reminder that we should pray that we are counted as believers by Allah. This is what we beg of Him, that all the believers and us remain together, that there be no separation, no rancor in our hearts towards each other.

The purpose of gathering together, beyond this is to remember the works of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}, to see how we can benefit from them. How we can apply them in our lives. And this will be done as the whole program unfolds and you listen to multiple speeches, which have been diligently prepared for this purpose.

At this moment I am going to read a message, which is for Jama'at Ahmadiyya USA, for the Ahmadies in America at the 56th Annual Jalsa, from Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}. After reading Hazoor's^{aba} message (which is printed in this issue of the Gazette) he continued as follows:

Now Hazoor^{aba} is quoting the Promised Messiah^{as}, who said, 'the word *Salat* points to the fact that it is not sufficient to pray with words alone, rather it is necessary that words accompany feelings in a sense of anxiety and of deep concern. God does not listen to any prayer until the person offering the prayer reaches a kind of death. Praying is a difficult task indeed but people are not familiar with its true nature. There are many who write to me that they prayed for such and such; their prayer had no effect. As a result they come to hold a negative view of God and are lost in their own sense of hopelessness. They do not know that unless prayer is accompanied with the necessary requirements, it cannot be of any benefit. It is necessary that the heart melts and the soul flows like water filling with feelings of pain and anguish within the feet of the Most Noble Lord. A person should not however, be impatient, seek quick results, on the contrary he should persevere in prayer with patience and steadfastness. It can then be expected that the prayer will be accepted. Whenever the Holy Prophet of Islam^{saw} faced some difficulty or problem he immediately stood for *Salat* and our own experience and that of all the people of truth is that there is nothing greater than *Salat* for taking one toward God

(*Malfoozat*, vol.9, pg.109-110).

Hazoor^{aba} continues: We live in a world where there is a school of thought that believes that in order for Islam to triumph Muslims should engage in a Jihad against the disbelievers. For them the following passage should be an eye opener:

"A strange phenomenal event took place in the deserts of Arabia when hundred of thousands of the dead became alive with in a few days and those who had become corrupted through generations took on Divine color. The blind began to see and the tongue of the dumb began to flow with Divine wisdom. Such a revolution took place that no eye had seen and no ear had heard. Do you realize what this was? All this was brought about during the darkness of night of one who had been wholly lost in God which created an uproar in the world and manifested such wonders and secured them as seemed impossible at the hands of that unlettered helpless man."

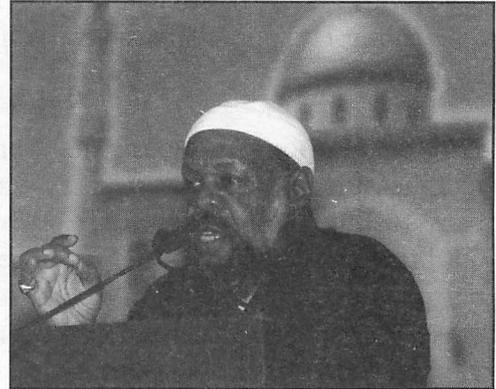
(*Roohani Khaza'in*, vol.6, pp 10-11)

Hazoor^{aba} says, "May Allah reward you with the Blessings that the Promised Messiah^{as} sought from Allah for all those who participate in the Jalsa Salana – *Wassalaam*"

I think Hazoor^{aba} has encapsulated every thing that we need to consider in the deliberation today or in our thoughts or discussions as we go through these days of reflection, prayer and discourse among ourselves. I am sure each one of us will benefit from this and put it into practice in all its details. Please join me in silent prayers.

IBADAT, PURPOSE OF HUMAN CREATION

Munir Hamid, Na'ib Ameer, USA



My dear brothers and sisters! I was sitting here thinking about what I should tell you on this subject, which you already do not know. I was introduced to this subject when I first came into the Movement through the writings of the Promised Messiah^{as}, and from the Commentary of the Holy Qur'an in Chapter 51: verse 57. Where Allah^{swt} says that He created men and Jinn so that they may worship Him. Reading this, someone can say, since we all worship in some form or other, this statement means nothing. But believe me, there is something very deep and significant in the word worship. The Promised Messiah^{as} brings it out so clearly when we read the commentary of this verse. It says, worship is not something that is just built around Prayer or Fasting or *Zakat*, it is not built around other things people have in their minds in regards to what is external. He said that true worship is internal. It is the 'internal' that worships the Creator, but people have to learn how to worship correctly, and this is where the Prophets of God come in.

All the Prophets of God, may Allah be pleased with them, each and every one of them taught people how to worship their Creator, how to find the purpose for their existence and why were they created. It is amazing that all the Prophets taught this message, and today there are only a handful of people on the face of this Earth who know proper worship of their Creator. We are the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, and we are very blessed because not only we were taught in the writings, of the Promised Messiah^{as}, but also in every *Khalifa's* writings how to worship our Creator. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V's^{aba}, through his *Khutbat*, whether we know it or not, whether we want to acknowledge it or not, is teaching us how to do perfect worship. That is the goal for human beings.

If you walk in the streets of America, nobody is looking for reasons for his or her existence. Why do I exist? They do not think in those terms. Some think that their purpose of creation was to play basketball, or football, become a doctor, a lawyer, a professional person, a teacher or a professor. The purpose of being placed here as human beings is to have spiritual experiences. This is the direction in which we travel in as members of this spiritual organization. We are moving towards a point in our lives where we can look at ourselves in the mirror and ask the question, 'How does a spiritual person look?' and you say (*pointing to himself*) "like this!"

Jalaluddin Rumi has a poem in this regard. Everything that you look at, you should be able to look at yourself in Islam and say that this is how a spiritual person looks. But if you focus on the non-spiritual, then you miss the point of your creation. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah^{swt} says that He offered this trust to the angels, He offered this trust to the elements, He offered this trust to the moon, the stars, He offered this trust to the creatures; but it was only mankind who took upon this trust. Does this mean that we as human beings would be perfect in following the commandments, the laws that are laid down in the Holy Qur'an for our spiritual advancement? No, it means that only a few of us would do that. We are fortunate as being part of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam that we encourage our members each and every day to become better human beings so that we can achieve the purpose of our creation.

It is amazing when I look around the world today and I see that we as Muslims are being blamed for many acts of terrorism. I do not blame society for doing that. I blame the Muslims who are in this society because they have not projected themselves as spiritual beings. When you project yourself as a spiritual being, by that I mean when you put it in your mind that this is the purpose of my creation and you live up to that, you put it in your life as a daily act. And I mean that no one should tell us that we lack the brotherhood, no one should tell us that we lack compassion, no one should tell us that we do not respond the way other people respond to the needs of those who are in this society, who are in need of our help, who are in need of guidance. Spiritual people do not need to be told that. They already hear this constantly from the relationship with their Creator. The Promised Messiah^{as} writes in *'The Essence of Islam'* that it is so beautiful when you make your connection with the Creator and find the purpose of your creation, when you focus on love, on beauty and on harmony. These are the things that we must practice in our lives so that we can come to the point when they become automatic when no one is pushing us to be a brother. I hear people say in their different communities or *Jama'ats* that we need to have a workshop, we need to have this and that, this is lacking in our community etc. The early companions of the Promised Messiah^{as} had no workshops; they did not deal with things that we are lacking today. They encouraged and exhausted each and every member to reach his human potential. This is the focus that we need to do as a spiritual *Jama'at*, which is to be obedient, and to be steadfast. This is called in this society SOS. It's a distress signal that is sent up by people who are on vessels across the seas or oceans when they are in trouble. We too, have to send out such distress signals. But, the purpose of your creation is to know who you send that signal to, who you make contact with when things are not going your way or when you are going through trials and tribulations or when you lose your children to this society. You make that contact with Allah^{swt}, the Creator. He will answer you. He will answer your prayers.

Jalaluddin Rumi in *muthnavie* tells a story about a spiritual person who spent all his life on his knees making his prayer and then one day a friend of his, in all probability a neighbor, came by and visited him. The neighbor said, "What are you doing?" You have been doing the same thing year after year, and the Creator has not answered you yet. Have you heard from the Creator? Has he spoken to you? The man said, "no". So he stopped making his prayer, fasting and all his spiritual obligations. Then later, the angel of Allah^{swt} came to him and said what happened to you brother? You are no longer making your prayers? You are no longer doing this and that. The man said, "You know I've been doing this all my life and the Creator has not spoken to me yet." He said, "Brother you are not listening. Every human being's prayer is answered by the Creator and you missed it in terms of that". This is what happens to us living in a Western society as well, because we leave off so many things that we were created to do, or told to do and yet we lose our contact with the Creator.

The early Muslims, were taught by Rasoolullah^{saw}, that steadfastness was one of the main keys. So when you face troubles and tribulations, when you are going through a lot of things that people may not know that you are going through, you may have cancer, your children may be sick, and you have not told anyone about that, Rasoolullah^{saw} insisted that we turn to the Creator and thank Him and pray to Him. When we pray we say, "O Allah, pour down Thy blessings on me, so that I am able to have a better relationship with you." This is the purpose of your creation, this is the purpose of human creation, to have a better relationship with your Creator, and love him with all your heart. It is just that simple!

The master Prophet Mohammad^{saw} was sitting with his companions one day. He^{saw} went out of the mosque and disappeared from them. Hadhrat Omar^{ra} said, "Where did he go?" He asked everyone. No one seemed to know where he^{saw} went. Hadhrat Abu Huraria^{ra} went out looking for him and finally found him. He said, "Ya Rasoolullah^{saw}, what happened? Why did you go away?" He said, 'O

Abu Huraira^{ra}, Allah^{swt} has just revealed to me that all you have to do to get into Paradise is to love Him with all your heart and mean it. He said, "Ya Rasoolullah^{saw}", "Can I go back and tell the other brothers?" He said, yes go back and tell them. So he met Hadhrat Omar^{ra}. Hadhrat Omar^{ra} said, where are you going? He said Rasoolullah^{saw} was just revealed this revelation from Allah^{swt} that all you have to do to get into Paradise is to love Him, with all your heart. Hadhrat Omar^{ra} said, do not tell people that and he started beating Abu Huraira^{ra} with his shoe. Abu Huraira^{ra} ran back to where Rasoolullah^{saw} was sitting. Rasoolullah^{saw} smiled and laughed, he knew that Hadhrat Omar^{ra} was after him, he knew how Hadhrat Omar^{ra}'s temperament was. He said, Abu Huraira, "Don't worry!" I will take care of Omar. So Hadhrat Omar^{ra} came and said, Ya Rasoolullah^{saw}, is it that simple to go to Paradise, to say we love Allah^{swt} with all our heart and mean it. He replied, "Yes." Hadhrat Omar^{ra} said, "Please do not tell the other brothers, because they will stop praying, they will stop fasting, they will stop doing all those required things that they are supposed to do, for they will say we just love Allah and leave it there". But, this is how simple it is. If you can convince the Creator, the Lord of all worlds, that you are indeed a true believer, that you are in search for the reason of your creation and you are searching for a spiritual way for your life and you believe in him with all your heart and with all your soul, you indeed will enter Paradise.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said, that this was like spiritual perfume, that the sweat of the Prophets of God have come in out of their pours, the spiritual perfume that the martyrs have, the spiritual perfume that the truthful have, the spiritual perfume that the Messengers of Allah^{swt} have. With this spiritual perfume, our prayer is to pour down the spiritual perfume on us so that no one in this spiritual organization will be left without the perfume that is necessary for us to enjoy the life that we are in.

Hadhrat Bilal^{ra}, and I would like to talk about Hadhrat Bilal^{ra} to sensitize those of you, who may not understand his significance in Islam. But if you look at it, you can look around in the Muslim world, there are so many Muslims who named their children after Bilal for spiritual reasons. Before I get to Hadhrat Bilal^{ra}, The Promised Messiah^{as} writes in "*The Essence of Islam*" in the last Chapter, part 2, which is titled the "Purpose of Man's Creation", in fact this is where I got my speech from, I read it. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that the people who are spiritual, kiss the chains that enslave them. Hadhrat Bilal^{ra} after becoming Muslim, he went to the house of Rasoolullah^{saw} and felt in an embrace with the master, Prophet Mohammad^{saw} that he could feel the heart of Rasoolullah^{saw}, transferring the beat of his heart into the heart of Hadhrat Bilal^{ra}. Rasoolullah^{saw} whispered in Hadhrat Bilal^{ra}'s ear and said, Ya Bilal, my dear brother, today, you are no longer a slave of man; you have become a slave of Allah^{swt}. He went out and his master heard that he had become a Muslim. He wrapped the chains that enslaved Bilal^{ra} most of his life and he dragged Bilal^{ra} through the streets of Mecca and the scene was so terrifying that it is a sign for us when we look for example of steadfastness that Hadhrat Bilal^{ra} kissed the chains that were around his body. He said to himself in his mind, he said, I am no longer a slave of this man. Why cannot he see that I am now a slave of Allah^{swt}. I do not fear anything; I do not regret anything in my life at all, because I know the purpose of my human existence. Why I was created? I was created to worship Allah^{swt}. So he cried out while they were persecuting him, *Ahad, Ahad, Ahad*. He did not call out and said O Abu Bakr^{ra}, come and help me, O Mohammad^{saw} come and help me. He called upon the Being that was responsible for his creation. That is the message that I leave you with today. You know the purpose of human creation, why Allah^{swt} created you. Now it is your job to cry out so that Allah^{swt} can remove those hurdles that stand in our way of preaching and bringing Islam to the people here in America. I close with *Alhamdulillah-e-Rabbil Aalamin*.

(Transcribed by Shahzad Latif)

THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD^{SAW}

AL-ABID: AN EXEMPLAR & A MODEL

Falahud Din Shams



Worship in Other Faiths

Worship and Prayer are the central key components of any religion. Without worship and prayer, what becomes of the meaning of "Faith?" There doesn't seem to be any traditions or history regarding the ways of worship of other Prophets. There are no details of how the Prophets worshipped. How did they prepare themselves for prayer, how many times a day did they pray and in what words did they supplicate on a regular basis?

Therefore, the followers of these Prophets can't seem to find the crucial significance of the form of worship. There was not enough importance to form or substance left to the

followers. When a Prophet cannot be relied upon as an example of prayer or worship, then it is left to the choice of his followers. Obviously, the early followers of these religions never found this to be important enough. If it were crucial to the followers of these Prophets, the practice of their Prophets would have been recorded in detail.

The Holy Prophet's^{SAW} Worship

Unlike other religions, Islam gives a complete description of worship and prayer; and the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{SAW} mirrors this. There is a clear and detailed history of the Holy Prophet's^{SAW} behavior and examples of praying. This is vital to his followers. With his example, Muslims know exactly when to pray and how to pray to God.

His practice of praying started way before his revelation from Allah. In fact, he prayed before becoming a Prophet in the cave of *Hira*. Even before any angel had come to him, he would go to this small cave outside of his town to meditate and pray. At this cave, the *Ka'ba* was visible to him and his attention

was drawn to God, yet God's attributes had not been revealed to him. He was inclined to worship even before his God was defined to him.

In Islam and through the example of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, form and substance for worship are clearly defined and followed. The followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{SAW} know exactly how many prayers to recite, how to recite them, when and how to fast, and how to perform the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca, etc. It is his true example that we as Muslims can follow exactly how to worship Allah. Holy Prophet^{SAW} made sure that by declaring in the *Kalima*, we acknowledge that Muhammad^{SAW} is a human being and a worshipper like us; therefore he must not be worshipped as other religions made deities of their Prophets.

Prayer was so important to the Holy Prophet^{SAW} that there never seemed to be a moment where he would not be worshipping God. He worshipped during the day and most of the night as he was commanded to. Hadhrat Huzaifah^{RA} and Hadhrat Abu Dharr^{RA} relate that the Holy Prophet^{SAW} supplicated on retiring at night:

“With Thy name, O Allah, I expire and return to life;”

and supplicated on rising:

“All praise belongs to Allah Who has brought me back to life after He had caused me to die, to Him is the return.”

While most people are sound asleep at night, the Holy Prophet^{saw} spent his nights praying. His wife, Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra}, relates: “One night I missed the Holy Prophet^{saw} from his bed so I cast about and discovered that he was in bowing and prostration and was reciting: ‘Holy art Thou and Thine is the Praise and there is none worthy of worship save Thee.’”

The Form of The Holy Prophet's^{saw} Worship

The first form of the Holy Prophet's^{saw} worship is *Salat* and this Prayer changed the world. No one could probably imagine it then, but the world can see it now. The form he used for Prayer was a global way of gesturing humility and humbleness. For example, in the *Salat*, when we stand with our hands folded, it is a reflection of people in the West, who fold their hands in front of themselves as a sign of respect to others. In the South American cultures and some Asian cultures, it is a sign of asking for forgiveness when they touch their ears, as we do in our *Salat*. Asians show their respect to others by bowing,

as we bow to Allah in our worship to Him. As we prostrate to Allah, cultures in the Middle East and India also emulate this body language to show humbleness and humility. The form of Prayer has been clearly defined and ultimately, designed to encompass all people of the entire world.

Surah *Al-Fatiha* is the essence of the Qur'an and was prescribed by the Holy Prophet^{saw} to all his followers as part of the regular *Salat*. No Prayer is complete unless Surah *Al-Fatiha* is recited. Although in his congregational Prayers, he would recite smaller surahs and profess to other imams to also recite smaller Surahs, in his own Prayers at home, he would sometimes recite two or three longer surahs in one *rak'at*.

Hadhrat Huzaifah^{ra} relates: “One night he had the opportunity of saying *Salat* with the Holy Prophet^{saw}. The Holy Prophet^{saw} started reciting Surah *Baqarah*, which is the longest surah in the Holy Qur'an. Hadhrat Huzaifah^{ra} assumed that he would recite 100 verses only, however, he continued on. So, then he thought he was going to finish the entire Surah. However, after finishing the entire Surah, he continued with Surah *Al-Imran* and after that, he completed reciting Surah *Al-Nisa*. These three Surahs make up more than 5 parts of the Holy Qur'an. In addition, as much time as he took to recite all 3 Surahs, he spent

equal amounts of time in *Ruku* and *Sajda* as well. So, when the Holy Prophet^{saw} was not saying his *Salat* in congregation, he chose to recite as many Surahs, no matter how long they were, as he wished.”

Although it may seem that the Holy Prophet^{saw} stressed the importance of praying, he also established the importance of moderation in worship. Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates that three persons inquired from the wives of the Holy Prophet^{saw} about his practice in the matter of worship. When they were told, they felt this would not be enough in their case and said: “There is no comparison between the Holy Prophet^{saw} and us. He has been forgiven in advance.” (Meaning that they need to worship more than the Holy Prophet^{saw}) One of them declared: “I shall always spend the whole night in voluntary Prayer.” The second announced: “I shall observe a fast every day without interruption.” The third said: “I shall keep away from women and shall never marry.” The Holy Prophet^{saw} arrived and asked them: “Did you say this and this? Now, I fear God more than you do and am more mindful of my duty to Him than you are, but I observe a fast and also abstain from fasting, and I perform voluntary Prayer at night and also sleep, and I consort with my wives. He who turns away from my practice is not of me.” What the Holy Prophet^{saw} was saying, is that even though he

spent an ample amount of time devoted to his worship and praying, he didn't spend every moment doing it. Although there were days that he would fast, there were also days when he didn't keep fast. There were parts of nights that he prayed and others where he slept. And he pointed out that his followers needed to observe his teachings and not to completely abandon living life for religion. It is noteworthy that in spite of the fact that he performed much worship, whenever he prayed, he always praised Allah and asked for forgiveness. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} relates that in his bowing and prostration the Holy Prophet^{saw} recited repeatedly:

"Holy art Thou, O Allah our Lord, and Thine is the Praise. Forgive me, O Allah."

Fasting

Another method of worship that the Holy Prophet^{saw} practiced was fasting. During the holy month of *Ramadhan*, the Holy Prophet^{saw} adhered to fasting the entire month and devoted his time to Prayer. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} never offered more than eleven *raka'at* at night during *Ramadhan* or at any other time. He would offer four *raka'at* long and perfect, and then four of the same type and then three. She asked him: "Messenger of Allah, do you sleep before offering *Vitr*?" He answered: "Ayesha, my eyes sleep but my heart does not." What the Holy Prophet^{saw} was trying to

say is that even though his eyes were closed, his heart was still worshipping. For example, if something is bothering us, during our sleep, our subconscious is continuously thinking of the problem. Even during sleep, our mind is focused on this problem. The Holy Prophet^{saw} said that even though his eyes were closed, his mind, heart, and soul were continuously worshipping Allah.

Ramadhan was not the only time of the year that he would fast. He would fast throughout the year for a different number of days. Yet, he never fasted for an entire month unless it was during *Ramadhan*. Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} would not fast during a month till we began to think he would not fast in this month, and he would go on observing the fast till we thought he would not omit fasting at all during the month, and if one wanted to see him offering Prayer at night one could do that; or if one wanted to see him at sleep at night one could do that as well.

There is such a large spectrum amongst the various religions regarding fasting. Some religions feel that just by refraining from meat on a particular day then it is considered fasting, while others, such as Hindu gurus and monks of different faiths, fast for long periods of times. The Holy Prophet^{saw} established fasting in the middle ground from other religions. He never

allowed 24 hour fasting, as some other religions. He required people to get up and eat and break the fast at the prescribed times. Once again, when he stressed the importance of moderation in worship, it was reflected in keeping fast as well.

Zakat

The third form of worship is *Zakat* or charity in the way of Allah, which was prescribed by the Holy Prophet^{saw}. He established a prescribed method of *Zakat*. By stating exactly how much and how to give, Muslims know the correct way of worshipping in the form of charity. However, there is no record of him ever paying *Zakat*. From this information, some have derived that the Prophets of God are not obligated to pay *Zakat*. But the fact is that the required *Zakat* is only on the property that a person keeps for more than a year. But anything that came in the possession of the Holy Prophet^{saw} never remained in his hands long. He always gave it away to the needy, therefore, not obligating him to pay *Zakat*.

One of the meanings of *Zakat* relates to the charity or *Sadqa*. In that respect, the Holy Prophet^{saw} was unique in a sense that he gave away everything that was given to him and even accelerated his giving in the month of *Ramadhan*. He was so conscious that no money or wealth should be kept in his house. At one occasion, extraordinary money

came from one of the battles. The whole distribution could not take place by the evening time. That night, the Holy Prophet^{saw} stayed in the mosque and did not enter his house until Hadhrat Bilal^{ra} came and told the Holy Prophet^{saw} that the work was complete and all monies had been distributed.

His desire to give charity to the needy, widows, and orphans is well recorded and cherished by Muslims. One day there was goat meat that was to be distributed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} had left the home and later returned. He asked Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} "How did the distribution of the meat go?" She replied by saying, "Nothing could be saved except for one leg." The Holy Prophet^{saw} said, "No, Ayesha, you should have said 'all of it was saved except one leg'." He was trying to show that the meat that was given away to the needy was actually the part that was saved. It was that distributed meat that would be their reward with Allah. The leg that was left for them to eat would not reward them. It will be consumed in this world and would not be saved.

Hajj

Pilgrimage to Mecca was another form of worship that was established by the Holy Prophet^{saw}. There was no record of how many Hajj he performed before Islam; possibly every year. It is recorded in the history that the Quraish in

Mecca used to perform Hajj every year. Therefore, it is assumed that the Holy Prophet^{saw} also performed Hajj once a year, but the exact number is not known. During his stay in Mecca, he performed two pilgrimages. During his stay in Medina, he did one Hajj in year 10. It is also confirmed that he performed the *Umra* four times during the time he lived in Medina. Also, he showed everyone precisely how to perform the circuit and what prayers to recite. This is the example and model that Muslims use until this day.

One extremely significant role of Hajj is the display of representation of all nations worshipping together in one place. People of all different backgrounds, color, and nationality come together for one purpose and are all equal in the sight of God.

Remembrance of Allah

The last form of worship, which I will discuss, is the remembrance of Allah as practiced by the Holy Prophet^{saw}. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} remembered Allah in every moment of his life. There was never a moment where he would not pray to Allah. I feel he was the personified example of the verse of the Holy Qur'an:

qul inna salati wa nusuki wa mahyaya wa mamati lillahi rabbil 'alamin

Say, My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds." (6-163)

Everything in his life was focused towards Allah. There are so many incidents of the Holy Prophet^{saw} remembering Allah. He prayed at the time of eating, going to sleep, waking up, riding on a horse, entering the house, wearing new clothes, entering or leaving the mosque, looking in the mirror etc. The times are countless. Even while traveling, he was known to pray. Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates: We returned from a journey with the Holy Prophet^{saw} and when Medina came into view he began to repeat: "We are returning safe," turning to our Lord, worshipping Him and praising Him; and he kept it up till we entered the town. He was also known to worship before going to sleep. His wife, Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra}, relates that when the Holy Prophet^{saw} came to bed, he would cup his hands and blow upon his palms and recite the last two chapters of the Holy Qur'an and then pass his hands over his body. Hadhrat Talha ibn Ubaidullah^{ra} relates that, on seeing a new moon, the Holy Prophet^{saw} would supplicate:

"Allah, do Thou cause the appearance of this moon to be a harbinger of peace, faith, security and Islam for us. Thy Lord, O moon, and mine is Allah. May this be a moon presaging guidance and good."

Even in battles, he worshipped, offered his Prayers, and remembered Allah in different ways. He set up a system that while a group of Muslims could say their Prayers, others would set up watch against the enemies. Then these groups would switch positions, so that the others could have their Prayer time. One time during the battle of *Khaibar*, the enemy attacked at the time of the *Asr* Prayer. It was such a vicious attack, that there was no way possible to have even one moment of time for Prayer. The *Asr* time then was over. The Holy Prophet^{saw} really felt bad about missing his Prayer time. As soon as the attack was over, the very first thing he did, was to offer the *Asr* Prayer in congregation.

On every Friday and on *Eid* celebrations, the very last sentence of his *khutba* was about the remembrance of Allah. The Arabic *khutba* that is recited, we call it the second *Khutba*, just prior to the Friday Prayer (*Jumu'ah Salat*), are the words:

udhkurullaha yadhkur-kum wad'oooho yastajiblakum wala dhikrullahi akbar

Remember Allah; so that He will remember you and pray to Him and He will accept your prayers and the remembrance of Allah is the greatest thing.

This is how he finished his *Khutba* every Friday and at *Eid* which are the occasions

of gathering of the largest groups of Muslims in a city or a particular neighborhood. It was of great importance to him that he continuously implanted this in the minds of every Muslim.

Establishment of Worship

In addition to being a perfect model, his biggest accomplishment was that he established worship throughout the world. For example, the time that a Muslim needs to rise for *Fajr* Prayer in New York may be between 5:00 am and 6:00 am. While Muslims are still praying in New York, the time for Muslims to rise in the Midwest has come. While the Muslims in New York are still saying the *Fajr* Prayer that the time for *Fajr* has come in Chicago and Muslims are getting up there to offer their Prayers. The same situation will be emulated by the Muslims in Arizona who are rising for *Fajr* while people in the Midwest are about to finish their Prayer. And once again, while they are still praying, the Muslims on the West Coast are beginning their Prayers. This obviously continues through Hawaii, Japan, and further west. By that time the *Zuhr* Prayer time comes and the same scenario starts all over again. So for 24 hours a day, there are human beings always offering Prayers somewhere in the world. No other Prophet or religion accomplished it. Other religions, whether they have weekly or daily services,

cannot achieve the 24-7 worship of God around the world. Furthermore, this is only the required *Salat* and does not consider the voluntary Prayer that Muslims offer.

Another way to look at this is on a worldwide scale. At any one moment, at various places in the world, it is time for one of the five daily *Salats*. So the daily Prayers are being offered in the world without any break whatsoever.

According to the instructions of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, Prayers are taught between ages 7 to 10. He established among his followers that children aged 7 should learn Prayers. By age 10, they should be forced to offer their Prayers every day. This reflects the importance of worship for his followers. That's why it begins in the early years of life and not in adulthood.

The Holy Prophet^{saw}, in addition to whatever a person wants to pray for, prescribes substance of these Prayers. Although during the Prayer, we all recite and say the same thing, we are also allowed to ask for whatever personal guidance we need. The prescribed Prayers are the ones that appeal to Allah and that is why he taught us those. A Muslim is following a perfect script as taught and practiced by the Holy Prophet^{saw}, but can also ask for any other prayers that personally appeal to him.

The example of the Holy Prophet^{saw} praying all night

until his feet were swollen, praying while traveling, and taking part in expeditions sends a forceful message to his followers for the worship of Allah. There should never be a moment where a Muslim forgets Allah. Not just through prayer, but through our actions as well. Worship is prescribed in other forms, such as *Zakat*, *Hajj*, and fasting. Remembrance of Allah is vital to being a true Muslim.

In our eyes, there can be no human being more perfect than the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} but his humbleness and humility is noteworthy. He always seemed to be asking for forgiveness for himself. Hadhrat Aghirr Muzani^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "Sometimes I perceive a veil over my heart and I supplicate Allah for forgiveness a hundred times in a day." It's amazing that a man as flawless as the Holy Prophet^{saw} could keep asking for forgiveness and be constantly praying and worshipping Allah, while most Muslims need to be consistently reminded to pray. In fact, the Holy Prophet^{saw} prayed so much, that it could not even be remembered how often or how much he prayed. Hadhrat Abu Umamah^{ra} relates: The Holy Prophet^{saw} made many supplications, which we were not able to retain in our memories. So we said to him: "Messenger of Allah, you make many supplications of which we do not remember any." He said: "Shall I tell you something which

shall comprehend all of them? Supplicate in these words: 'Allah, I beg of Thee of good all that Thy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} begged of Thee and seek Thy protection against all the evil against which Thy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} sought Thy protection. Thou art the One who is asked for help and it is for Thee to convey the guidance. There is no strength to resist evil nor power to do good except through Allah.'"

The Promised Messiah^{as} has summed up beautifully the result of the worship, prayers and supplications of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. In his opinion, whatever happened in the beginning of Islam was the result of the supplications of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, which he had submitted to God Almighty with his tears in the streets of Mecca. All the grand victories which changed the entire aspect of the world were the result of his prayers."

(*Al-Hakam*)

The Promised Messiah^{as} writes in , '*Barakatud Du'a*'.

"Have you any notion what was the strange event that occurred in the desert country of Arabia when hundreds of thousands of the dead were revived within a brief period and those who had been misguided through generations put on divine color, and those who were blind obtained sight, and those who had been dumb began to speak of the understanding of the Divine, and the world underwent a revolution which had

never been seen or heard of before? It was the supplications during dark nights of one who had lost himself in God, which raised a clamor in the world, and manifested such wonders as appeared impossible in the case of that unlearned helpless one. Send down Thy blessings and peace, O Allah, on him and his people according to the number of his grieving and sorrows for his followers and pour down upon him the lights of Thy mercy for ever."

(*Translation of the Urdu text*)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} was a great model of worship for his followers. He praised Allah so much, and it was the excellence of his worship that Allah responded with such kindness to him that He had not done in the past. Allah Declared:

innallaha wa mala'ikatahoo yusalloona 'alannabiyyi ya ayyuhalladhina amnoo salloo 'alaih wa sallimoo taslima

Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe, so you also invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace. (33.57)

Under this commandment, all over the world at every hour of the day, there are believers who join Allah and His angels in sending the salutations and blessings on this Prophet. The recitation of *Drood Sharif* ended the speech.

SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE IN ISLAM

Dr. Waseem Sayyed

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا
ذُرِّيَّتًا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلتَّقِيِينَ إِمَامًا ۝

And those who say, 'Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous. (25:75)



The Mindset

Many years in the past, I remember a friend telling me of an Ahmadi Muslim lady being interviewed by the BBC in London, England. She was asked:

"Why do you do make-up if you are going to go out in the street all wrapped up?"

I am using my own words here. And it seemed to me to be a very hard question! I had been in England for a while, I was very young, and my mindset obviously had be-

come the same as that of the interviewer.

The answer was devastating!

It destroyed in an instant, and totally, the mindset that had led to the question! The reply was so simple, so sincere and so true that it left no room for any further argument!

The Ahmadi lady said, again in my own words:

"I don't do make-up for the people in the street, I do it for my husband!"

This incident speaks volumes about how little sanctity of marriage there is left in the modern world but let me come to that, as we get further along.

The Acid Test

My next sentence can be put in a much more scientific way – to do with discarding theories that don't fit the data and all that– but I do not have the time, so let me just say it

this way:

"It is common sense to throw away something that does not work."

But when it comes to the moral field – the modern man refuses to do this. He refuses to bow his head before the data – as he does in the material universe - when we are in the moral and spiritual realm.

He feels he should be able to defy the moral and spiritual teachings and edicts and values well established generally throughout mankind on the basis of the work of great human benefactors – the Prophets of God - all over the earth.

Chastity, purity of conduct, modesty, chivalry, and decency, all these values are under attack and for no good reason and with no good results!

A simple: Why not? Is deemed sufficient basis. Cheat on your wife, commit adultery, fornication, .. all justified often by a simple: Why not?

The universal story of Adam^{as} and Eve, its basic message, according to Islam, was to teach humanity the lesson that the way to create heaven on earth was by promoting and establishing and strengthening the sanctity of marriage and family that results as a consequence.

The Holy Qur'an likens the relationship of husband and wife as that of garments for each other and says that Allah has sent down raiment for you and that the best raiment is that of righteousness and warns the children of Adam^{as} that they be on guard against Satan who is ever on the lookout from where you cannot see him to snatch away your raiment as he did to your forefathers!

Our Christian friends who talk about their men of the cloth – meaning their priests etc. are familiar with this notion.

The Holy Qur'an is a wonderful Book. Its message is so concisely and beautifully presented as to directly reach into the hearts and minds of anyone seriously interested. A basic characteristic of the Holy Qur'an's style is that it takes people's mind from the material to the spiritual – again and again. So the metaphor of the Garden – *Jannat*, paradise, of Adam^{as} and Eve – drives home this message.

Another beautiful aspect of Islamic teachings is their total consistency. Talking of

the garden, *Jannat*, paradise, I am instantly drawn to that wonderful saying of the Holy Prophet^{saw} of Islam – where he is reported to have said:

*al jannato tahta aqdaa-
mul ummahaat*

*Paradise lies under the
feet of your mothers.*

Which mindset mother could provide Paradise under her feet – the one made-up and walking about in the street or the one doing so only for her husband?

A friend of mine said to me while reviewing this – Waseem there are plenty of decent men and women all over the world – the women do make-up and do go out looking good – not to attract attention etc. but just for their own selves.

I could not agree more with him, but the point being made is not that women or men are going out deliberately to harm themselves or to create all the billions of evil intentions in the minds of each other daily leading to the millions of liaisons outside of marriage leading to (I don't think it is necessary for me to be graphic here, but the consequences are well known and documented) without exaggeration, millions of unwanted pregnancies, abortions, broken families, and divorces, and ruined lives, and innumerable tragedies, etc. It matters not whether the parading around is intended or otherwise.

The point being made is that Islam claims to be of Divine origin and claims that God, Who created men and women, says that the way to live in peaceful societies for human beings is to organize themselves around the concept of families founded on the model of Adam^{as} and Eve.

I am reminded also of the case of a close friend of mine who would try so hard in our college days, in discussions with friends, to convince them of the Islamic ways being so much in the interest, and to the benefit of women – and in his own way he would cap the discussion by saying that women in the modern world, who fell victim to these ways, were to be pitied as they were being exploited. His frustration would become evident when almost always, and invariably, he was met with the response by the women that 'well, we like being exploited' I am sure many of us have had this experience – there are, I dare say, some young men and women among us too who have fallen prey to this pervasive mindset and started thinking like this.

When the tastes get corrupted it is hard to argue – the Holy Qur'an says this very beautifully:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ
لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤١﴾
خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى
أَبْصَارِهِمْ عَسَاءَةً وَاللَّهُمَّ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

Those who have disbelieved - it is equal to them whether you warn them or warn them not - they will not believe. (2:7)

Allah has set a seal on their hearts and their ears, and over their eyes is a covering; and for them is a great chastisement. (2:8)

Seeing the fatal consequences of the modern practices, yet people all over the world continue headlong along the same paths.

Whenever, I read the verse of the Holy Qur'an where Allah says:

And cast not yourselves into ruin with your own hands.. [2:196]

I used to wonder: How is this possible? *Is this possible?* Well, here you see what is meant! The sorry state of marriage in the modern world - and its consequent effects on family, society in general - is there for everyone to see - suffice it to say that something is terribly wrong

I shall hopefully be able to convince you that it is the disappearance from the scene of the sanctity of marriage that is the problem and it is this that needs to be restored in order to set things right!

The basic message in the end will be: It may sound nice, this so called 'free' structure of society but the data shows that it is having devastating, even fatal, consequences so:

Do the right thing, the only thing, throw it away.

Try the things that make sense and work. Try the high road. Make the difficult, but right choice. Nothing worth anything can be gotten for free. Ask any mother how much each of her little darling angels cost her - she will tell you. Let me not deliver my invitation to the youth of America just yet. Let me first explain how tough the road I want them to take.

Sanctity: Belief in God and Day of Judgment

Let me say at the outset that the concept of sanctity is empty if not linked to the concepts of God and the Day of Judgment and the Life Hereafter.

It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'an, the Word of God, vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} makes it clear in the very beginning that:

This is a Perfect Book; there is no doubt in it; it is a Guidance for the righteous (2:3)

Thus, it will prove of benefit and be discernible, and comprehensible, and of use, only to those who are *mut-taqeen* - those whose minds are ever full of, and always inclined towards God, otherwise translated often as those ever fearful of God, ever aware of God - who are ever hopeful of and ever fearful of God.

Those who deny and disbelieve in these things say, and this is from the Holy Qur'an:

'And they say, 'When we shall have become bones and broken particles, shall we be really raised up as a new creation?' [17:50]

'What! when we die and are reduced to bones and broken particles, shall we really be raised up as a new creation?' [17:99]

And when it is said to them, 'What think ye of that which your Lord has sent down?' They say, 'Stories of the ancients.' [16:25]

'This is what we have been promised before, we and our fathers. This is nothing but fables of the ancients.' [23:84]

And they say, 'There is nothing except this our present life, and we shall not be raised again.' [6:30]

'There is no life other than our present life; we were lifeless and now and we live, but we shall not be raised up again; [23:38]

And they say, 'There is nothing but this our present life; we die and we live here; and nothing but Time destroys us.' But they have no knowledge of that; they do but conjecture. [45:25]

But the Holy Qur'an tells us that the object of life is a very lofty one and it establishes this truth in very powerful ways. Briefly, it tells man, again and again, from one angle or the other that God didn't take a few billion years to create this universe and this

huge earth size spaceship complete with food and oxygen and every other needed thing for humanity – and humanity itself so that you could go and mess around for a few days in Las Vegas!

Which is amazingly what the Holy Qur'an tells us that those who disbelieve basically think to be the case!

Defiance of God - Consequences

But believe in God and/or the Day of Judgment or not – the laws of nature, so repeatedly cited by the Holy Qur'an to so conclusively establish the truth of these unseen things, cannot be defied without consequences!

Their stories are there in the Holy Qur'an. How again and again those who defied God met their end right here in this world. The fundamental truth and law safeguarded and communicated to humanity through the Holy Qur'an being that, look, just as there is a material universe with its laws of nature, similarly there is a spiritual universe, with its own laws, and that both are God made, and neither can be defied with impunity!

Gain insight from the material and visibly and easily comprehensible and make use of this insight to guide you in the spiritual.

When we look at the modern world we are amazed to find that no one would dare

suggest defying simple ordinary man made laws yet there are whole industries and enterprises set up for encouraging and promoting the abuse of Divine laws. Anything of the nature of moral or spiritual is defied and it is considered a sign of having become an adult to be able to do this – it is almost as if this were a right of passage to adulthood – that now you can begin to defy God!

We read in the Holy Qur'an:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 وَالشَّيْنِ وَالرَّيْبِ
 وَالطَّرِيقِ
 وَهَذَا بَلَدُ الْأَيْمَانِ
 لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ
 ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ
 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ
 غَيْرُ مُبْتَلَوِينَ
 فَمَا يَكْفُرُكَ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ
 أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَاكِمِينَ

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

By the Fig and the Olive,

And by Mount Sinai,

And by this Town, the abode of peace,

Surely, We have created man in the best of creative plans;

Then, when he does evil deeds, We degrade him as the lowest of the low,

Save those who believe and do good works; so for them is an unfailing reward.

Then what is there to give the lie to thee after this, with regard to the judgment?

Is not Allah the Most Just of judges? (95:1-9)

The verses of Surah Al-Tin the

95th Chapter of the Holy Qur'an say all that I need to convey regarding the subject.

In essence what is said there is that God has created human beings in the most perfect manner – and the whole process of evolution is called to stand witness to the truth of this claim!

Then it is said that those who abuse the creation of God become thereby the worst of creatures. Evolution, nature, God, has created for man feet to walk with but if man decides to walk on his hands then how apt is the description of the Holy Qur'an!

The world is accustomed to hearing people say that the religious zealots are the ones who come up with ludicrous things and hold beliefs totally disproved by science and evolution and so on – but let me assure you that the religious zealots do not monopolize this behavior – it is, these days, displayed brazenly by the so-called scientific minded or posing as such when the discussion centers on morals and things Divine or to do with God or Godliness – it is as if to be classified a scientist one must take an oath to deny all that points to the existence, need, or usefulness, of the concept or existence of God or things spiritual or moral.

Marriage According to Islam

Let me describe the sacred

marriage as presented by the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet of Islam^{saw}.

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
 حَلَالٌ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ
 الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ
 غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ وَلَا مَتَّجِدِينَ اخُذُوا مِنْ نَفْسِكُمْ
 بِالْإِيمَانِ لَقَدْ حِطَّ عَمَلُكُمْ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ
 الْخَيْرِ ۝

This day all good things have been made lawful for you. And the food of the people of the Book is lawful for you. And your food is lawful for them. And lawful for you are chaste believing women and chaste women from among those who were given the Book before you, when you give them their dowries, contracting valid marriage and not committing fornication, nor taking secret paramours. And whoever rejects the faith, his work indeed is vain, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers. (5:6)

Marriage in Islam establishes the relationship of husband and wife and this relationship is so beautifully characterized in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an::

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

The function of husband and wife vis-à-vis each other is described as that of a gar-

ment. Generally taken to mean that each plays the role of embellishing and protecting – but an important fact is that garments are the closest things to you. In the Bible this is stated:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. [Genesis 2:24]

Remember, nevertheless, the Qur'anic teaching though that God is nearer to you than even your Jugular vein, as is said:

And assuredly, We have created man and We know what his mind whispers to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (50:17)

But the Holy Qur'an says a lot of things about garments as an explanation of this further.

O children of Adam, We have indeed sent down to you raiment to cover your nakedness and to be a means of adornment; but the raiment of righteousness – that is the best.

O children of Adam, let not Satan seduce you, even as he turned your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment that he might show them their nakedness. Truly, he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you see them not. Surely, We have made Satans friends of those who believe not.

And when they commit an indecency, they say, 'We found our fathers doing it and Allah has enjoined it upon us.' Say, 'Allah never enjoins indecencies. Do

you say of Allah that which you know not?' (7:27-30)

Islam is a self-consistent, complete religion. How wonderfully this is illustrated here again. We are told that husband and wife are garments for each other and then that the best garment is the garment of righteousness – *taqwa* – and now would you be amazed if I read out to you what the Holy Prophet^{saw} read out at the time of the announcement of the marriage of a couple.

The one thing repeated in these, again and again, and again, is this very *taqwa* – or righteousness – or what I earlier tried to convey was a state of mind full, ever, of God, of living, ever, in hope of God, and in fear of God.

"All praise is due to Allah. We laud Him, we beseech help from Him and ask His forgiveness. We confide in Him; we trust in Him alone; and we seek protection with Allah against the evils and mischief of ourselves and from the vices of our deeds."

"Whomsoever God guides on the right path none can misguide him; and whomsoever He declares misled none can guide him unto the right path; and we bear witness that none is worthy of worship but God. He is alone and has no partner and we bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger."

This is followed by the recitation of the following verses from the Holy Qur'an:

"O ye people! I fear your Lord who created you from a single soul and of its kind created its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear ALLAH, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear him particularly respecting ties of kinship. Verily ALLAH watches over you." (4:2)

"O ye who believe! Fear Allah and say the straightforward word."

"He will set right you actions for you and forgive you your sins. And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger shall, surely, attain a supreme triumph." (33:71-72)

"O ye who believe! be mindful of your duty to Allah and let every soul look to what it sends forth for the morrow. And fear Allah, verily, Allah is Well-Aware of what you do." (59:19)

This is what is recited at the announcement of marriage – so it is clear where Islam is coming from.

It is all in keeping with the object that Islam has set for humanity:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي ﴿٥١﴾

And I have not created the jinn and the men but that they may worship Me. (51:57)

And marriage and married life is just a station on that path. And the prayers we are taught also reflect this same focus:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً
مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥١﴾

'Our Lord, make us both submissive to Thee and make of our offspring a people submissive to Thee. And show us our ways of worship and turn to us with mercy; for thou art Oft-Returning with compassion, and art Merciful. (2:129)

The character of the conjugal relationship is beautifully illustrated from the direction of the Holy Prophet^{saw}:

When you come together, supplicate: 'O Allah, safeguard us against Satan, and keep Satan away from such issue as Thou might bestow on us.'

The point I made that Islam is self-consistent we see again reflected very nicely in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet^{saw} in which he is reported to have said:

A woman is married for four things: (1) for her wealth; (2) for nobility of her family; (3) for her beauty and (4) for her (good) character, so attain success with one possessing good character.

Then another metaphor is used to explain more fully the nature of the relationship:

Your wives are a tilth for you, so approach your tilth when and how you like, and send ahead some good for yourselves and fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him, and bear good tidings to those who obey. (2:224)

Again, in a Hadith, the Holy Prophet^{saw} is reported to have said:

khairokum khairokum lay ahlayhee wa ana khairokum lay ahlee.

That the best of you is he who is best in treating his wife and I am the best of you in this.

So this is a brief, quite incomplete, but I hope sufficient, description of the sanctity accorded marriage in Islam.

It is to this sacred way of life that it is our duty to invite the men and women of today. I said earlier that it is an uphill task, a hard and taxing journey – but you know, the more I think about it, and the more I ponder on it, it seems to me that, in reality – in the end, it is in fact an easy road, a satisfying and rewarding struggle, not a deception, nor a mirage, a real life, real achievement to which Islam guides us.

Safeguarding Sanctity

But it is not enough to just declare something to be sacred and certainly, the claim of Islam to be complete and self-consistent would be hollow if it did not make provisions for the protection and safeguarding of the thing it has declared to be sacred! It is stated in the Holy Qur'an:

Say to the believing men that they restrain their looks and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is Well-Aware of what you do. And say to the believing women that they restrain their looks and guard their private parts, and

that they display not their beauty or their embellishment except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they display not their beauty or their embellishment save to their husbands, or to their fathers, or their sons, or the son of their husbands, or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or women who are their companions, or those that their right hand possesses, or such of male attendants as have no desire of women, or young children who have not yet attained knowledge of the hidden parts of women. And that they strike not their feet so what they hide of their ornaments may become known. And turn ye to Allah all together, O believers, that you may prosper. (24: 31, 32)

What Islam has taught and put in place is just the perfection of earlier teachings – for instance we read in Matthew Chapter 5

²⁷ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

²⁸ But I say unto you, t h a t whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

²⁹ And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Explaining the Qur’anic verse the Promised Messiah^{as} writes:

“...The Holy Book of God sets forth directions for both men and women in this context. It says: ‘Direct the believing men to restrain their eyes from looking at women outside the prohibited degrees so openly as to be sexually excited by them, and to cultivate the habit of guarding their looks’ “.

They should safeguard all their senses.

For instance, they should not listen to the singing or beguiling voices of women outside the prohibited degrees nor should they listen to descriptions of their beauty. This is a good way of preserving the purity of their looks and hearts.

In the same way direct believing women that they should restrain their eyes from looking at men outside the prohibited degrees and should safeguard their ears against listening to the passionate voices of such men. They should cover up their beauty and should not disclose it to anyone outside the prohibited degrees. They should draw their head-coverings across their bosoms and should thus cover up their heads and ears and temples. They should not strike their feet on the ground like dancers. These are directions, which can safeguard against moral stumbling.

In Chapter 24 verses 31-32 God Almighty has not only set forth excellent teaching for acquiring the quality of chastity but has furnished man with four remedies against unchastity.

These are:

- To restrain one's eyes from gazing on those who are outside the prohibited degrees;
- To restrain one's ears from listening to their voices and to descriptions of their good looks;
- To avoid occasions which might furnish incitement towards this vice; and
- To control oneself during the period of celibacy through fasting, dieting etc.

We can confidently claim that this excellent teaching with all its devices that is set forth in the Holy Qur’an is peculiar to Islam.

It should be kept in mind that as the natural condition of man, which is the source of his passions, is such that he cannot depart from it without a complete change in himself, his passions are bound to be roused, or in other words put in peril, when they are confronted with the occasion and opportunity for indulging in this vice. Therefore, God Almighty has not instructed us that we might freely gaze at

women outside the prohibited degrees and might contemplate their beauty and observe all their movements in dancing etc. but that we should do so with pure looks. Nor have we been instructed to listen to the singing of these women and to lend ear to tales of their beauty, but that we should do so with a pure intent. We have been positively commanded not to look at their beauty, whether with pure intent or otherwise, nor to listen to their musical voices or to descriptions of their good looks, whether with pure intent or otherwise. We have been directed to eschew all this as we eschew carrion, so that we should not stumble. It is almost certain that our free glances would cause us to stumble sometime or the other.

As God Almighty desires that our eyes and our hearts and all our limbs and organs should continue in a state of purity, He has furnished us with this excellent teaching. There can be no doubt that unrestrained looks become a source of danger.

If we place soft bread before a hungry dog, it would be vain to hope that the dog should pay no attention to it. Thus God Almighty desired that human faculties should not be provided with any occasion for secret functioning and should not be confronted with anything that might incite dangerous tendencies. This is the philosophy that underlies

the Islamic regulations relating to the observance of the veil.

The Book of God does not aim at keeping women in seclusion like prisoners. This is the concept of those who are not acquainted with the correct pattern of Islamic ways. The purpose of these regulations is to restrain men and women from letting their eyes to rove freely and from displaying their good looks and beauties, for therein lies the good both of men and of women. It should be remembered that to restrain one's looks and to direct them only towards observing that which is permissible is described in Arabic by the expression *ghadde basar*, which is the expression employed in the Holy Qur'an in this context. It does not behove a pious person who desires to keep his heart pure that he should lift his eyes freely in every direction like an animal. It is necessary that such a one should cultivate the habit of *ghadde basar* in his social life. This is a blessed habit through which his natural impulses would be converted into a high moral quality without interfering with his social needs. This is the quality, which is called chastity in Islam.

CONCLUSION: The Reward

I began my speech by quoting an Ahmadi Muslim lady from England. Let me come to a close by quoting an

Ahmadi Muslim lady from the United States. This is Maryam Chaudhary Sahiba writing in the August 1995 issue of *The Review of Religions*:

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

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

The Holy Prophet of Islam^{saw} tells us:

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

Modest behavior, of which clothing is only one part, is worth the effort. Why would we, as women, who are entrusted the great responsibility of teaching all of mankind the ways of our Lord, why would ever want to cause indecent thoughts in the mind of our fellow men who are our brothers in the sight of God.

In an Islamic society, men and women help each other achieve goodness; they are not devilishly tempting one another.

The believers, men and

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

So this is the reward. This is what awaits those who make the effort. Let me, therefore, now, having made all plain and simple, invite the young men and women of the United States of America, yes, you, who have been suffering the troubles and travails of life as only you know how!

I invite you to the path of Islam. I invite you to the practices that I have outlined.

You have traveled along those other roads, and you know better than anyone the heavy, lifelong tolls you end up having to pay for a few moments of 'so called fun'. Try the path of Islam! You too will find Paradise on earth as it already exists in the homes of millions of Ahmadi Muslims all over the world. And the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, the same Creator Who fashioned you in your mother's womb, says again and again, that this same Paradise shall manifest itself in the Hereafter also, as we read:

إِنَّ أَحْسَبَ الْجَنَّةِ أَيُّومَ فِي شَتَّى لَهْوُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾
لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَكْفِيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا يَدْعُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Verily, the inmates of heaven will, on that day, be happy in their occupation. They and their wives will be in pleasant shades, reclining on raised couches. (36:56-57)

Again at another place we read:

يُبَادِرُ لَأَخَوْفٍ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّومَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾
أَدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَسْرَرًا وَأَزْوَاجًا مُتَجَبَّرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾
يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِيفَاتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَالْكَوَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾
وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُهُ الْإِنْسُ وَتَلَذُّهُ الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُونَ ﴿٥١﴾
لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَكْفِيهِمْ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

To them Allah will say, 'O My servants, there is no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve.

'You who believed in Our Signs and submitted,

'Enter ye the Garden, you and your wives, honored and happy.'

There will be passed around to them dishes of gold and cups, and therein will be all that the souls desire and in which the eyes delight. And therein you will dwell forever.

'And this is the garden to which you have been made heirs because of what you did.

'Therein for you is fruit in abundance, of which you will eat.' (43:69-74)

And in Chapter 48 Allah, the Exalted, tells us:

لَيْدُجَلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَلا يُكْفَرُ عَنْهُمْ سُبْحَانَهُمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٧﴾

That He may cause the believing men and the believing women to enter the Gardens beneath which streams flow, wherein they will abide, and that He may remove their evils from them - and that, in the sight of Allah, is the supreme achievement. (48-6)

And again Allah says:

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَنْشُرُكُمُ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْقَوْلُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٥٧﴾

And think of the day when thou wilt see the believing men and the believing women, their light running before them and on their right hands, and angels will say to them, 'Glad tidings for you this day of Gardens through which streams flow, wherein you will abide. That is the supreme triumph.' (57:13)

Wa akhiro da'waana anil hamdo lillahay rabbil aalameen!

And our last word is that All Praise belongs truly only to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds!

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR WAQFE NAU BOYS

All those boys who have the blessing and honor of being a member of the *Waqfe Nau* scheme, and are graduating from their respective high schools in 2005 or 2006 are hereby encouraged to apply for admission in *Jamia Ahmadiyya*, Canada to become future Missionaries. Those *Waqfe Nau students* who desire to be admitted into *Jamia Ahmadiyya*, Canada are being asked to forward their parentally approved applications through the local Jama'at President to the **National Secretary, Waqfe Nau at Masjid Baitur Rehman, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905**. This will allow the department of Waqfe Nau to prepare for interviews and complete the official admission process. Please provide the following information in the application:

**Name, Address, Father's Name, E-mail Address
Phone / Fax Number, Date of Birth, Waqfe Nau Number**

Please include the high school student's information along with a complete academic record. It should be noted that the applicant must pass high school with an above average GPA. All *Waqifeen-i-Nau* students are requested to continue learning the proper recitation of the Holy Qur'an and are encouraged to recite the Holy Qur'an on a daily basis.

You are requested to learn the languages of Urdu and Arabic to the best of your ability. Furthermore, you are asked to improve your religious and secular knowledge through the reading of Jama'at literature and periodicals such as; the daily *Al-Fazl*, monthly *Khalid* and *Ahmadiyya Gazette*. Also, please pay close attention to the life and character of both the Holy Prophet^{saw} and the Promised Messiah^{as}. Please pray to Allah^{swt} so that He may enable you to benefit from the purpose of your devotion to Jama'at. Ameen.

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CAREER CHOICE INFORMATION OF U.S. WAQIFEENE NAU ABOVE AGE 15

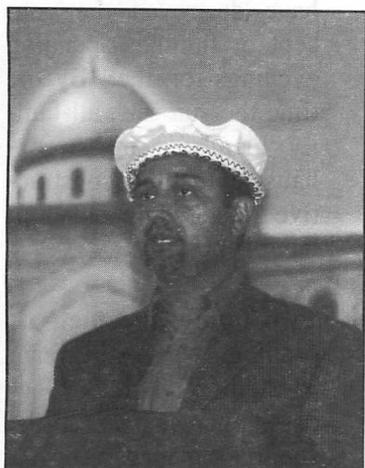
Under the instructions of Syedna Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, given in his Friday sermon of June 18, 2004, a career choice survey was done for U.S. *Waqifeene Nau* above the age of fifteen (born before 1990). The following *Waqifeene Nau* could not be reached because of a lack of information in the Central and U.S. Jama'at systems. The limited information on file is the following:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Father's Name</u>	<u>W.N. #</u>	<u>D.O.B.</u>
Ahsan Khalid	Muhammad Khalid	552A	Jun 29, 87
Ahsan Mubarak Malik	Tariq Ahmad Malik	685B	Aug 27, 89
Faiz Ahmad	Muhammad Akram Omar	544A	Jul 31, 87
Faslah Daud	-----	-----	Aug 21, 89
Irfan Ahmad Azam	Munawar Ahmad Azam	40A	Mar 11, 87
Muzafar Jamal	Munawar Ahmad Azam	40A	Jul 25, 88
Muhammad Izhar Ahmad	Mubashir Ahmad Raja	9020A	Nov 30, 88
Mustansar Ahmad	Muhammad Akram	2199A	Aug 14, 89
Muzafar Masood	Kaleemullah Anjum	3822A	Dec 02, 87
Owais Ahmad Malik	Muhammad Ahsan Nasim	4425A	Jan 11, 89
Rizwan Ullah	Amanullah Cheema	1056A	Dec 25, 88
Sattar Zubair	Muhammad Zubair	2943A	May 05, 86
Tariq Mahmood	Mahmood Mubarik Shakir	1510A	Nov 25, 88
Zareen Rehana	Muhammad Afeef Ahmad	7416A	Apr 23 89

Please contact **Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary, National Secretary Waqfe Nau**, as soon as possible if you find your name on this list. Also, if anyone else has any information about these individuals and their families please forward it to the National Secretary Waqfe Nau USA

CHALLENGE OF RAISING CHILDREN IN WESTERN SOCIETY

Khurram Fuaad Ahmad



Western society in lieu of its modernization, materialistic goals, and material bounties bestowed upon it, provides considerable challenges in raising children. This is further compounded when these norms clash with the mainstream Eastern norms and Islamic values. Nonetheless, the challenge still remains with managing the behaviors and value system of the parents first, which will result in a direct gain in results for their children.

Chapter 1

Introduction

A subject that should be highest in our concern list: Raising our children in a Western Society. While there

is no universal standard for raising children, every parent is keenly involved in this pursuit, devising plans based on the guidance in the Holy Qur'an, Sunnah of our beloved Holy Prophet and the advices of our Khulafa. Thus this article at its most basic level is only meant to be a wake up call so the reader can make a renewed promise to take steps for the betterment of his or her children. *Insha-Allah.*

If all of us gather the gist of Hazoor's^{aba} sermons and advices, we will begin to see a picture being painted for our behavior. I sincerely believe that in our modern society the challenge in raising our children lies with the challenge of putting ourselves on the straight path first. Our children will easily follow us.

On 30th January 2004, Hazoor^{aba} mentioned in his Friday sermon that this advice is for men and women alike. Shops are open that are offering movies that are very indecent and below grade. We must keep people abreast of the ills of these offerings because all these take us on the wrong path. If you want your children to be saved from the

nonsense and keep their future bright, then the only solution is to make them observant of the five daily Prayers, Because, in the Holy Qur'an, Allah has stated that *Namaz* protects us from indecency and wrongdoings. Thus observe your children daily and see how regular they are in their Prayers. May Allah grant high moral standards to our next generations. Ameen.

It is often said that we see ourselves in our children. Similarly, the reverse is also true that our children look at us for the first model to follow. So if we want our children to speak the truth, we must be truthful ourselves. If we want our children to be honest, we need to be honest to them and around them. If we want our children to pray five times a day, the only real possibility is that they see us doing it from the earliest of their childhood. Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} states a saying of Prophet Muhammad^{saw}

Every child is born with an Islamic nature. Then its parents make him or her a Jew, or a Christen, or an Atheist. That is, the immediate surroundings affect the child's thinking. The same as an animal

cub is born flawless. Do you see any of them with their ears cut up? It is the people who later cut their ears and make them flawed.

(Muslim-Kitab-ul-Kadar)

This is the time of the “*Dajjal*”, a time of great turmoil in the world, time of many rapid changes in technology, geo-politics and culture. Everyday our children are exposed to values and norms that either we as Muslims do not agree with, or as part of our Islamic or Eastern values, we are offended by them. Yet, we turn a blind eye towards many common ills by not making sure what impact they may have on our children. Thus the question that should always be with us is: Do we know where our children are?

Chapter 2

Challenges

The challenges posed by Western society are numerous. These originate mostly when the Western morals and values clash with Islamic values, and become increasingly a problem when they collide head on with our Eastern values. To make this article focused on the topic at hand, I have kept the challenges that are solely of Western Society. The challenge is not that the East has moral authority over everything, but rather the challenge is what the modernization in Western society has made our

children susceptible to.

Thus the challenges are as follows:

- ❖ **Media** – Media is the tool of the West. The West uses the media to promote its values and it easily influences the young minds. The media is thus the biggest challenge to watch out for. The media should include television, movies and most importantly the internet.
- ❖ **Promiscuity** – Western society is rampant with illicit behaviors. Nudity, drinking, and gambling are mainstream. Our challenge is to protect our children’s innocence from this onslaught everyday.
- ❖ **Moral standards** – All societies agree on general moral standards. However, the Western society poses a lot of gray areas that become challenging during our children’s exposure to this society.
- ❖ **Schools** – Our children are exposed to a Western majority for a long and extended period of time. We must instill strength in our children to thwart any influences that come their way through peer pressure or general company they keep.
- ❖ **Lack of time due to the fast paced society** – Our work and the time spent

on it becomes our formidable foe in raising our children. The fact remains that the fast-paced society, longer commutes, increasing number of activities for children, (especially the post school activities) have destroyed the concept of families spending evenings together. By the time the sun sets, all family members are so exhausted that no constructive relationship development is possible.

- ❖ **Two family income** – A problem for mainstream Western society may become increasingly an issue to be managed for our Ahmadi society as well

So far, the reader will agree that the challenges laid out are truly of modernization, and cannot solely be blamed as a product of Western society. This is established because our Eastern brethren are increasingly becoming aware of these challenges in their society and devising plans to cope with them.

Eastern societies are increasingly falling victims to increased Media onslaught through competitive multiple channels. Technology is allowing it to be more affordable for everyone to own a television, or a DVD player and net cafes are allowing even a street person to use the Internet. In his Friday sermon on 30th October 2003, Hadhrat Khalifa-tul-Masih V^{aba} gave

the following advice:

“Internet relationships should not be kept. We should make them (children) understand with love, with tenderness. Understand it ourselves also, otherwise, remember that children born of Ahmadi mothers will be given up to strangers, because you (mothers) are being callous to yourself as well as your generations. This advice is for men and women alike. Shops are open, that are offering movies that are very indecent and below grade. We must keep people abreast with the ills of these offerings because all these take us on the wrong path. If you want your children to be saved from this nonsense and keep their future bright, then the only solution is to make them observant of the five daily Prayers. Because, in the Holy Qur’an, Allah has stated that *Namaz* protects one from indecency and wrongdoings. Thus observe your children daily and see how regular they are in their prayers. May Allah grant high moral standards to our next generations. Ameen”.

East or West, with all these options available and we as social animals working even harder to fulfill the desires that we ourselves are creating, this hunger, this desire, this ambition can easily be termed the never satisfying fire that we must save ourselves and our families from (66:7).

7.0 ye who believe! save yourselves and your families from Fire whose fuel is men and stones over which are appointed angels, stern and severe, who disobey not Allah in what He commands them and do as they are commanded.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا تَقُونَ
 أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ
 وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ كِلَابٌ
 مُسَبِّحُونَ فَلَا تَلْمِزُوا لَهُمْ مِمَّا
 يُقْتَضُونَ ۗ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

Chapter 3

Coping with the Challenges

The challenges specified earlier can only be managed when we face these head on. We make the realization that our children are our future and apart from their worldly knowledge, their moral upbringing, Islamic and Ahmadi values, and cultural depth of our forefathers will be the strong pillars to base their future on.

Truly though, this challenge does not start with our children but starts with ourselves. Children are mere mimics at their early developmental stages. The environment we provide for them, the model we present to them and the knowledge we impart on them will only start with us building the environment, us being a model that is worthy of following and us having any knowledge to impart. Thus when Hadhrat Khalifatul-Masih IVth advised Lajna on the annual Ijtema in 1983, he stated:

“Thus establish a relationship with Allah, and then fulfill the obligation of this rela-

tionship, and keep this belief that this relationship will enlighten your lives as well as enlighten the lives of your next generations. And Allah will continue to love and care for you and generations to come... As I have said earlier, the most important thing to me is to have women that establish relationship with Allah. This work has to start at early childhood because this work takes time”

The challenges need to be accepted and dealt with at three levels:

- ❖ Managing our own behaviors as the models to be followed
- ❖ Managing early childhood through early adulthood of our children
- ❖ Drawing a balance between Godly and worldly goals

Once we accept these challenges and start to work cohesively as loving parents in achieving these goals, we will gain the joys of seeing our children grow as a blessing for us and for the community. Two things remain prerequisites for managing these challenges:

Prayers for the Children

We are all but mere created beings. There is nothing we can do that can guarantee the safe upbringing of our

children, and there is a lot we cannot do to ensure the opposite. As humbled created beings, Allah has given us one tool to get this guarantee, which is our sincere and emphatic prayers for our children. Not a minute should be left without prayers for our children. All else is an effort that we can build upon:

قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ *

He says, "My Lord, grant me the power that I may be grateful for Thy favor which Thou hast bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do such good works as may please Thee. And make my seed righteous for me. I do turn to Thee; and, truly, I am of those who submit to Thee." (46:16)

Loving Home

A safe and loving home provides a safe and nurturing environment that extends a safe haven that the children can grow in and remember as they grow. The late Khalifatul Masih IVth, speaking regarding how parents can create a paradise at home said:

"Thus when the Holy Qur'an states that, until both parties become peace for each other to expect that their children will bring peace to them is an exercise in imagination, carries great wisdom which relates directly to the human psyche. The reality is that, the

parents that receive peace from each other always find their children to bring peace to them. There is cohesiveness in the upbringing, and children are being raised under similar mindset. Those mothers and fathers that truly love each other and are respectful to each other and worrisome for each others needs and civil to each other, then their chil-

dren also love their parents and form better relations within the family. Thus these children truly bring peace to their parents".

Once we have accepted that prayers will yield the direct benefit for us as well as our children and start to be a loving set of parents, we are in a position to take the challenges for raising the children in a modern as well as a Western society.

Managing our own behaviors as the models to be followed

When we make the following prayer of the Holy Qur'an (25:75):

75. And those who say, 'Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous.'

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا ذُرِّيَّتًا قَرَّةَ عَيْنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

We are asking Allah to make our family a delight for us. But the prayer enjoins us to be

a model for the righteous. To be a model, requires that we are following Allah's commandments to the letter and following up on our responsibilities to His beings. There is great wisdom in this verse that we must ponder on. If we are a model for the righteous then we are righteous ourselves, which will create a regiment of righteous practices led by us, leading our family, our children and those around us to be righteous.

When a child is born in our house, we make a promise with that child. This promise is made when we call the *Adhan* and *Aqamat* in her or his ears. We make the promise that we will uphold the greatness of Allah, we bear witness to the *Tauheed* (Oneness) of Allah, we bear witness to the prophethood of Muhammad^{saw}, and we proclaim that we will draw the child to prayers and to good deeds.

How can we keep these promises if we ourselves are not following up on these mandates? Thus the mission of safe and righteous upbringing of our children begins with the straightening of our selves.

Managing early childhood through early adulthood of our children

What we often fail to recognize is that the children up

to the age of sixteen spend most of their time at home and at school. As parents, our sole effort has to be directed in managing these two segments of their lives. I believe that if we learn to manage these two important segments and build the foundation appropriately, the game as we call it is won.

At home the burden is to manage the mini society that we create. This mini society has laws, morals, relationships and history. All of these culminate into a mold that our children pass through. If this mold has any leaks, a deformity will occur and this deformity when left unchecked becomes the challenge that we all pray, no one ever has to face. Up to the age of five, children are learning everything from us. This is the time to sow the proper seeds. This is the time when we alone are the images that will be left in their minds. This is the time to show by example the five daily Prayers, regular recitation of the Holy Qur'an and managing our time.

After age five the children start to get influenced by the outside society. They are spending a good amount of time outside the house, making new friends and start going to school. Now the challenge is to instill confidence in our children and foremost manage the company they keep. I must stress this again: The **company** our children keep. Someone once asked Hadhrat Mir Ismail^{ra}, regarding the effects of a company

one keeps. His answer was:

"The effect of company one keeps is a philosophical and keen question. One matter is certain that there is some effect and no one can negate that. I have a container with oil in it. The oil is inside the container but the area around it is still greasy. I have an electric lamp, that when lit, lights up everything to a distance. I have a fragrant bush that casts its smell to a furlong at night. When inanimate things can have such an effect on their surroundings, the effect of human society, good or bad must be stronger."

Our children must learn to grow with the belief that being different is their pride and their strength, and keeping with good company is essential for their Godly as well as worldly gains. They do not need to follow the mainstream population because our beliefs have better morals nor they should ever be ashamed of their beliefs or their Islamic heritage.

Most of us are following this regiment at home but we fail to recognize that we must get involved in the other life of our children, which is at the school. Treat school as your first avenue of "*Tabligh*". This is mostly passive "*Tabligh*", but "*Tabligh*" it is. This involvement can include participating in the school activities, volunteering for school programs etc. but most importantly, this is to get involved with the teachers in

guiding their curriculum. Teachers are hungry for material that can allow them to offer diversity in their teaching programs. Work with them to provide informative lectures on our festivals, our beliefs and show them that the perceived differences are actually very superficial.

Raised in Pakistan and now raising children myself, I see challenges on two levels:

1. How to accept that Western society is indeed different, and that the East does not have a monopoly on good morals
2. Channel the new generation's eagerness properly and guide them to adopt good morals in light of our "Islamic" teachings

In his book "*Way of the Seekers*", Hadhrat Khalifa-tul-Masih II^{ra}, has given some explicit directions on raising children. I will encourage all here to read this book. Based on my established preamble, I have selected the following advices as most relevant:

1. **A child should not be allowed to choose his own friends.** Please consider this in the Western society as very important. As mentioned earlier, your children's friends will carve a good portion of your children's personality
2. **Tell the child that it is nice and good.** Children need encouragement.

Moreover the children should always be led to believe that no matter what the issue is, they should always feel confident in approaching us.

3. **Address a child politely and courteously, for a child is a great mimic.** Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw} states:

“Respect your children”

This respect starts with being soft spoken to them so that the children can easily pick the politeness from us.

4. **Do not lie to a child nor be peevisish or arrogant with it.** Children are very observant. They will quickly adopt our way and mimic what we do not want them to.
5. **Stop children from playing in privacy.** Today this is an advice that should be strictly followed to the letter. Today the opportunities to get corrupted are limitless and one wrong exposure is one too many for our children so the children should be kept under a watchful eye at all times

Drawing a balance between Godly and worldly goals

We love our children, and will do everything in our power to provide them com-

fort. Remember not to be misguided in this love for them. Get up yourself for *Fajr* Prayers and wake up your children as well.

wa'mur ahlaka bissalaati

And enjoin Prayer on thy people (21:133)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} states a saying of the Holy Prophet^{saw} emphasizing the same subject:

“Allah have mercy on the man who gets up at night, offers *Salat*, wakes his wife. If she hesitates then sprinkles a little water on her face so she can wake up. Similarly Allah have mercy on the woman who got up at night, offered *Salat*, woke her husband. If he hesitated then she sprinkled a little water on his face so he could wake up.”

(Abu-Daud Kitabus-Salat)

We may feel that our children need to sleep a bit more, or our heart may ache at their pleading for some extra sleep but remember that this is not something that can be negotiated on. Hadhrat Khalifa-tul-Masih IVth has spoken on this at length. Today the idea is to lead by example. More often we are faced with challenges when we have our own shortcomings, yet we expect our children to be perfect. Here I want to relate an incident from Hadhrat Amma Jan's^{ra} life regarding love for prayers, love for Allah and belief in Allah:

When her son Mirza Mubarak Ahmad was very ill and nearing death, she was sitting next to him when suddenly she said that why should I be missing my *Namaz*? The child is nearing death and there is no knowledge of how long he will live but my Allah's rights must be fulfilled. So she said this and started praying. When she finished her Prayers, she asked how was Mubarak? She was told that he had died. All she said at that was:

inna lillahi wa inna alaihi raji'oon

Indeed we are for Allah and it is to Him that we return.

No undue expression of emotions and wailing, like many women do. This was so much accepted by Allah that Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{ra} received a revelation:

“Allah is Pleased”.

When Hadhrat Amma Jan^{ra} heard of this, she was so happy that the loss of her son was immaterial, and she said that, “I am so happy that the grief over the death of even two thousand Mubarak's will not compare to the joy I have received with this blessed news.”

Of human actions, those that relate to human beings and are inter-human in character are called moral. The same actions, when they relate to

God, are called spiritual and form part of the spiritual life of man. I believe that if we can instill the following qualities in our children, we will have given them a great boost in the right direction. On the other hand, if we shy away from these responsibilities due to our laziness or lack of interest then we are our children's worst enemies.

1. **Love for One God.**

This is the most important attribute to instill. The oneness has to be in all its attributes, but most importantly have them believe that Allah is their sole provider and sole listener of their prayers.

2. **Love for the Holy Qur'an.**

The only guiding light available to us, and especially because of the blessings we have received by accepting the Mahdi of the time allows us greater insight into the Holy Qur'an. Children should be enjoined to recite the Holy Qur'an regularly, understand it and give it respect not by adorning it physically but by adorning its teachings in their spiritual and moral self.

3. **Love for Prophethood, especially the love of Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw}.**

Prophethood is a blessing that Allah has bestowed

on its creation (us). With the appreciation and love, the children develop a keen insight into the lives and lessons of these holy personalities.

4. **Love for God's creations.**

This is important because with this comes the appreciation of our self and what Allah out of his graciousness has provided for us.

5. **Love for Khilafat.**

This is very important from the aspect that children need a focal point. Khilafat provides this from every aspect during their upbringing.

6. **Love for the Jama'at.**

This allows the children a sense of belonging. In this society the sense of belonging goes a long way in allowing the children a good upbringing.

7. **Preferring Godly goals over Worldly goals.**

An oath we all take in our pledge to our Khalifa, prescribed by Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}, is an oath that must be instilled in our children at an early age through example. Once our children understand the meaning of this pledge, the rest comes easy to them

I will further emphasize

that these qualities cannot be force fed to the children. Today's children are very intelligent. Remember that each generation is genetically programmed to exceed the former. This along with the technological advancements available, has given our children a huge starting lead. Thus remember that the children are constantly watching us for example. If they see us following after materialistic ambitions then their "Ma'b-ood" (One to Worship) will quickly turn away from Allah as well. If they do not see us working at the first call of our office holders and keeping a constant attachment with the Khalifa, then remember that there are enough attractions for them elsewhere.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

So far I have emphasized on issues that regardless of the society you live in, must be passed on to our children. Then how come we always are faced with the challenge that Western society poses a threat for our children?

Honestly speaking, there is a lot of good in this society that we overlook in our hasty judgment. This society abhors social evils. This society still condemns cheating, lying, stealing and promotes general good-will towards fellow beings. So is the challenge in this society mainly the free and rampant willingness to

shed clothes? Is the challenge in this society how to find time to be with our children? Is the challenge of this society to educate our children to be well-versed in Islam? Is the challenge in this society the total and utter "Undependence" (word used by Hadhrat Khalifa-tul-Masih IVth in his book: *Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues*) on God because of the material bounties bestowed on this society?

I will respectfully submit that the challenges mentioned so far cannot be labeled Western or Eastern. These challenges are the challenges of our times. These challenges had been prophesized years and centuries ago. These challenges are why we exist as a Jama'at. So the answer to the question posed earlier simply will state:

"Our goal is to bring up our children in this society as good Muslims. Accept that we are part of this society, but do not accept that the society must become a part of us".

In the end the following saying of the Promised Messiah^{as}, allows for true reflection of the self and represents strength when we may feel despair:

"Think not, you are sinners. Will your prayers be heard? Do not think like this. Man makes mistakes, but a time comes when he is able to overpower his sinning self. This power to overpower the sinning self is also built into

the nature of man. Water puts out fire. This is part of its nature. Howsoever you may heat it, when water drops on fire it must put it out. That is natural. So is man a purifier by nature. Every man has this purifying property. Do not feel defeated because you have been involved in sin. Sin is like a stain on the surface of a piece of cloth. It can be washed away. Your habits, your dispositions may be dominated ever so much by your passions. Pray to God weeping, crying, He will not let your prayers go waste. He is full of compassion".

(Badr 1907)

I will hope that we focus on this attribute in our children. Develop the confidence in them and provide them the tools to wash away the stains as they may encounter them in life. West or East, the challenge remains that the children are our responsibility and our future.

In the end I want to leave you all with this thought: We have chosen to live in this society. We all have come to learn to do basic things ourselves. We mow our lawns; we fix basic things in the house and do our own basic chores. Then, my dear friends, why do we expect that our children should be helped from outside? This job is ours, not our parent's. This job is ours and not of Jama'at's. This job is ours and ours alone.

Al-Fazl International

Al-Fazl International is a weekly Urdu newspaper that has been published since January of 1994 in the United Kingdom. The newspaper today enjoys International readership. New York Jama'at has been given the responsibilities of distributing and increasing circulation of this weekly newspaper within the United States. Earlier, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth had set a target of 350 subscribers in the USA.

Unfortunately, we are lagging far behind in achieving the goal assigned to us. All Jama'at members are encouraged to subscribe to the newspaper. It is an important newspaper as it routinely carries Friday sermons of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, religious articles written by various *Ulema* of the Jama'at and Jama'at news. **Subscription is \$120 for 52 weeks, which includes mailing charges. Please make checks payable to:**

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“CHALLENGES FACING MUSLIM YOUTH IN WESTERN SOCIETY”

Aamjad Mahmood Khan



koonoo ma'assadiqeen

*Be with the truthful.
(9:119)*

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} writes:

*“Qutb ka kam dho tum
zulmato tareeke main,*

*bhulay bhutko kay leey
rahnoma ho jao”*

Be like the guiding star in utter darkness; be a leader to those who are astray and who are misguided.

I will never forget my first week of law school in September of 2001. I was 3,000 miles from home near Boston, Massachusetts, away from my parents, family, and friends living alone in a dormitory.

One incident from that first week struck me in particular. I remember seeing a flyer posted on the elevator door which read: “First Weekly Bar Review: 8 PM Thursday”; I assumed that the review session would be covering the first week’s reading materials for my classes that semester—classes that most law students refer to as “bar courses.” So, I quickly jotted the date and time down on my planner. When Thursday came, I heard a knock on my door at around 7 PM. It was my next-door neighbor asking me if I was going to the bar review session. I replied that I was going to go, but I needed to know what classroom it was being held at. He broke into laughter and asked me if I was joking. I didn’t quite understand. He then proceeded to tell me that the first bar review was going to be held at the Red Line Bar in Boston and that we shouldn’t pass up on the free alcohol. I just looked at him for a few seconds and said, “No thanks... why don’t you go ahead.” He gave me a strange look and left. I looked down the hall and noticed every student on my floor dressed up ready to head out to this bar. Within minutes, the dorm cleared out and all

was quiet.

I walked back in my room and sat down on my bed. I placed my hands on my head and slowly surveyed my room: on the book shelf lay a copy of the Qur’an, near my window a picture of my parents, on the floor a Prayer rug, on the night stand my black Prayer cap, and in my hands a copy of that Bar Review flyer. I was 22 years old at the time, it was cold outside, I was alone, and I was frightened. Here now I was ready to embark on a very difficult intellectual journey, and I would have to do so with no one around me who shared my same values, no Ahmadi there to guide me. Here now I was forced into a position where I had to make decisions about my own life, test the strength of my convictions, and withstand challenges to my Ahmadi identity. Indeed, it was in that moment when I first realized in my life what it meant to grow up as an Ahmadi Muslim in America.

My story is like so many stories of the Ahmadi youth here in attendance today. Indeed, the topic that has been assigned to me -- the challenges facing our Muslim

youth -- is a serious one. My aim today is to tackle some of the tough issues facing our Ahmadi youth in America today and to do so from an insider's perspective so to speak. Many of the parents in attendance today understand the basic teachings of Ahmadiyyat with respect to raising their children, but many still struggle to understand the real challenges faced by their children in America. What do American Ahmadi youth have to deal with on a daily basis, and how do we protect them from walking down the wrong path?

In researching for my speech, I thought about all the various challenges facing the youth today and tried to come up with the one single challenge that is the source of all other challenges. What is the one overarching, all encompassing challenge facing our Ahmadi youth today? The answer is identity. American Ahmadi youth sometimes do not know who they are and to whom they belong to. They sometimes face an identity crisis where they adopt the identities of those around them--they assimilate and accept the social norms as they see them. Our beloved Hadhrat Khali-fatul Masih IVth explained this problem in his address at the Canada Jalsa Salana in 1992. He said:

"Ay America or Canada kay Ahmadio, tum kub tak bhairon kay libas main zindagee basur karo gay.

Utho aur in libason ko chaak kar tho. Tum Khuda kay shair ho, or shairon kee tarah, dhandhanatay hoo-ay aur garajtay hoo-ay, junglo per fathayab ho jao..."

(Urdu Transliteration)

"O' Ahmadies of America and Canada, for how long will you remain in sheep's clothing? Wake up and leave that clothing! You are the lions of Allah, and like lions, with might and tenacity, you must conquer the jungles ahead of you..."

These powerful and insightful words of our late Hazoorth deserve careful attention. Hazoorth describes the sheepishness of some Ahmadies in America and Canada. Some of our youth in particular are sheep to the shepherd, and the shepherd is Western society. Some of our American Ahmadi youth fail to recognize and take pride in their Muslim identities.

Indeed, the concept of identity is a deeply significant one. Knowing who you are enables you to resist the temptations of this society. But what exactly is this identity? The answer is amazingly clear. Allah says in Surah Al-Hijr, Verse 22:

howa sammaa komul muslimeen

He (Allah) named you Muslims. (22:79)

In Surah Al-Baqarah,

Verse 129, we read the prayer of Hadhrat Ibrahim^{as} who said:

rabbana vaj'alna muslimainay laka

Our Lord, make us submissive to Thee. (2:129)

Taken together, these verses clearly define the identity of our American Ahmadi youth to be that of a Muslim. Given these verses, you would think that there's no reason for our youth to have an identity crisis.

But while the description of their identity is clear, American Ahmadi youth have a difficult time recognizing it. This is because it is not reinforced by people around them in American society; in point of fact, there is a negative reinforcement. Certain aspects of American society threaten the identity of an American Ahmadi youth. Our youth must figure out these threats and overcome them. Three main threats to identity stand out to me: social interactions, information, and materiality, and I will address them one at a time.

The first major threat to the identities of American Ahmadi youth is their everyday social interactions. Our American Ahmadi youth interact daily with people who drink alcohol, take drugs, and engage in promiscuous activities. Take alcohol for example. According to a recent

study at MIT University, 81% of college students drink alcohol, and 31% of college students abuse alcohol! The eerie reality is that drinking is something that American Ahmadi youth have to deal with. As I mentioned earlier with my "bar review" story, drinking is a part and parcel of American academia to such an extent that many Deans of Students regularly sponsor drinking parties. The story is even worse for our young Ahmadi professionals who have to deal with social drinking. Drinking at large corporate firms is a rite of passage. How do our American Ahmadi youth deal with this reality? One way to fight the threat of drinking is to create and sustain an impression among your peers that you do not drink. It's important to take pride in being different—to show how you don't need alcohol to interact well with your peers. Some people will obviously look at you strangely, but most will admire the strength of your convictions and will help you preserve your Muslim identity. To give you an example, at a company retreat, the managing partner at my firm walked in a large meeting hall and handed me a can of Diet Coke and then began talking to me about work. This indicated to me that not only did he find out from someone that I don't drink, he removed any artificial barriers that might have been created as a result of it. The lesson here is to let people adapt to your lifestyle in-

stead of you adapting to theirs.

Like drinking, interacting with members of the opposite sex is an inescapable part of American culture. Our beloved Imam, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} delivered a sermon on this very issue on December 11, 2003. Hazoor^{aba} said that Satan is present wherever Islamic practices are absent, and the free mingling of sexes on college campuses is especially dangerous. Given the level of co-education in America, our American Ahmadi youth interact with members of the opposite sex with group projects for school or work. Casual interactions can explode into dating. Again, to prevent these interactions, one potential solution is to create and sustain an impression in the mind of the man or woman you're working with that you abide by certain limitations specified in Islam. For young American Ahmadi youth, this is a very difficult task and some of them feel vulnerable in this position.

When this happens, our youth should remember the story of Prophet Joseph. Hadhrat Yusuf^{as} resisted the sexual advances of the wife of his Egyptian master by seeking refuge with Allah. He admitted that no amount of effort on his part could safeguard him from Satan, and only the grace and mercy of Allah could protect him from being seduced. We read this in Surah Yusuf, Verse 54. Hadhrat Yusuf^{as} says:

wa maa ubarri'u nafsee. innannafsa la ammarah, bis soo'ay, illa ma rahima rabbee. inna rabbee ghafoorur rahim.

And I do not absolve myself of weakness; for, the soul is surely prone to evil, save that whereon my Lord has mercy. Surely, my Lord is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (12:54)

My dear brothers and sisters, Hadhrat Yusef^{as} trusted Allah in preventing the wife of his master from seducing him; indeed, our American Ahmadi youth can follow his sublime example to safeguard themselves from the Satanic tendencies that can arise when they interact with members of the opposite sex.

The second threat to the identity of American Ahmadi youth is information. We're living in the technological capital of the Western world where information lives. The amount of information processed in this day and age is mind-boggling. The worldwide web consists of over 3 billion pages of information. Indeed, as one contemporary musician observed, "We are getting high on information." Take one aspect of information: the news. On a daily basis, we flip through various news channels and internet sites - CNN, MSN NBC, FOX, BBC - all suggesting competing versions of the same story - all spinning the truth in their own way. Now,

what is the risk of being exposed to so much information? The risk is that our American Ahmadi youth amass a great deal of secular knowledge, but do not make room for religion. In a society that is obsessed with information, religion proves to be irrelevant.

So, how can our American Ahmadi youth prevent this risk? They must use the Qur'an as their information filter. Whatever information they are exposed to that contradicts the teachings of the Qur'an, they must question it. This is the reason our beloved Hadhrat Sahibzada Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad Sahibth, late Ameer Jama'at of America, urged American Ahmadi families to create "Universities of Islam" within their homes to equip our American Ahmadi youth with the truth. Indeed, just two weeks ago (August 20, 2004) our beloved Imam^{aba} recited the verse of Surah Al-Muminum,

***walladhina hum 'anill-
aghway mo'ridhoon***

*And who shun all that
which is vain. (23:4)*

Hazoor^{aba} discouraged spending needless hours surfing the internet and encouraged our youth to focus on what is relevant in their lives.

The third and final threat to identity is materiality. Without a doubt, the relentless pursuit of material pleasure is

the bane of this society. This pursuit sadly permeates into our American Ahmadi youth as well. If you sit in on a conversation among some of our youth, you'll hear talk of Cadillac Escalades with 20-inch rims, plasma TVs, fancy cell phones, and fancy sounds systems. But it's not the acquisition of these items that are bad, it is the reason why they are acquired — the image-seeking pursuit of one who's cool and sophisticated. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth, during a question & answer session in Australia on September 30, 1983 had this to say about these pursuits:

"I have studied American society. There they invent new ways of pleasure. All the magazines are devoted to pleasure. All the psychological studies are concerned with pleasure — even in the name of science, they tell people to seek pleasure in different directions, be it Sadism or homosexuality. This mad pursuit of pleasure has made them totally non-dependent on God. In the name of freedom, Americans are putting themselves into shackles..."

Hazoor'sth powerful condemnation of American society has an implicit message for the American Ahmadi youth. By going down the pleasure-seeking path, they risk losing their Muslim identities. The moment our youth realize that they do not need to be like the people they see in TV to be accepted by society,

the less materialistic they become. Our youth must destroy the threat of materiality lest they continue to lose sight of their identity.

Having now discussed the three main threats to identity and some ways to fight these threats, let me now focus on two key solutions to the challenges faced by our American Ahmadi youth, and these are strength of community and prayer. Turning first to strength of community, Allah says in the Qur'an in the verse I recited earlier in my speech:

koonoo ma'assadiqeen

*Be with the truthful.
(9:119)*

The best way to preserve one's identity is to spend time with people who have similar identities. The importance of this verse cannot be emphasized enough. Our American Ahmadi youth are truly fortunate to be a part of a large community or Jama'at.

The significance of community has never been more important than during this past year. Indeed, for most of our American Ahmadi youth, April 19, 2003 will forever be etched in our hearts and minds. On this sad day, our beloved Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth passed away. It was a profound loss - one that deeply affected Ahmadi youth all over the world. For Ahmadies of my age and generation, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth was the only

Khalifa we knew and communicated with. He was our spiritual grandfather and guide. I was blessed with the opportunity to journey to London to attend his funeral and to witness working of the *Majlis-e-Intikhaab* (the body responsible for the election of the Khalifa). One particular image during my visit is still stuck in my head. Just after the Hazoor'sth funeral prayers, I exited the tent and saw thousands upon thousands of Ahmadi youth gathered together in an orderly manner quiet and subdued. What struck me more were the thousands of Ahmadi youth in attendance. We truly felt proud at that moment to belong to a community so dynamic, so organized, and so loving, *maa shaa allah*. The loss of Hazoorth was made easier by the strength of our community. The youth rallied together in the most inspirational way and leaned on each other's shoulders in this time of deep crisis. Many of the Khuddam afterwards spoke to me in tears that they never needed the Jama'at more than they did now. My dear Ahmadi youth, no person outside this Jama'at could have truly felt the pain you felt on April 19, 2003. To cope with the loss of our beloved Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth, you needed the Jama'at. Indeed, my dear Ahmadi brothers, if you take one message from my speech, let it be this: it is not so much that Jama'at Ahmadiyya needs you; indeed, it is you who need Jama'at Ahmadiyya.

The second key solution to the problems faced by Ahmadi youth is Prayer. Without a doubt, observance of *Salat* is the ultimate solution to preserve one's Ahmadi identity on a daily basis. Prayer is the glue that binds the youth to their Community. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an in Surah *Al-Imran*:

*alladhina yadhkuroon-
alla ha qiyamanwwa
qo'udanwwa 'ala junoobi
him*

Those who remember Allah while sitting, and lying, on their sides. (3:192)

We are taught to pray five times a day. Each Prayer corresponds to a different stage of the day, so that by praying at every major shift in the day's sequence, a Muslim is taught to glorify God. The gaps between Prayer timings are chances to slip, to be induced by temptation; but the cycle of Prayer regulates your day-to-day behavior because from one prayer to the next you know you have to talk to God, to face Him, and so you rectify your behavior accordingly. My dear brothers, American Ahmadi youth constantly facing the worst temptations, the worst social evils; their ultimate weapon against these evils is daily Prayer.

Let me now recap where we've come. We've discussed the overarching challenge faced by American Ahmadi

youth today, which is the problem of preserving their Muslim identities. We've discussed three major threats or sub-challenges to identity: first, social interactions, be it through exposure to drinking or to members of the opposite sex; second, exposure to excessive amounts of information; and third, exposure to material pleasure. Finally, we identified two key solutions to overcome the problems facing American Ahmadi youth, namely the strength of the Ahmadiyya Community and Prayers.

The final component necessary to protect one's identity is courage. Our American Ahmadi youth need courage to withstand the pressures and threats of this society and to defend their Muslim identities. I would like to end my speech with a famous story of courage. Many of you have heard the story of Hadhrat Talha^{ra}, a companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, fought bravely during the Battle of Uhud. He courageously kept his hand in front of the face of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} even though arrow after arrow pierced it. His hand was permanently crippled after this battle. I wanted to end my speech by quoting from Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II's^{ra} Friday sermon delivered on April 10, 1938. In Urdu, he described the significance of the story of Hadhrat Talha^{ra}, and I quote:

“Daikho kitna azeemush-shaan sabak is waki'ya may pinha(n) hay. Talha jaantay thay keh aaj Muhammad^{saaw} kay chayrah mubarak kee hi-faazat mayra hath kar raha hay. Agar mairay ith haath main dhurra bhi harkat hooei, tho teer nikkal kar Muhammad^{saaw} ko ja lagay ga. Phus, uno nay apnay hath ko nahee hilaya. Kyun kay wo janthay-thay kay is hath kay peechay Muhammad^{saaw} ka chayra hay. Isee thura ugur thum bee up-nay under yay ahsas payda kuro, ugur thum bee yay samaj nay lago, kay hamaray pechay Islam ka chayra hay. Or Islam or Muhammad dho nahee bulkay aikee hai(n). Tho, thumbi aik muzbooth chataan ki thara qaim ho jao, Or thumbi hur who theer jo Islam ki tharaf phainkha ja tha hay apnay hato or seeno phir laynay kay leelay thayar hojao. Bhus yay muth khayal kuro kay tumaray member kum hay ya tum kumzoor ho. Bulkay tum yay sumjo, kay hum jo Khadim-e-Ahmadiyyat hai(n) humaray peechay Islam ka chayra hay. Thub, bayshak thum ko, Khuda tala ki taraf, aysee takat milaygee jiska muqabla koey nahee kursukay ga. Phus, thum upnay amal say upnay aapko mofeeth vujud banao. Thake dunya ko maloom ho, kay Ahmadi ikhlaq kitnay bulund ho thay-hay.”

(Urdu transliteration)

“Just see what an incredible lesson this incidence has for you! Talha^{ra} knew full well that today his hand

was protecting the face of Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saaw}, and any slight movement could lead to an escape of an arrow that could pierce the beautiful face of the Prophet^{saaw}. Therefore, he did not shake his hand even the slightest. In the same way, if you (the youth) also understand that behind you is the face of Islam, and Islam and Muhammad^{saaw} are not different entities, but rather they are one and the same, then you will be established like a rock, and every arrow, which is directed to ruin Islam, you will be prepared to receive on your chest. Do not consider that you are small in number or are weak; rather you must keep in mind that you are a servant of Ahmadiyyat and behind you is the face of Islam. Then you will gain such strength from the Almighty God that no one will dare to attack you ... and the world would learn that Ahmadiis are at a sublime level of morality.”

May Allah enable our youth to develop the courage of Hadhrat Talha^{ra} and grow up as righteous Ahmadies in America. Ameen.

HUMANITY FIRST

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JIHAD

Jihad is of three types:

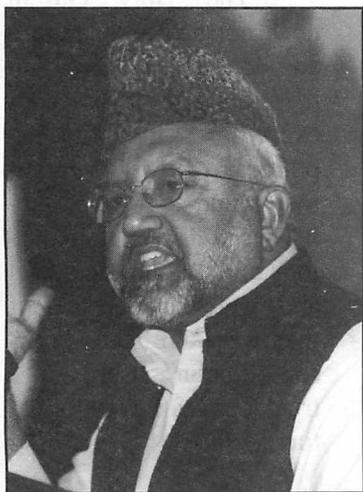
1. The *Jiha-d* that is waged against Satan and satanic teachings and designs, and efforts to convey the message of Allah and to preach the Word of God, is the great *Jihad* (*Jihad Kabir*).
2. The *Jihad* against oneself which in Islamic idiom is called the greatest *Jihad* (*Jiha-d Akbar*).
3. The *Jihad* that is waged against the enemy of freedom of conscience; this is called the lesser *Jihad* (*Jihad Asghar*).

In his book, *Masih Hindustan Mein* (Jesus in India), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as} writes that there are only three instances in which Islam permits the use of force. Firstly in the act of self defense, secondly as a form of retribution, for example the death penalty for murder, and thirdly to establish freedom for Muslims who are killed as a result of their religious beliefs.

(A Study of Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Exposition of Jihad, Tayyba Seema Ahmad, p 32, Jesus in India, p 12)

THE HOLY QUR'AN – THE PERFECT GUIDANCE FOR CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN THE WESTERN SOCIETY

Nasir Mahmood Malik



Life's journey is very competitive and full of hurdles and risks. And, then there is the natural law of consequences. To get ahead safely in this journey, we need to constantly search for and learn better ways of running our lives. Enamored and flooded by the modern power of reason and scientific discovery, we eagerly look towards the latest research and hypotheses by the contemporary experts, the philosophers, the psychologists, the specialists, etc. But, mostly the focus of such research and discovery is the material life only.

The principle of safely getting ahead through continuous learning and self-improvement should at least

equally apply to our moral and spiritual lives. Because of the lop-sided and shortsighted pursuit of material success only, we find our society in moral and spiritual decay. Such decline poses severe challenges for those who wish to lead a more balanced life, a life of material success without compromising the moral and spiritual life.

Just like to be successful in the world, we need to set our goals high, to be successful in the spiritual world, we need to set our goals high too – *Nabiyyeen*, *Siddiqeen*, *Shohada*, and *Saliheen*. Aspiring to lead such a sublime life is indeed a very tall order and poses several challenges, especially, in the Western society.

So, where can we find the guidance for facing these challenges and leading such a sublime life? As Ahmadi Muslims, we believe that the Holy Qur'an is the Perfect Guidance for this purpose. We believe it is the Word of God revealed on the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. And, just as he is the *Khataman Nabiyyeen*, the Holy Qur'an is the *Khatamal Kutub*, i.e., the last, the

perfect, and the matchless book of guidance for all mankind and for all times.

We also believe that, as prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, is the Promised Messiah and the Stipulated Mahdi. As such, he is the Arbitrator (*Hakam*) and the Just (*Adl*) of this age. Therefore, his divinely inspired explanations and teachings deserve serious consideration and understanding for success and salvation in this age.

To facilitate such consideration and understanding, let us focus on why the Holy Qur'an is the Perfect Guidance for Challenges of Living in the Western society, and, more importantly, why it is incumbent upon us to follow this Guidance.

Why is the Holy Qur'an the Perfect Guidance?

1. It is the only Revealed Book that claims to be the Perfect Book.

tanzeelummir rabbil 'alameen.

It is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. (56:81)

zaalikal kitabu la raiba feehee

This is a perfect Book; there is no doubt in it. (2:3)

2. It is the only Guarded and Preserved Book

inna nahno nazzalnaz zikra wa inna lahoo lahaafizoon

Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian. (15:10)

bal howa qur'anumma-jeed, fee lau him mah-mfooz

Nay, but it is a glorious Qur'an. In a well guarded tablet. (85:22-23)

3. It is a Blessing and Mercy of God

haadha kitaabun anzalnaaho mubaarakun, fatatabi'oooho wattaqoo la'al-lakum turhamoon

This is a Book which We have sent down; it is full of blessings. So follow it, and guard against sin that you may be shown mercy. (6:156)

wa nonazzilo minal qur'ane ma howa shi-

faaunwwa rahmatullil mo'mineen

And We are gradually revealing of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers. (17:83)

4. It is Decisive and Definite

innahoo laqawlun fas-lunwwa ma howa bil hazl

It is surely a decisive word, and it is not a useless talk. (86:14-15)

The Promised Messiah^{as} states:

*"The Holy Qur'an is so glorious that none other can excel it in its glory. It is *Hakam*, i.e., the one whose judgment is the ultimate; and it is *Muhaimin*, i.e., the compendium of all guidance. Therein is found every argument one may require."*

(Khutba-e-Ilhamiya, p 103)

5. It is the Law of Nature

tanzeelammimman khalaqal ardha was samaawaatil 'ulaa

A revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens. (20:5)

"In truth the Holy Qur'an is a picture of the Divine Law of Nature, which is visible everywhere. It is perfectly reasonable that the word of God and the work of God should be in accord with each

other."

(Kitabul Bariyyah, p. 87-88)

6. It is the only Rational Book

The Promised Messiah^{as} states:

"The Holy Qur'an does not desire to impose any doctrine perforce. On the contrary, it precedes everything that it expounds with such arguments and logic as establish its truth. ... Its teachings are straight, powerful and well balanced as if they were a reflective mirror of nature itself and a true copy of the law of nature."

(Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya, p 81-82)

7. It is the only Living/ Universal Book – For all Mankind/Times

feeha kotobun qayyimah.

Therein are lasting commandments. (98:4)

The Promised Messiah^{as} states:

"Of all current revealed Books, the Holy Qur'an is the only one in accord with human nature."

(Braheen-e-Ahmadiyyah, p. 81)

wa maa arsalnaaka illa kaa affatallinnase bash-eeranwwa nazeera

And We have not sent thee but as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner, for all mankind. (34:29)

qullau kanal bahro mi-adalle kalimaate rabbee lanafidal bahro qabla un tanfada kalemaato rabbee wa law ji'na bimithle-hee madaada

Say, 'If the ocean became ink for the words of my Lord, surely, the ocean would be exhausted before the words of my Lord came to an end, even though We brought the like thereof as further help.' (18:110)

The Promised Messiah^{as} writes:

“The meanings of the Holy Qur’an are unfolded as demand is created according to the changing times and stand guard like well-armed soldiers against the insinuations and aspersions cast in every age.”

(Izala-e-Auham, Part 1, p 255)

Hadhrat Chaudhary Muhammad Zafrullah Khan^{ra} writes:

“An amazing miracle of the Holy Qur’an is that it contains teachings for all situations and all ages. This can be described by citing the example of our Solar System and Earth, etc.; all have been present since the advent of man in the same state as they are today. However, with time

man has increased his knowledge, making discoveries, unraveling the treasures that existed from the very beginning. Similarly, the Holy Qur’an has been around for 1,400 years and in it all spiritual and moral guidance has been amassed. According to the needs of the time and era, God’s holy people ponder over it and acquire its enlightenment.”

(Aik azeez kay naam khat – Letter to a Dear One, p. 37-38)

“The Holy Qur’an carries perfect guidance in it and does not constitute of anything that could in any way be harmful to mankind because it is the word of a Being that has created man and indeed the entire cosmos. He knows the intricacies and depths of human nature extremely well and knows the evil temptations and thoughts that can prevail therein. He knows what situations man has to go through and the difficulties he has to face.”

(Aik azeez kay naam khat – Letter to a Dear One, p. 37-38)

In short, according to the Promised Messiah^{as},

“The Holy Qur’an is a miracle the like of which never was and never will be. The door of its grace and blessings is always open, and it is as bright and manifest in every age as it was in the time of the Holy Prophet^{saw}.”

(Malfoozat, Vol III, p. 57)

Dil main yeh hee hai her dam tayra saheefah choomoon

Qur’an kay gird ghoomoon ka’ba mera yeh hee hai

My heart yearns every moment to kiss Thy Book And circuit around the Holy Qur’an, for it is my Ka’aba.

Challenges of Living in the Western Society

Now, let us reflect upon the root cause of the moral and spiritual decadence in the Western Society. Primarily, this is a Judeo-Christian society and as such the Holy Bible was its original foundation. However, we find that the current Bible is not only inadequate and outdated but also corrupted. Therefore, not finding what the intellect of modern mind requires, it has essentially become irrelevant for daily life in this society. And, worst yet, this society has largely become oblivious to the presence of the Living God.

This indifference to God has led to a materialistic and sinful life – a life with wishful desire for instant gratification, lust for power and prestige, futile search for peace and happiness, insatiable thirst for wealth and excitement. Such a life leads to a society where ends justify the means and where immodesty, substance abuse, spouse/child abuse, and other crimes are the norm. In

essence, a life without God is a Sinful Life (like absence of light is darkness, absence of *taqwa* is sinfulness).

On the other hand, it is only the Holy Qur'an that provides the perfect guidance for real success and salvation. The Promised Messiah^{as} writes:

"The true purpose of a heavenly Book is that it should rescue its followers from a sinful life through its teaching and influence, and its power of reform and spiritual qualities, and should bestow a pure life upon them and after purifying them it should bestow upon them full insight for the recognition of God and should establish a relationship of love and devotion between them and the peerless Being, Who is the fountain-head of all joys. In truth this love is the root of salvation and this is the paradise. ... I wish to convey to everyone that the Holy Qur'an is the Book which fills all these needs."

(*Chashma Marifat*, p 291-295)

Some Precious Principles of the Holy Qur'an

Let us ponder over some of the precious principles of the Holy Qur'an and judge for ourselves if this indeed is a perfect guidance.

• Worship

yaa ayyohannaso'bodoo

rabbakomullazee khalaqakum wallazeena min qablekum la'allakum tattaqoon

O ye people, worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may become righteous. (2:22)

• Zikr and Peace of Mind

ala bezikrillahe tatmainnul qolooob

Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort. (13:29)

• Righteousness

yaa ayyohallazeen aamanuttaqullaaha wal tanzur nafsum ma qadamat leghad

O ye who believe! Fear Allah, and let every soul look to what it sends forth for the morrow. (59:19)

yaa ayyohallazeen aamanuttaqullaaha wa koonoo ma'assadeqin

O ye who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful. (9:119)

lan tanalul birra hattaa tunfeqoo mimma tohibboon

Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend out of what you

love. (3:93)

• Steadfastness

yaa ayyohallazeena aamanusberoo wa saaberoo wa raabetoo, wattaqullaaha la'allakum tuflehoon.

O ye who believe! Be steadfast and strive to excel in steadfastness and be on your guard and fear Allah that you may prosper. (3:201)

• Qaul-e-Sadeed

yaa ayyohallazeen aamanuttaqullaaha wa qooloo qawlan sadida

O ye who believe! Fear Allah and say the right word. (33:71)

• Indecency and Evil

innas salaata tanhaa 'anil fahshaa'e wal munkar

Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil. (29:46)

• Modesty

qul lil mo'meneena yaghudhdhoo min absoarehim wa yahfazoo foroojahum, zaaleka azkaa lahum. Innallaaha khabeerum bema yasna'oon

Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes

and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is aware of what they do. (24:31)

- **Mutual Cooperation**

wa ta'awanoo alal birre wat taqwaa wa la ta'awanoo alal ithme wal 'odwan

Help one another in righteousness and piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression. (5:3)

- **Peace and Harmony in the Society**

yaa ayyohallazeen aamanoo atee'ullaaha wa atee'ur rasoola wa olil amre minkum

O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you. (4:60)

- **Marriage**

arrajalo qawwaamoona alan nisaa'e

Men are guardians over women. (4:35)

- **Wordly Life:**

wa mal hayaatud dunyaa illa la'ibunwa lahw

Worldly life is nothing but a sport and pastime. (6:33)

- **Unity**

wa'tasemoo behablillahe jameen-wala tafaaraqoo. Hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah and be not divided. (3:104)

- **Reconciliation**

as-sulho khair

Reconciliation is best. (4:129)

- **Patience**

We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives, and fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient, who, when misfortune overtakes them, say, 'Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. (2:156-157)

- **Social Responsibility**

Verily Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. (16:91)

Similarly, there are hundreds of such golden principles of real success in this wonderful holy book dealing with liquor, interest, gambling, backbiting, etc. The proof of the veracity and riveting effect of these principles lies in the dream lives of the companions^{ra} of the Holy Prophet^{saw} and those of the Promised Messiah^{as} and his

companions, and their Khulafa^{ra}. How miraculously did their lives change for the best after they started practicing on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an?

We need such role models living in the Western society

The ignorant might argue that those are the tales of the old or of people of the East. Therefore, we who live in the Western world can negate such an absurd argument by demonstrating a similar effect of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an in our lives.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

wal takumminkum ummatunyyad'oona ilal khairi wa ya'moroona bil ma'roofi wa yanhauna 'anil munkar, wa olaa'ika homul muflihoon

And let there be among you a body of men who should invite to goodness, and enjoin equity and forbid evil. And it is they who shall prosper. (3:105)

Divine Grace and Mercy (Some Qur'anic Prayers)

Despite one's best and most sincere efforts, one cannot succeed without Allah's Grace, Mercy, and Help. The

Holy Qur'an says about Hadhrat Adam^{as}:

fatalaqqaa aadamo mir-rabbihee kalimaatin fataaba 'alaih

Then Adam learnt from his Lord certain words of prayer. So He turned towards Him with mercy. (2:38)

It is another unique feature of the Holy Qur'an that it contains the most profound and comprehensive prayers that cover every possible situation that one may face in this life, for example:

- *Our Lord, do not punish us, if we forget or fall into error; ... efface our sins and grant us forgiveness and have mercy on us; ... (2:287)*
- *Our Lord, forgive us our errors and remove from us our evils, and in death number us with the righteous. (3:194)*
- *Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of Fire. (2:202)*
- *Our Lord, grant us of our spouses and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous. (25:75)*

And Allah promises in the Holy Qur'an:

ud'ooni astajib lakum

Pray unto Me; I will answer your prayer. (40:61)

It is incumbent on us to learn and follow the Holy Qur'an

We, the Ahmadi Muslims, need to learn, follow and teach by example the beauty of the Holy Qur'an. If we can spend our whole life in learning about science, math, and all other contemporary subjects, we are certainly capable of learning the profound teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Our school going children should spend some reasonable amount of time in the study of the Holy Qur'an and then it should become a life long practice for all of us.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

ya ay'yohallazeena amanu qu anfosakum wa ahleekum naara

O ye who believe, save yourselves and your families from a Fire. (66:7)

The Holy Qur'an is a magnificent favor on us from Almighty Allah, and He warns that:

la'in shakartum la-'azedannakum wa la'in kafartum inna a'zabi lashadid

If you are grateful, I will, surely, bestow more favors on you; but if you are ungrateful, then know that My punishment is severe indeed. (14:8)

The Holy Prophet^{saw} says:

khairokum mun ta'alamul Qur'ana wa al-lamahu.

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

(Bukhari)

He in whose heart there is nothing of the Qur'an is like a house in ruin.

(Tirmidhi)

In the 6th Condition of Bai'at, we pledge that we shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and shall completely submit ourselves to the authority of the Holy Qur'an; and shall make the Word of God and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet^{saws} the guiding principles in every walk of our lives.

The Promised Messiah^{as} writes:

“Consider this well and do not pass over it in haste and supplicate God that He open your minds to it.”

(Izala-e-Auham, pp. 352-356)

“For mankind now, all over the surface of the earth, there is no Book except the

Holy Qur'an. Those who do honor to the Holy Qur'an shall be honored in the heavens.

....The Holy Qur'an can purify a man within a week, provided there is no attempt to get away from it in form or spirit. The Qur'an can make you like the Prophets, provided you do not try yourself to run away from it."

(Kashti-e-Nuh)

"Be alert all the time and do not take a single step contrary to Divine teaching and the guidance of the Qur'an. I tell you truly that anyone who evades the least one of the 700 commandments of the Qur'an, shuts upon himself the door of salvation. The ways of true and perfect salvation have been opened by the Qur'an and all the rest is its reflection. Therefore, study the Qur'an with care and hold it very dear with a love that you have not for anything else. As God has conveyed to me:

alkhairo kullohoo fil Qur'an

i.e., All types of good are contained in the Qur'an. This is wholly true. Those people are to be pitied who prefer anything else to it. The Holy Qur'an is the fountainhead of your prosperity and salvation. ... There is no other book under the heaven beside Qur'an which can furnish you with salvation. It is indeed a great blessing of God upon you that He has bestowed on you a

book like the Qur'an."

(Kashti-e-Nuh, p. 36-37)

The Law of Consequences

We must remember the ubiquitous law of consequences; there is no escape from it. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

laises lil insani illa masaa

Man will have nothing but what he strives for. (53:40)

We are our choices. So, let us make the right choice. Let us make the Holy Qur'an our anchor so we don't drift too far from the right path. This choice will require a change in our behavior. Change means to give up something to gain something. May Allah enable us to give up our old ways to gain a life of true compliance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an; a supreme choice indeed. *Ameen.*

The Bottom Line: Whatever, whenever, and however we do, at the end of the day, we wish and pray to be counted among those about whom Allah says:

radhiallaho 'anhum wa radhoo 'anho

Allah is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. (98:9)

The Promised Messiah^{as} writes about Ahmadiyya beliefs

"The summary and essence of our faith is that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad^{saw} is the Messenger of Allah. Our belief that we profess in this life and with which, through the favor of God Almighty, we shall pass on to the next life, is that our lord and master, Muhammad^{saw}, the Chosen One, is the Seal of the Prophets and best of Messengers, at whose hands the faith was perfected and the bounty was completed through which by treading the straight path, a person can reach God Almighty. We believe with absolute certainty that the Holy Qur'an is the last of the Heavenly books and that not a word or vowel point of its laws and limits and commandments can be added to or subtracted from. No revelation can now be received from God which can have the effect of modifying or abrogating the commandments of the Holy Qur'an, or of changing any single one of its directions. Anyone who thinks otherwise is, according to us, not a believer, and is a heretic and *Kafir*. We also believe that even the lowest stage of the straight path cannot attain to any stage of honor and perfection or of nearness to God except through the true and perfect following of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. Whatever is bestowed upon us is by way of reflection and through the Holy Prophet^{saw}."

(Izala-i-Auham, pp 69-70)

ISLAM IN THE WEST

(AMERICA)

Musa Asad



Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Wal 'asr, innal insaana lafee khusrin, illalladheena aamanu wa 'amilussalihaati watawasau bilhaqqi watawasau bissabr.

The subject of Islam in the West is immense and obviously cannot be fully addressed in my brief presentation today. I will focus primarily on the case of America –

- (i) Because that's where we are and
- (ii) Because there are many cultural similarities between America and most other Western countries. I will also limit my remarks mainly to the Qura'nic

verses I recited a few moments ago. As we shall see shortly, in the great wisdom of the Qur'an, just these few verses provide the fundamental response to various questions such as:

What is the real Islam in the West?

Where do we find it?

Who are the true followers of Islam? And so on.

Mankind In a State of Loss

The portion of the Qur'an I recited is from Chapter 103, Surah *Al-Asr*. The translation is:

*In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful
By the fleeting Times,
Surely, man is in a state of loss,
Except those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to be steadfast. (102: 1-4)*

Let's examine first the initial section of the verses recited – they refer to “that age when man as a whole would

be in a state of loss.” Though there is no specific reference to the West, even a casual observer could recognize the signs here in America. Despite great wealth and power, the family (arguably the very core of society since the earliest civilization) is in great turmoil. Dr. Kevin Leman, the internationally acclaimed psychologist and author of *Keeping your Family Strong in a World Gone Wrong*, presents some striking findings:

Researchers estimate that (in America) about half of all marriages will end in divorce, and about a third of all babies are born to unwed mothers. The odds say that most couples about to get married will remain so about 11 years – less than life of their washer, dryer, or refrigerator. The odds say that drug pushers will approach you and your children, or at least by peers who want you and your family to light up and be part of the fun.

(Keeping your Family Strong in a World Gone Wrong p.1-2)

But we need not rely on the research findings of an expert. Surely, we're all too well aware of the reality around us.

The media constantly reports the tragedies of divorce, delinquency, inadequate education, and unwanted pregnancies. Crime is on the increase, often connected to drug and alcohol abuse. Listen to some statistics from a recent Reader's Digest report:

- (i) The Marin Institute says alcohol-related problems give us a \$185 billion annual hangover;
- (ii) Cigarette smoking, \$137 billion;
- (iii) Underage drinking last year cost the nation \$53 billion, says the National Academy of Sciences;
- (iv) Cocaine alone snorted away \$47 billion from American businesses, states the US Chamber of Commerce;
- (v) Identity theft costs us \$53 billion annually, according to the Federal Trade Commission;
- (vi) Frivolous lawsuits, another \$170 billion;
- (vii) Crime, a whopping \$450 billion;
- (viii) Obesity and stress combined for over \$1 trillion cost to society at large.

(Reader's Digest July/04, "The \$50 Billion Headache")

Throw in the nearly trillion dollar pornography and gambling industries – yes,

they're actually called industries – and this all adds up to a condition that sounds pretty much like "a state of loss" to me. In the words of one of the most revered leaders in the history of the United States, President Abraham Lincoln:

"We have grown in numbers, wealth and power... But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious land (that) preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become... too proud to pray to the God that made us!"

(The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, ed. Roy P. Basher, vol. 6, p. 156, 1953).

America Aligned With Islam

But my intent is not to stand before you today and focus on gloom and doom statistics and scenarios. Let's recall the second section of the verses I recited at the outset – that man as a whole would be in a state of loss, *except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and deliver the Truth in a manner that is also truthful.* The good news is we do find such people in America – all across this great country,

among the Christians, the Jews, an increasingly rapid-growing population of Muslims, and others. And we find in America a rich tradition of much that resembles the Truth – religious freedom, tolerance, individual self-worth regardless of gender or race, a rigorous work ethic, charity, and many other righteous qualities.

Ironically, though the Major Media might have us believe that Islam mainly promotes terrorism and fanaticism, many of the basic teachings of Islam are well aligned with the fundamental tenets of American culture. The values inherent in our constitution, pledge of allegiance, and patriotic songs, call forth the authority of God, brotherhood, and liberty and justice for all. Similarly, the life of the founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{SAW} is replete with admonishments and daily practices highlighting the same themes. Even to the end of his life, virtually on his deathbed, he exhorted his followers:

"... All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold are equal. (Raising his hands, and joining the fingers of one with the other, he added). Even as the fingers of two hands are equal, so are the human beings equal to one another. No one has any right, any superiority, no

claim over another... God is One and your ancestor is one. An Arab possesses no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab over an Arab.

A white (man) is in no way superior to a black nor, for that matter, is a black (man) better than a white, but only to the extent to which (he) discharges (his) duty to God and man(kind). The most honored among you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you..."

(Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues, p.138).

The Founder of Islam^{saw} also put great emphasis on raising the status of minorities and the down trodden. Though slavery was common, he freed those under his dominion; an African slave, Hadhrat Bilal^{ra}, he elevated to the post of one who recites the call to Prayer (*Muedhdhin*).

With respect to women, his teachings went beyond mere liberation of rights to address fundamental issues of dysfunctional relationships between men and women. Through the Prophet Muhammad^{saw}'s teachings of segregation, sexual anarchy was brought to a halt. Order between male and female relationships was established on the basis of deep moral principles. The status of women was raised to such high standards that they could no longer be treated as little more than

commodities. They were given an equal share in the affairs of life.

Whereas previously they were distributed as chattels of inheritance, now they could inherit not only of the estate of their fathers but also of their husbands, children and next of kin. They could not only be divorced but they had equal rights to divorce their husbands if necessary. In short, under Muhammad^{saw}'s leadership and guidance, women were provided virtually all the same rights and privileges that we now find in America – yet, more than 1400 years ago!

And his teachings went beyond mere liberation to defining roles and relationships that would lead to the stability and strengthening of the family – not its breakdown. Women as mothers were treated with profound respect. It was the Prophet Muhammad^{saw} who was to stand for the rights of women by declaring that:

Paradise lies under the feet of your mothers.

He was not only referring to a promise to be fulfilled in life after death, but to high social status (or paradise) promised to a people who showed profound respect and reverence to their mothers. Similarly, in a well-known Hadith (or saying) of the Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, Hadhrat Abu Harairah^{ra} relates that he said: ...The most perfect of believ-

ers in the matter of faith is he whose behavior is best, and *the best of you are those who behave best towards their wives*. Take note – and the best of you are those who behave best towards their wives.

Which Islam

Elevation of the status of women and minorities, liberation from slavery, equal rights regardless of race or station in life – are these not among the most basic of American values? One might think that Americans would embrace Islam, and Muslims. Yet, Dr. Kevin Leman's findings on a "World Gone Wrong" in America, of stressed-out moms and myriad other social problems begs the question – is the social reality today really the American ideal of liberty and justice for all?

Similarly, faced with endless images of radical Islam, Americans are hardly to blame for their curiosity and skepticism –

What really is Islam?

Who are the true Muslims?

What does it mean to be a Muslim in America?

And if a friend or neighbor is open-minded enough to attend a Muslim conference, social conference, or other event, what he/she witnesses may only lend credence to existing stereotypes.

As is true for other world religions, the implementation of Islam in practice does not always live up to the lofty ideals set forth in the Qur'an and by the Founder of Islam^{saw}.

Here in America, for example, a casual observer might readily notice the various different styles of garments and scarves Muslim women wear to cover themselves. The observer might, on one hand, attend a Muslim gathering where women are fully covered from head-to-toe. In another setting, the same observer might just as readily meet a Muslim female teacher, doctor, or lawyer, who covers herself with a modest outfit and scarf. Who's right? Who's wrong? Does it matter? Or, our observer might attend a Muslim gathering and find that, despite the technological advances of modern society, there are little or no arrangements in place that enable men and women to exchange ideas. And, so the observer may begin to wonder – Is this what the Founder of Islam^{saw} had in mind when he laid the groundwork for elevating the status of women and minorities? Are there cultural issues at play? How does Islam the scripture differ from Islam in practice? And so on...

Part of the challenge in responding to these sorts of issues and questions is that the practice of Islam in America (and, for that matter, the world) is not singular in na-

ture. That should not be much of a surprise – it's certainly true of America as well. Many politicians, for example, refer to a Red America and a Blue America – the so-called conservatives who tend to support traditional values such as family, faith, defense and minimalist government; the so-called liberals who tend to support comprehensive social programs and wide-ranging social choices. Even as Barack Obama publicly promotes a compelling vision – that there is no White America or Black America, no Asian America or Latino America, there is the United States of America – privately, politicians know that the fundamental issue driving the coming Presidential election is a polarized America.

But one need not be divisive to recognize differences. Just as Americans celebrate diversity, so Americans will come to realize that there are many different Muslims in America. While Muslims in America share basic beliefs, cultural differences are bound to yield different approaches to the daily practice of Islam.

The trick, perhaps, for Muslims themselves and American observers, is paying attention to the cultural differences and recognizing them for what they are, identifying the spirit of Islam and its teaching underlying such varying cultural approaches, and remembering that Islam is a religion – for all mankind.

There is no such thing as an Islamic culture, there are peoples of various cultures who seek to follow the religion of Islam. Remember the Prophet Muhammad's^{saw} farewell sermon that "an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, nor a White over a Black, and so on... And, again, the Qur'anic – *except for those who believe and do righteous deeds* – these do not single out any particular culture over another.

Indeed, as Haddad and Esposito elaborate, in their recent book, "*Muslims on the Americanization Path*", one of the most important characteristics of the Muslim community in America is its diversity. It includes immigrants who chose to move to the United States for economic, political, and religious reasons from over sixty nations and various ethnic, racial, linguistic, tribal and national identities. It also includes a large and growing number of converts, who have opted out of the dominant American culture.

While the vast majority of Muslims in America today remain foreign-born from nation states with identities formed by European colonialism, the now-burgeoning second-generation immigrants and converts are increasingly developing their own identities, often equally comfortable as Americans as they are Muslims. Whether or not a unique (or at

least common) American Muslim identity can be established and maintained over time is increasingly a central focus of many Muslim immigrants, converts, communities and organizations. It is challenging both because of the dominant Judeo-Christian society that America represents, as well as the considerable diversity of Muslims themselves.

Haddad and Esposito's findings indicate that the conversion of African-Americans to Islam, for example, has been both an inspiration and a challenge to the immigrant Muslim community. While many African-Americans find Islam's message of peace and equality for all liberating, some are increasingly sensitive to immigrants who insist on including regional cultural preferences as an essential part of the definition of Islam and set themselves up as arbiters of Islamic norms and of what it means to be a Muslim. Increasingly, this is no less true for American converts from other backgrounds, as well as second-generation immigrants.

Though the sons and daughters of immigrant families may be born Muslim, and may have even been born in their home-country before emigrating to America at very young ages, they have spent their entire formative lives in the U.S., and are far more likely to relate to American culture than that of, say,

Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, or Indonesia.

Adapting The Vision of Islam To America

Findings from the annual conferences of the North American Association of Muslim Professionals and Scholars (NAAMPS) bear out the same themes. For example, drawing again from Haddad and Esposito (Ch.1, "Dynamics of Islamic Identity"), let me quote from several NAAMPS conference leaders:

(Muslims may) say how stupid Christians are to believe in the Trinity. But what do we achieve by saying such a thing other than making them angry? Instead... why don't we talk about (the) oneness of God..? Why do we try to make a career in proving that the Bible is nonsense? Why don't we spend time in showing that the Qur'an (provides) solution (s), and delivers people from slavery to liberty?

(Further quoting from the NAAMPS, many) Muslim institutions in America, unless they change fast, will fall into major errors. (Many Muslim) centers are institutions to deal with homesickness, not headquarters for driving and guiding the Islamic movement in America. Egyptians miss Egypt, so they form a part of Egypt

in Los Angeles, where they can come together. So it is with Pakistanis, and Palestinians, and so forth. Indeed, you can walk into a center and say that this is an Indian center, a Pakistani center, or an Egyptian center. From people to food to virtually everything – you can see, you can feel it in the air – these were not built here for America after all... While we huddle together as Pakistanis or Egyptians or Iranians or whatever else, our children (and Muslim converts of various backgrounds) are, whether we like it or not, American. The question should be whether they will be Muslim-American or just American...

In a call to reassess the mission of Islam in North America, the NAAMPS leaders go on to suggest a reshaping of the traditional emphasis among Islamic organizations to center their interaction with American society on an effort to convert the American population to Islam. As one conference leader puts it, "I would like the (next) generation of Muslims to focus on change... We want to change the lives of Muslims as well as the lives of non-Muslims for the better".

Inevitably, if it is God's will, such change could likely lead to greater engagement of Muslims themselves and a growing number of converts

entering the fold of Islam. Yet, in shifting the emphasis to helping to change people for the better, there may be less of a preoccupation with the signatory line of a conversion form, and a renewed focus on the fundamental message of Islam. And just what might that be? Let me repeat from the Qur'an that:

We call to witness that age when man as a whole would be in a state of loss, except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and deliver the Truth in a manner that is also truthful. They exhort patience while they themselves exercise patience (103: 2-4).

Notice again, the reference to *those who believe and do righteous deeds*. These are the true Muslims in America (and the world for that matter). There is no singling out of a particular culture, race, male or female. In the pursuit of righteous deeds, all are equal in the sight of God. And (those who) *deliver the Truth in a manner that is also truthful*. Notice the focus on conveying the message – and doing so in a patient way that may lead people to believe and do righteous deeds. Indeed, we find elsewhere in the Qur'an:

There is NO compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong. (2:257):

But if they turn away, We have NOT sent thee as a

guardian over them. Thy duty is ONLY to convey the Message. Leave it to God to make the Message effective. (42:49)

Then (you should be) of those who believe and exhort one another to exercise patience while they do the same themselves and they exhort one another to be considerate and merciful to others, while they themselves are considerate and merciful. (90:18)

NAAMPS conference leaders have picked up on these themes in their call to reassess the mission of Islam in America. They go on to suggest:

Muslims should gain the confidence of other people by their positive contributions to the growth of the contemporary civilization, which is universal, and by participating in the concerns of all their fellow human beings... There are areas of cooperation where Muslims should not hesitate to work with others without compromising on their differences... We should be *careful about our words* and pay attention to the limitation(s) of our audiences. We have to *consider the importance of modern thinking* and not (always seek out ways to undermine it), underestimate it, or ignore it...

The Challenge of Aligning Islamic and American Values

As a member of the

worldwide Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, I'm proud to say that this organization, with its some 200 million members worldwide and tens of thousands in North America, unified under the leadership of the Institution of Khilafat, has already laid the groundwork for some of these ideas. It is this organization that regularly sponsors inter-faith dialogues with Christians, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, and others.

It is this organization that actively seeks to convey the message of Islam through its institutional structure and the use of modern technology (such as MTA – the independent satellite program that broadcasts worldwide 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week). And it is this organization that opens its mosques and other centers to Muslims and non-Muslims alike from all walks of life, race, gender, and background.

At the same time, we cannot ignore or summarily dismiss the findings and suggestions coming out of conferences such as the NAAMPS. All Muslims in America are confronted with dynamics of Islamic identity described earlier. On one hand, the shared values of foreign-born Muslims, American-born Muslims, and Muslim converts have much in common with traditional American ideals regarding family, dedication to God, good works, commitment to a religious community, education, religious freedom, and discipline. The heritage of religious freedom in North

America, in particular, allows Muslims to integrate Islamic practices into the routines of daily life.

At the same time, these practices often come into conflict with American ways. Dietary restrictions (such as the prohibition of pork and alcohol), defined primary roles for men and women and the respective dress codes, and restrictions on dating are some that may conflict with typical American practices.

The challenge, then, is integrating religious obligations into our daily lives in ways that are aligned with common values that Americans and Muslims share. The alternative is to limit Islam to a largely immigrant phenomenon, thereby shutting out the next generation of American Muslims, thereby remaining relatively isolated, and thereby missing an opportunity to establish a unique American Muslim identity that is beneficial for Muslims in America, American society at-large, and quite possibly the world.

An American Muslim Implementation Approach

In the limited time remaining today, let me briefly touch upon an approach to taking up this challenge. On one hand, integrating some Islamic obligations into daily life is straightforward. Take daily Prayers or dietary re-

strictions, for example; these are, let's say, do or don't kinds of issues that require little discussion – not always easy to implement but not much room for flexibility either.

On the other hand, issues such as the roles and rights of women and men, and their respective codes of modesty, are far more complex. While the Holy Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad^{saw} provide fundamental guidance on such complex matters, the prescriptions are inherently flexible in nature. It is not possible, at present, to delve into the details of these particular issues; and, in any case, they are merely demonstrative of an array of additional complex matters that American Muslims need to address.

Rather than focusing on one or two questions, then, it may be more constructive to identify a process whereby American Muslims can integrate positive American values into daily life, while maintaining a Muslim identity. This process is highlighted in the following portion of the Qur'an. In Chapter 42, we find that the true Muslims are:

Those who hearken to their Lord, and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation, and who spend out of what we have provided for them. (42:39).

The section - *and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation* - is a clear indication that decisions of Muslim society, whether at the core unit level of the family or the broader organizational level, are made through mutual consultation. This sounds a lot like one of the fundamental tenets of democracy – government by the people. The common will of the people becomes the ruling will of the people through mutual consultation. Though Islam does not prescribe Western-style democracy, per se, we find, again, that basic Islamic teachings are well aligned with core American values. Integration, then, becomes mainly a just a question of implementation. That makes it sound easy. It is not. In the words of the Czech Republic President, "*Democracy is hard – it requires the participation of everybody.*"

There is no inherent conflict with Islam. On the contrary, if, as described earlier, there is no singling out of race, gender, nationality, etc. when it comes to righteousness and the delivery of the Truth, and if the decisions of Muslim society are to be made through mutual consultation, then there is ample scope for all Muslims to participate fully in matters of life and religion, whether purely spiritual or administrative in nature.

Just as the Founder of Islam^{saw} admonished that an

Arab is not superior to a non-Arab, nor a White to a Black, and so on, so should the administrative arrangements of Muslim institutions in America reflect this ideal. Naturally, in keeping with basic Islamic teachings, the social and dress codes required of men and women must be respected. But the practice of segregation and *Hijab*, for example, is intended fundamentally as a code of modesty to assure the strength of the family, the righteousness of men and women, and the preservation of those who believe and do good works. It is not an excuse to shut out the ideas and participation of women, the unfortunate stereotype inflicted upon Muslim women in America – a stereotype that may be unnecessarily furthered by some administrative practices among Muslim organizations. If an American Muslim woman can observe the Islamic modesty requirements while contributing to society as a doctor, lawyer, or teacher, or in some other capacity, and there is nothing in Islam that prohibits such as long as she has not abandoned her responsibilities as a wife and mother, can she not also contribute her ideas in the context of the administrative affairs of a Muslim organization? Surely, the answer is yes. Surely, with today's technological and other advancements, the *Hijab* and related modesty requirements cannot be used as an excuse to treat women like second-class citizens.

Similarly, the next generation of American Muslims, whether the sons and daughters of immigrants, or American converts, cannot be ignored, intentionally or unintentionally. Yet, as Haddad and Esposito point out (*"Muslims and Identity Politics in America, Ch. 4"*), because American Muslims have not yet articulated a cohesive domestic agenda, they concentrate instead on the issues of their native countries, which then become the source for drawing narrower boundaries and creating internal others (or "clicks"). Differences in national origins, still strong because of involvement in politics back home, have hindered unity among American Muslims and within their organizations. Even on college campuses, for example, discussions on issues of Islamic identity can generate bitterness between Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants. Some of them have been American nationals for over 30 years but their obsession with the issues of their native countries impedes their capacity to understand and relate to issues of identity and interests in the American context. Yet, the next generation of American Muslims is much more likely to affiliate with domestic American issues, and concerns about the practice of Islam in America, than issues in foreign lands.

They are much more likely to relate to American cultural and religious debates

surfacing around Mel Gibson's "Passion of Christ", or Dan Brown's "DaVinci Code", than they are to address matters of conflict between Pakistani and Indian Muslims over Kashmir, or conflicts between religious majorities and minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh. But, because, as Haddad's and Esposito's research bears out, Islam in America remains largely an immigrant phenomenon, these domestic American Muslim issues are left off the table.

Closing Remarks

One could go on citing other examples of what I have summarily referred to as the process, mutual consultation, or participation, issue. But, even with just the few I have cited, the point is clear. There is no inherent conflict among fundamental Islamic teachings and many positive American values. Integrating the two, however, requires careful attention to implementation. At the root of that is a process, a process that requires participation. In real estate, it's all about location, location, location. For the future of Islam in America, I submit to you today, it's participation, participation, and participation.

Surely, this is an oversimplified notion of the road ahead, but it is equally true that this singular issue, and all its related aspects and implications, is quite likely the primary factor in determining

whether or not Islam in America will remain a largely immigrant phenomenon, or evolve into a unique American Islam that is beneficial for Muslims in America, American society, and the world.

In closing, let me suggest a challenge, or perhaps a prayer, to focus on change for the better – to change the lives of Muslims as well as non-Muslims for the better:

- That we seek out the righteous in America, for surely those who believe and do righteous deeds are the true Muslims;
- That we honor American's liberty and participation, for surely those whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation are the true Muslims;
- That we respect American's efforts to raise the status of women, for surely paradise lies at the feet of the mother, and the best among Muslims are those who behave best towards their wives;
- That we be considerate of American's diversity and tolerance, for surely the true Muslims are those who exhort one another to be considerate and merciful to others, while they themselves are considerate and merciful;
- And that we deliver the message of Islam in

America unencumbered by hidden agendas, for surely we have not been sent as guardians over Americans; our duty is only to convey the Message, whereas it is left to Allah to make the message effective.

May Allah enable us to do so. Jazakallah.

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- Previous Speeches by Musa Asad:
 - "Muhammad^{saw} the Exemplar" (June/03)
 - "Faith Above all Else" (June/01)

WUDU (ABLUTION)

The Promised Messiah^{as} says about *wudu* :

"It is mentioned in the Islamic literature that *wudu* is a means of purifying a man of his sins. This actually means that even the minor commandments of God are of great value and we can get our sins forgiven by acting upon them."

(Nurul Qur'an, Part II)

PRAYER

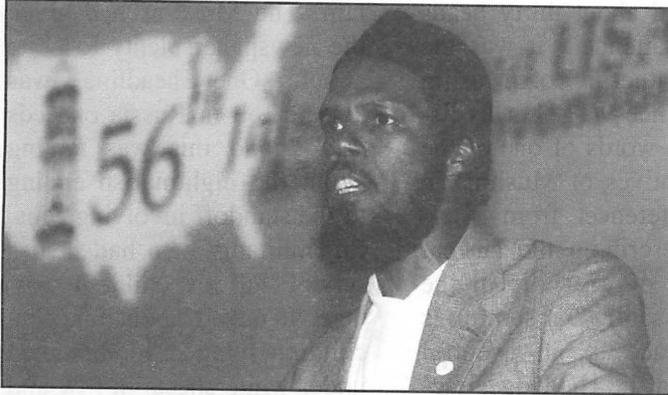
As far as the contents of the Prayer go, whether the Prayer is offered individually or in congregation, they are of two types:

1. A formal routine recitation of the verses of the Qur'an and other prayers, which are done in the language of the Qur'an, which is Arabic. All worshippers are expected to know the meaning of what they are reciting, otherwise they will deprive themselves of the immense benefit which they may draw from the meaningful recitation.
2. To the second category belong individual prayers in one's own language, in which one is free to beg as he pleases during the individual or congregational Prayers. Many a school of jurisprudence disallow prayers in one's own language during the Prayer. However, they do appreciate the need for private and personal prayers, so they suggest praying in one's own language after the formal Prayer has ended and not during its course. We, the Ahmadi Muslims, use the option of praying to God in one's own language as one pleases during the formal Prayer.

(An Elementary Study of Islam, International Publications, London, UK, pp 34-36)

KHILAFAT – DIVINE LEADERSHIP

Maulana Azhar Haneef



وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ وَيَبْسُطَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ
وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي
وَلَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors *from among* those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear; They will worship Me, and they will not associate anything with Me. Then whoso is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious. (24:56)

The word Khilafat translates in English as successor; deputy; one who follows and supports the messenger of the time and continues in that mission and ministry of that particular messenger who is the first Khalifa that God sends on Earth to bring mankind out of darkness, out of immorality, out of sin and transgression into *tauheed*: the unity of God; the oneness of God; the worship of God and the oneness of mankind to establish peace on this earth. In this regard I would like to share with you one of the revelations of the Promised Messiah^{as} in which he said that the 'key to success of the church' ... regarding this revelation about the institution

of successorship in Christianity ... we see in the Bible that just before the death of Jesus Christ or as it is considered his death on that cross; but we differ in that with the Christians. However, they believe before he was to perish on the cross he gave his companions the glad tidings and he said to them that he must leave them now but he will not leave them alone, for God will send you another comforter like him and that comforter shall abide with them forever. The remarkable thing about these words is that the founder of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^{as}, who claimed to be the like of Jesus and the Messiah of this Age,

also just before his death, in his book *Al-Wassiyat*, mentions in very similar words that he will leave shortly but he will not leave his community alone in fear as God will send, as he calls it, *Qudrat-e-Thania*, a second manifestation, or a second comforter as Jesus Christ used in his terms. In this sense the words "Key to the success of the Church" has a very profound significance because when we look at all of the Christian groups in the world one stands out as dominant; one has stood out throughout all its long history as being progressive and being that which has prospered and that is the group called the Catholics. What is it about the Catholics that distinguishes it

from the other Christian denominations? It is the institution of Papacy. They have a man leading them called the Pope, whom they believe to be the agent of God, whom they believe they owe their allegiance and obedience, and no matter what the condition, this agent of God is for life. I am sure many of us in the recent days have seen the current Pope of the catholic world. How weak and how given to human suffering, yet how they all owe their allegiance to him and do not wish that he be removed from his office. Instead they pray for his recovery and his life. It is for this reason that the Roman Catholics still out number other Christian denominations.

Now, let us consider the Khilafat in Islam. During the early era of Islam, the Muslims were able to be blessed and to rise to this system of Khilafat, and for thirty years they enjoyed the blessings of what is called the *Khilafat-e-Rashida*, that is, the rightly guided Khulafa, or *Khilafat alaa minhaj-e-nabuwwat*. These individuals had spiritual authority from God and upheld the spiritual ministry of Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. Yet as we know, most unfortunately for the Muslim world, instead of listening to the command of God to hold fast to the rope of Allah they let this blessing slip through their hands and the Muslim world has been plunged ever since into a spiraling downward condition. It is strange

that about nine months ago in October a summit of Muslim nations was held in Malaysia, which was the tenth summit of the Organization of Islamic Conferences. Fifty-seven Muslim nations were represented and about thirty heads of states attended. It was the largest gathering of Muslim nations since 9/11. Let us listen to the words of one of the representatives of Muslims in that conference from Maldives. Describing the current condition of Muslims in the world, he said, "Our summit is taking place at an eventful time when the challenges facing the *Ummah* are not only immense but also innumerable. Events unfolding in the Gulf in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world have great stakes for the Islamic *Ummah* and great consequences for the Muslims. Yet the *Ummah* appears divided and dominated by hostile powers, apathy, indifference and confusion seem to have rustled our ranks making the *Ummah*, once the most advanced and the most powerful fall into this abyss."

Brothers and sisters I ask you to look back in history. Didn't Hadhrat Usman^{ra}, the third Khalifa of Islam, give the clear answer to this question? During his Khilafat when rebellious individuals approached him to end his life he warned them in prophetic words saying: If you succeed in killing me you shall never be able to remain united nor able to offer your Prayers, or

face your enemy in unity.

Before sleeping last night I glanced at the newspaper, The Washington Times. Two of the main headlines on the first page were about Islam. The Muslims had given the newspaper plenty to write about. One headline was "Death toll in Russia exceeds 200" and this was talking about the nightmarish ending to the standoff involving Muslim militants who had held a school full of children hostage. It talked about innocent children lying dead, bloodied under white sheets in row and awaiting identification by devastated loved ones. Another headline was "Iraqis fight huge pipeline fire due to sabotage", which explained how insurgents set off the biggest sabotage operation on the oil installations of Kirkuk since the Gulf War invasion. This article also spoke about defiant statements of a Shiite rebel army that it can never be defeated. This was just the first page. I am sure all of us have been seeing and experiencing the decline of Islam. But I would like to go back to the Organization of Islamic Conference. What is also strange is that this group came into being in 1969. The whole purpose of its coming into being was an incident in *Al-Aqsa* Mosque in Jerusalem having been set on fire. This controversial incident – they don't know for sure who did it, but that incident fired the Muslims to stand up and say that we will defend *Al-Aqsa* Mosque,

they will defend Jerusalem and they will drive the infidels from that place and set the Palestinians free. There will be freedom for all Muslim brothers in Palestine. This was their constant slogan and cry. But as Hadhrat Usman^{ra} had warned them years earlier, by abandoning Khilafat they would never be able to stand united against their common enemy. In the conference the Prime Minister of Malaysia stood up and he admitted that the fifty years of fighting Israel had achieved nothing and that Muslims should now use political and economic tactics, not violence and terrorism. No more strapping bombs to themselves and blowing themselves up and fighting this group of individuals in Palestine. Yet all of us know that the plight of Palestinians is appalling. They are like a people who have been held hostage with a gated fence and have been denied access to food, water, shelter, security, government and all the amenities of life and liberty that we hold so valuable in this nation. This is the group that after 50 years still has not seen a single day of liberty, a single day of peace and security, and the organization is still debating the issue.

Taking another glance at the Muslim world one wonders what political might or economic pressure the Prime Minister of Malaysia had in mind when he said that these are the new tactics to be used. As the US has found in its

wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Muslim world is a political nightmare, characterized by injustice and insurgencies. And economically, as the President of Pakistan addressing the same Islamic conference had to note, Muslims nations comprise more than a fifth of the world's land mass but they have 29 of the world's poorest nations. The GDP of the entire *ummah* is \$1.4 trillion, while that of Japan alone is \$4.5 trillion. The highest GDP of any Muslim nation is \$185 billion. While that of a tiny European country with no natural resources is about \$200 billion. What can they hope to achieve through politics and economics? During the past thirty years the Muslim world has seen devastating wars in Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and other places leaving millions of Muslims dead at the hands of – not non-Muslims – but Muslims, brother killing brother, forgetting about the Qur'an warning them that this is the surest path not to God but to hell fire. All of this with the name of Allah shouted at the top of their lungs. *Allah-o-Akbar, Allah-o-Akbar*. Dragging the name of the Lord of Peace into their bloody strives. Think about the words, the *Al-Qa'ida* network, whose members were also in fact involved in the hostage takeover of the school in Russia. Think about Suicide bombings in the Middle East, the Taliban, and the Hamaas. These are now common household names. But do

any of these names cause the people of the world to come towards Islam? All these names, they do not give the images of love, peace, justice and humanity, which are the ethics of Islam. Instead they instill fear, hatred and revulsion. As soon as this conference in Malaysia in Oct 2003 was ended, Muslims in Bangladesh issued a leaflet denouncing the leaders of this conference as being stooges of colonialists and urging the Muslims to establish the Khilafat in order to unite and wage Jihad for liberating Muslims lands and spreading Islam worldwide. How strangely ironic is the situation. Perhaps there are many in this audience today who are younger and do not know the history of Jama'at Ahmadiyya. Why did I say thirty years ago? Thirty years ago, 1974 was one of the blackest years in the history of religious movements. This was the year in which in Pakistan a subtle movement was launched and political intrigue not to kill the Khlaifa physically but to kill him through politics. This same group the Organization of Islamic States in their conference held in Lahore, they demanded that Jama'at Ahmadiyya should be declared Non-Muslims according to the constitution of Pakistan and at that time the King of Saudi Arabia, King Faisal, moved strongly to have this as his greatest plea. It is mentioned in an article of Economist of London published on 15 June 1974: "They have

been provided another incentive by the Pakistan's oil rich Muslim brothers. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia is said to have urged Mr. Bhutto at the Islamic Summit in Lahore last February, at the time of the conference, (the one held last October in Malaysia was held in Lahore in 1974)."

In 1974, in Lahore Pakistan, the same group of Muslims got together again for what? They got together for liberating us, for uniting us, and for bringing us prosperity. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia is said to have urged Mr. Bhutto to deal with the Ahmadies. And even made Arab aid contingent on solution of the Ahmadi problem. At a follow up of a Muslim meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in March, they pronounced the Ahmadies as Non-Muslims with the Pakistani delegation reluctantly acceding. Pakistan's religious parties have been stepping up anti Ahmadiyya propaganda ever since. This was 15 June 1974 and we know the history of that year: There were bloody riots, Ahmadi homes were burnt and looted, Ahmadies were forced out of their homes as refugees into the streets of Pakistan. Many were killed. It was a very bloody year, a bloody experience for us, and a black and dark year in the history of Islam. This article speaks to what was the problem. The Ahmadiyya problem according to King Faisal, the monarch of Arabia, the guardian of holiest sites in Islam, the

Ka'ba, the house of God in Mecca, harbored a desire to be recognized not only as a temporal ruler but as the spiritual leader of the Muslim world. He had designs on being declared the Khalifa. But how could that happen in the presence of another claimant to that office, who resided in Pakistan, having the allegiance of 10 million of his followers. The people who observed those events, they were not unaware of how much the Ahmadiyya Community had done for Islam. In one of the articles written at that time it was stated: No Muslim group has carried the green banner of Islam with greater audacity to every corner of the globe except the Ahmadiyya Community. How ironic it is that Pakistan, which flaunts its Islam on every conceivable occasion, should let this small, but remarkable community, to be persecuted by the fanatical elements, which demanded that Ahmadies should be declared a Non-Muslim minority. This was from the *Illustrated Weekly* of India July 7 1974. So the difference between these Muslims, at that time there were 500 million in the world and this small community of 10 million Ahmadies was well noted and documented in many quarters and this was just one of the examples, but I want to talk about results and consequences because God made a promise and Allah does not break his promise.

innaka la tukhliful

mi'aad

Thou breakest not Thy Promise. (3:195)

And his promise was that those who believe amongst us and do righteous deeds, he will establish them in the earth. They are the ones who will prosper, they will be progressive, they will be the champions of everything that is Islamic, all the ideas of Islam and the ministry and the message of our beloved master Prophet Muhammad^{saw} King Faisal who desired to be that great spiritual leader, he died within a year. Bhutto died a few years later being unable to escape the Divine destiny. Strangely, you will note that at that time in Africa another ruler who was bent on brutality and bent on removing the Ahmadies from his country of Uganda, that was the well known Idi Amin Dada, he was also forced into exile by his nation and had to seek refuge in Saudi Arabia. A short time ago he died and strangely enough this man also died in a place called the King Faisal Hospital. All of this does not give us any joy. And I want everyone here to realize that I do not recount the decline of Islam with any measure of joy in my heart or any pride or any gloating. It reminds me of the first battle of Islam, the battle of *Badr*, in which one thousand strong Meccan army came to destroy and annihilate Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and his followers in Medina and felt sure that

they would win. That they would wipe out the Khalifa of Allah and his community. A Khalifa who years earlier wandering in the streets of Mecca with a friend, his wife, a small cousin, a few slaves, telling them that I would succeed over you. They laughed and mocked Muhammad^{saw}, and said that you must be a madman. How can you defeat us? And here they are coming with seasoned warriors to wipe them out in Medina and yet God's decree to establish Khilafat on the earth forced back all of these Meccan soldiers and they were defeated. Digging up a pit for the mass grave for their slain leaders, the Who's Who of Mecca into that grave and addressing them he said: Have you found the promise of your Lord to be true. And he looked at them with great pain. For these were his countrymen, they were his kith and kin, they were the ones for whom he had prayed all night long, yet now their destiny had turned against them for their having turned against Khilafat. Therein their fate, their doom had been sealed. This is the message I want to convey about Khilafat in the world. The blessing of Jama'at Ahmadiyya, compared to these Muslims. In 1974, we were ten million, a small group. Those leaders, they were sure they could wipe us out. They are just ten million of them in Pakistan, we just destroy them, declare them Non-Muslims, and no one would follow their leader any

longer. They say there would not be a Khalifa who is no longer even a Muslim, And yet now look in 2004, 500 million Muslims of that time are now 1.2 billion Muslims in the world, All they could do was double, But ten million Ahmadies of that time are now two hundred million Ahmadies in the world. And they have increased twenty fold. Twenty times the blessings and you have seen all the things this Jama'at has done: in humanitarian aid, in setting up a satellite system, in schools, in hospitals in Africa, in spreading the system of homoeopathy, in alleviating the distress of humanity, wherever the Jama'at goes, wherever the Khalifa goes, in Africa, in Europe, in America, this is the Muslim group that has served Islam that must be established on the pattern of *Khilafat 'alaa minhaj-e-nabuwwat*. This is the blessing of Jama'at Ahmadiyya. But my dear brothers and sisters of faith now we must beg of your prayers. The Holy Prophet's heart was so distressed, this was his *Ummah*, and he could also see in the future and he warned us that after thirty years of Khilafat the *Ummat* would decline and would decay. We must pray that this blessing of Khilafat is never lost by us. Let us not, by our negligence, by our inability to protect our Khalifa, to follow his words and his directions, fail to safeguard this grand and blessed institution from the evil designs of the enemies. This I beg of all of you

Ahmadies. For this is the grand scheme of God to establish true Islam on earth. This is the only message that can prevail for this is the promise of God. I close with a promise and a pledge of our second Khalifa, Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra}, he requested the *Jalsa* participants in 1960. It is a pledge to safeguard Khilafat. And I ask you to listen to these words in closing and also to repeat them in your heart and let us go from here and implement them in our lives.

After tashahud, Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} said: "We solemnly pledge under oath of Allah the exalted that we will continue to endeavor to the last breath of our lives to propagate Islam and Ahmadiyyat and to protect and strengthen the institution of Khilafat and we shall continue to exhort our children, and their children to always remain attached to the institution of Khilafat and to benefit from its blessings. This will be to preserve the functioning of Khilafat in Ahmadiyyat to the end of time. And to eternally propagate Islam through the Ahmadiyya organization and to hoist the standard of Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw}. high about all worldly flags." Oh Allah grant us the capacity to fulfill this pledge.

(Transcribed by Asif Omar)

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HADHRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH IVth

Zahir M. Ahmad



*The moment that you died,
Our hearts split in two,
One side filled with
memories,
The other died with you,*

*We often lay awake at night,
When the world is fast
asleep,
And take a walk down
memory lane,
With tears upon our cheeks,*

*Remembering you is easy,
We do it every day,
But missing you is a
heartache,
That never goes away.*

*We hold you tightly within
our hearts,
And there you will remain,
Life has gone on without
you,
But it will never be the
same.*

April 19th, 2003 is a day that no Ahmadi will ever forget, each and every one of us will always remember where we were and exactly what we were doing when we learned that we had lost our beloved Imam Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth. Our hearts were saddened, our eyes tearful, for the most loving and giving among us had departed, however, we submit to the Divine command that is

kullu man alaiha faann

*All that is on it (earth) will
pass away (55:27)*

I will talk today about the legend that we all love and miss very much. I will begin with a brief sketch of Hazoor's illustrious life and later discuss some of his many attributes.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth was born on 18th of December 1928 to Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} and Hadhrat Syeda Mariam Begum Sahibath. He was a grandson of Hadhrat Promised Messiah^{as}. He received his early education in Qadian and later attended Government Collage, Lahore. He also attended University of London in the United Kingdom.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth completed his education by obtaining the Shahid degree from Jami'a Ahmadiya Rabwah.

Upon his return from the United Kingdom, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmadth married Syeda Asifa Begum daughter of Sahibzada Mirza Rasheed Ahmad Sahib and Sahibzadi Amtusalaam Begum. He was a devotee of the Jama'at and as such joined the service of the Jama'at in 1958. His first responsibility in the service of the Jama'at was Waqfe Jadid. He also held the offices of Vice president and the president of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya from 1960 to 1969. Later, held the office of the Sadr (President) Ansarullah from 1979 to 1982 at which time he was elected the fourth Khalifa of the Jama'at.

By the Grace of Allah, Khilafte Rabi'a lasted twenty one years. Those were some of the most difficult years in history of the Jama'at. Through out those difficult times Jama'at Ahmadiyya once again proved that it is indeed the Jama'at of Allah, it again proved that trials and tribulations don't come to weaken a people, they come to strengthen them. Throughout

these difficult and trying times the resolute son of a resolute father, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth guided the Jama'at magnificently and at the end of his Khilafat delivered it much stronger both in quality and quantity. During his Khilafat the number of bai'ats grew many folds. During his Khilafat the Jama'at became an international entity with number of Ahmadies growing to more than 170 Million world wide and yes, during his Khilafat the Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (MTA) project was launched and consolidated causing the message of Hadhrat Promised Messiah^{as} to reach the corners of the earth as indeed was prophesized. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IVth was indeed a man of God, he gave us all that he had until his last breath and then quietly went to meet his Creator.

If one is to discuss Hazoorth, one has to begin with his love for his creator, the Almighty Allah. God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an:

qul in kuntum tuhibboo nallaha fattabi'ooni yuhbib kumullah

Say if you love Allah, follow me; then will Allah love you. (3:32)

Once when Hazoorth was ten years old, he was asked by a well known and respected Ahmadi, Maulana Abdul Rahim Nayyar Sahib^{ra}, "what

reward he, Hazoor, seeks for his good work, Hazoor responded by saying, "Allah, only Allah". That ten-year-old boy on that day established for the world to know what his priority in life was. If one examines his life it is very clear that every breath he took was to seek the pleasure of, Allah, only Allah.

Hazoorth once shared a dream he had when he was young, he said, "I would pray to Allah: if you exist, then I am in search of You. Let me know that you are there otherwise I might drift astray and may not be held responsible. Then one afternoon I was in a state of semi-consciousness, half way between a dream and reality. I saw the entire earth squeezed into a ball. There was no creation of any sort visible, no life, no cities, nothing just the earth. Then I saw each particle of the earth tremble and burst out into a slogan: 'Mairay Allah (my God)' each particle was proclaiming the reason for its existence.

The whole earth was flooded with a strange light and every atom of the earth began to swell and contract in rhythm. I found myself repeating the words, 'Mairay Allah (my God)' as well. He did not believe that everyone could have a similar experience, he said:

"Allah reveals Himself to everyone in accordance with their capacity to experience

Him. Allah is universal and it is the threshold of a persons limitations which determines how that person experiences Allah".

During a Darsul Qur'an delivered by Hazoorth on January 29, 1998, Hazoorth said:

"If you stick to the Unity of Allah and if you will purify your faith solely for Allah then it becomes the source through which you will come under the protection of Allah."

In his address, "Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues" Hazoorth states:

"Without Allah there can be no peace. No other formula can work."

I will end this part of the speech by narrating an incident that will adequately describe the love of Allah in Hazoor'sth heart, Sahibzadi Faiza narrates that at the time when Hazoor first fell ill, he said to Sahibzadi Tooba who was about to get married in some time, the following: "I have met all my son-in-laws, I don't know if I will meet your husband. Just say one thing about me to him, I have not done anything in my life, but I have dearly loved my Allah." Personally speaking, I have been blessed with the privilege to spend a great deal of time with him both at a personal level as a nephew and serving him during his visits to the USA, I have never seen him

discuss the subject of Allah and Allah's blessing without a tear in his eyes. He expressed such love, devotion and tenderness at the mere mention of the name of Allah that it made the ones present in his company cry.

Allah too loved Hazoorth and the manifestation of this love was clear for anyone to see, the manner in which Allah protected Hazoor can be witnessed by the momentous event that took place in 1984. The details of Hazoor'sth departure from Pakistan have been discussed many times before and are available for one to read in the book, A Man of God. For today's discussion I will focus only on the fact that while Gen. Zia's used all the resources available to him in order to make certain that Hazoor was not able to leave Pakistan, Hazoor, against all odds was able to leave through an Airport controlled by the Government using a passport issued by the same Government that was instructed to use all means available not to allow Hazoorth to leave. He wore his traditional dress (*Shirwani* and turban) and even used the Government managed and controlled VIP lounge, the passport he used stated that he indeed was the Head of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. Allah showed the World that He would protect his Khalifa even if Allah has to part the skies and make way for Hazoor as Allah did by parting the seas for Moses.

The deep knowledge and understanding of the Holy Qur'an was a gift of Allah to our beloved Hazoorth. A gift that was granted to Hazoor because of his love of Allah. A gift that generations will benefit from as Hazoor has left us with a wealth of knowledge through the recorded Darsul Qur'an sessions. These Darsul Qur'an sessions also provided us with a potent vehicle as they are a forum to respond to the enemies of Islam and it's Holy Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa^{saw}. Under Hazoor'sth supervision the Holy Qur'an was translated into more than fifty languages.

The love and affection Hazoor had for Hadhrat Khatamun Nabiyeen, Muhammad Mustafa^{saw} was always evident on his face and in his words. He always responded to any attacks levied against our beloved Holy Prophet^{saw} in the most knowledgeable, logical and irrefutable manner. His question and answer sessions were a treat by them-selves, his responses were based on true understanding of the word of Allah and His messengers.

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "Seven will be sheltered under the safe guarding shade of Allah's mercy;

1. A just ruler.
2. A youth that occupies himself with worship of Allah.
3. One whose heart is ever suspended in the mosque.

4. People who love each other for the sake of Allah.
5. One who is called by a woman possessed by beauty and charm and declines.
6. One who spends secretly in charity.
7. One who remembers Allah in solitude.

We have seen that our beloved Hazoor, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth, turned to Allah with love and devotion as a youth, Allah's words and the words of Allah's messengers remained the only corner stone of his illustrious life. Now let us turn to some of the other virtues that were stated by the Holy Prophet of Islam, in the Hadith I just mentioned.

A just ruler is one who cares for his people. Hazoorth was an eloquent, experienced public speaker. He mixed in jokes with exhortations, sometimes interpolating scraps of his own poetry both humorous and serious to make a point. He had the ability to make every listener feel that he was directly talking to them. However, he was not always able to distance himself from the picture he was painting with words. He saw what he talked about and felt emotionally what he saw. It was then that his voice would break and falter. Those of us who have been near him on those occasions would bear witness that his eyes would fill with tears and at times the tears

would run down his cheeks. It was one of those emotional moments that he talked to us about something that was so important to him. He said:

"It is true that sometimes I cannot hide my feelings no matter how I try, but I have seen so much trouble in my life that it is difficult for me. I do not mean trouble for me, but trouble for the other people. I have seen people who have been so unhappy, so lost in their despair that even to recall their faces now can make me unhappy. And yet around these unhappy people can be people who do not even see them. For them, they do not exist. How can people be like that?" He asked.

On his first Eidul Fitr as a Khalifa people had gathered in Masjid Aqsa expecting a sermon to be pleasantly exacting in its demands, after all it was the Eid festival. On his first Eid Sermon, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth laid out his expectations from us when he stated the following:

"How can you be happy if you walk to your family celebrations and walk past houses where you know there are people who are old and lonely? Or so poor that they cannot buy enough food for their children even on a holiday? How can you give presents to your children when you know that not far away are children who do not have enough blankets to keep

them warm? If you want to enjoy this holiday then seek out these people now and help them. They are there in every country of the world. You will find that it is impossible to give away too much happiness. The more you give the more you have."

Hazoorth had a tremendous amount of love and sympathy for the poor and the under privileged. He would seek out ways to help the poor and meet their needs. In her article published in *Al-Nusrat*, a U.K. Lajna publication, The wife of Hadhrat Ameerul Mo'mineen, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} Hadhrat Syeda Amtus Sabooh Begum Sahiba writes;

"Among certain qualities that I particularly noticed in *Mamoon's* personality, the one that comes across most vividly is that of an extremely loving and affectionate person and the patronage of the poor".

In the same publication Hazoor's daughter, Sahibzadi Faiza Luqman writes:

"From the very beginning he had fond affection and sympathy for the poor and needy. He would be extremely compassionate towards them. In order to develop a sense of compassion for the poor and the needy in us, he would at times take us to visit their homes. He would explain that these disadvantaged people were just like us and their Creator was the very same God that had created us". She goes on to say: "After migrating to the United

Kingdom, when ever I visited Pakistan he would particularly instruct me to visit certain house holds and would send gifts for them".

I remember once a long time ago, when I was about eight years of age I was spending my summer holidays at "Al-Bushra" the home of Hadhrat Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad^{ra}. I was riding my bike just outside the house when I saw *Mamoon* riding his bike at some distance. He was traveling away from Al-Bushra and towards the railway lines for those who know Rabwah. I started to follow him while calling out for him. He did not hear me and continued to ride the bike. When I reached the railway lines I was surrounded by some stray dogs, being that I was afraid of dogs I started to call for him as loud as I could. Upon hearing me, he returned to rescue me. Once the dogs were gone, he looked back and said it is too far for me to ride back alone so I should come along with him and we would return in a couple of hours. He had a shotgun hanging from his shoulder and we went around hunting. After collecting a few pheasants we rode to some poor people homes and distributed the pheasants to people who otherwise would not have the opportunity to buy meat. He led the *Maghrib* Prayers and the locals joined us. The only problem we encountered was the scene in front of *Al-Bushra*. My mother had gathered a significant number of family

members and was apparently having a discussion. I had seen the picture many times before, she was panicking as she thought I had got lost. Both Mamoon and I stopped, he turned to me and said that seems to be *Baji*, elder sister. When I confirmed that in fact it was she, he told me that he was taking a different route as he didn't want to be in trouble with her.

Sahibzadi Faiza Luqman sums up Hazoor'sth love for his people in the following statement:

"These would be people who for some reason or another would be deserving of Abba's love and compassion. After Khilafat, Abba simply loved every single Ahmadi."

Indeed Hazoorth loved each and every single Ahmadi, however, he had a special place in his heart for the devotees and the volunteers of the Jama'at. He took pride in all the workers and in the way the Jama'at responded to his every call. I remember in 1998 he had expressed a desire for all the workers of the Jama'at to maintain a beard at least for the time when they are in the service of the Jama'at. I too like some others grew a beard and in all honesty with every intention of shaving it as soon as my duty with the Jama'at for the 1998 Jalsa was over. One day we were driving back from the Jalsa, Hadhrat Sahibzada Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad Sahibth was sitting in the back seat along

with Hazoorth. Hazoor turned to my father and said:

"Bha'ie yeh Allah kee kamaal kee Jama'at hai"

This is an amazing Jama'at of Allah

My father agreed. Hazoorth went on to explain:

"Main ne aik dafa' kaha keh darhie rakh lain, to tamam javaano ne darhie rakh li"

I only once said that men should grow a beard and they have all grown it

There went my intention of shaving the beard after the Jalsa upon his departure.

Hazoorth loved the Jama'at and he had great confidence in the destiny of the Jama'at. In his last speech at a Jalsa in Rabwah Hazoorth said:

"Baarash ki qatrun ku chatain roak sakti hain, sailaab ki pani ku bandh roak sakti hain, laikin jo asmaan si Allah kee rehmat ka paanee girta hai usi koan roak sakta hai. li-haaza, aagi barrho aur barrhti chali jaa'o keh abb aapki qadmun ko ko'ie naheen roak sakta"

(These roofs may stop the rain drops, and the dams may stop the flood water but who can stop the flood of Allah's mercy, therefore, press on, march forward for there is none that can stop your progress.)

Another way of assessing how just any ruler was, is to observe the feelings of his subjects regarding him. I am sure that you all will agree that just as Hazoorth loved each and every Ahmadi, each and every Ahmadi loved him as well.

I can quote endlessly the expressions of love for him that I have come across, but in the interest of time, I have only chosen a few.

Munavara Ghauri Sahiba of the United Kingdom wrote a poem in Hazoor'sth honor, I will recite some it hear:

"A man of God in more ways than one, A loving father, a blessed son. A world wide leader, a mentor, a friend, Devoted to us his community, up to the end."

Sadiya Ayaz Sahiba, another U.K. resident, writes:

"Some people make the world special just by being in it, Hazoorth was certainly one such person". One such person he indeed was, a person that lit up any room when he entered with his radiant smile, a person that genuinely cared for all he came in contact with, a person that made everything that came in contact with him better."

Hazoorth not only cared genuinely about the Jama'at, he cared deeply about global human rights always supporting the cause of the persecuted. In

his book, 'Murder in the Name of Allah', he forcefully argued from the Holy Qur'an and the early Muslim history that Islam completely rejects compulsion in the matter of faith.

In a more recent book, 'Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth', Hazoorth established the truth of the Holy Qur'an in light of modern physical and biological sciences and offered Islam as the solution of all contemporary spiritual, social, economic and political issues.

Hazoorth was a very generous person he gave freely and he gave quietly. He helped many individuals and families in the true Islamic spirit of giving with one hand in a manner that the other is not aware of it. He gave of his personal assets and he set up organizations such as the "Maryam Shadi (marriage) Fund" and "Humanity First" to help those in need. During his years in Pakistan, he had a homeopathic clinic at his home. The foundation of the home clinic was laid down by the father of Hadhrat Promised Messiah^{as}, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Murtaza who use to treat the villagers in and around Qadian. There were no doctors in the vicinity and he helped as the chief of the village. He passed this knowledge to Hadhrat Promised Messiah^{as} who was renowned for his successful treatments. Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} was also very interested in medicine, he studied allopathic

treatments and local herbal medicine. When homeopathy arrived in India, he was one of its first practitioners. Initially Hazoorth practiced homeopathy to help the poor from his home in Rabwah, however, after migrating to London this practice was extended to serve all Ahmadies who sought it. By Practicing homeopathy, Hazoorth also fulfilled, in a way, a desire of his mother, Hadhrat Syedda Mariam Begum Sahiba^{ra}, who had wished that Hazoorth grow up to be a doctor.

One of Hazoor'sth passions was to build and to populate house's of Allah. The Holy Qur'an says:

"The mosques of Allah shall be visited and well-maintained by such who believe in Allah and the last day and pay Zakaat and fear none but Allah. It is these who are likely to reach the goal of being guided aright"
(9:18)

At the inauguration of this beautiful house of Allah, Hazoorth said:

"The building of places of worship such as mosques, dedicated entirely to the one and only God is indeed among the noblest of tasks." He went on to say that there is no doubt that this grand spacious and beautiful building is extremely impressive and is a treat for the eye to behold, yet, the

greatness of the mosque depends entirely on the fear of God and sincerity with which the worshipers bow and prostrate therein."

During the Khilafati Raabi'a there were thousands of mosques and places of worship built and acquired around the world, again bearing witness that Hazoor's heart was indeed suspended in the mosque.

In his Friday sermon of March 19th, 1999 Hazoorth said:

"among the guidelines I had issued to the Jama'ats', the most significant advice was that they should start building houses of God and build them in great numbers."

Hazoorth not only loved to build and populate the houses of Allah, he loved to see also others also offering prayers. Once his youngest sister, Sahibzadi Amtul Jameel Begum was offering Salat in the London mission house where Hazoorth lived for the last 19 years of his life. On his way back from his office, he saw that she was praying. He quietly stood there for a little while and watched her pray. The next day when Sahibzadi Amtul Jameel Begum was on her way up to the residence, Hazoorth crossed her at the staircase. As he went by he told her to wait while he returns from the office. She says that she was terrified as she thought she had done something he did not approve

of. Hazoorth returned shortly with his prayer rug in his hands and said, this is for you, this prayer rug has absorbed all the tears that I have shed in front of my Allah. I watched you pray yesterday and felt that you are entitled to this rug."

Hazoorth had many passions but none bigger than remembrance of Allah and doing so in solitude. Hazoor'sth daughter, Sahibzadi Faiza Luqman narrates, "my mother once told me that at the private hour of *Tahajjud*, my father would say prayers profusely weeping and agonized, so much so that at times it would be unbearable for her and she would want to stop him from taking so much burden on himself."

Hazoor'sth personality was so all embracing that it is not possible to discuss or even touch upon the surface of it. He was generous, he was gracious, he was hospitable, he was humble, he was loving and helpful and the list goes on. One aspect of his personality that I would like to discuss here is his sense of humor, because without a discussion of his sense of humor this would not be complete. We all have our favorite stories about his sense of humor, I will share mine with you. Once I stopped over at London while returning from Pakistan. I went up to his residence and was waiting for him to return from his office. He graciously stopped, waiting at the living room to greet me. Once he saw

me he asked me how come I had gained so much weight. I responded by saying that actually it was not all weight gain but that I looked fat because I am wearing my fathers over coat and it is large on me. He smiled and invited me to join him for lunch. While having lunch he asked my aunt, his wife Hadhrat Syeda Asifa Begum Sahiba, if she had seen my coat. She thought that I had bought a special coat of some sort so she proceeded to ask me about it. As I began to respond, Hazoorth stopped me and said let me tell you about this amazing coat. Battu puts it on and his checks fluff up. I got the message, I had gotten fat.

I can go on for a very long time talking about this very special man, however, I have to stop in the interest of time and I would like to end by repeating the words of Hazoor'sth granddaughter, Sahibzadi Nida:

"With every death begins a new life. The passing away of Hazoor, Khalifatul Masih IVth started a new chapter in his story. Although he no longer remains with us physically, he remains alive in our hearts and thoughts. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad'sth memory and legacy will live on for centuries and centuries to come, because he touched the hearts of millions around the globe-and they will keep the candle burning forever".

Alhamdu lillah

SOME OF THE BELIEFS OF MUSLIMS

Apart from the six fundamental beliefs, there are many other important beliefs in Islam. Some of them are:

1. Muslims believe that every person is born innocent and free from sin. Only when he reaches maturity of understanding and can distinguish between right and wrong, does he become accountable for his actions.
2. Muslims believe that Allah does not hold anyone responsible unless he has shown him the right way. Allah has always sent Messengers and revelations before inflicting His punishment on people.
3. Muslims are required to follow their faith with reasoning and understanding, not blindly. A person should use his powers of reasoning and reflect in his heart on Allah's teachings.

(Pathways to Paradise, A Publication of the Lajna Imaillah, USA, p. 6)

CLOSING ADDRESS

At 56th Jalsa Salana USA

DR. AHSANULLAH ZAFAR, AMEER, USA JAMA'AT

Kalim bin Habib

After *tasha'hud* and *ta'awwudh*, Respected Ameer Sahib said:

The 56th Jalsa of USA Jama'at, with the Grace and Mercy of Allah, draws to a close very shortly. I want to share a few parting thoughts with you before we raise our hands to Allah in collective prayers and ask for His mercy and blessings on all of us.

The act of prayer is strengthened, or as the Holy Qur'an says: *Yerfao Indahu* by adding "*A'maale Saliha*" to it. The "*A'maale Saliha*" in front of us during this Jalsa were firstly our very presence over here under the guidance of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood's^{as} directions and desires. In several ways as you have already practiced this are: in collective prayers, listening to speeches, or participating in discussions.

You have also been informed of the numerous financial sacrifices. Please don't take that as a burden, rather take that as an opportunity. Now, as well as after you leave here, keep in mind that they are all for the pleasure of Allah and not anything else.

In particular, I want to remind you of a scheme that Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} is promoting at this time. I

think everyone is aware of it. Missionary Daud Hanif Sahib, on Friday also alluded to it in the discussion of *Al-Wasiyyat*, and that is the drive where Hazoor^{aba} has expressed a wish that we should have 1,000 more Moosies in about a year in the USA Jama'at. You must understand the magnitude of what he is expecting of us. We have some 700 odd *Moosies* in the USA Jama'at before this drive. We are now going to double the number of *Moosies*, *Inshallah*.

Wasiyyat is a unique sacrifice. It is not just an issue of paying the *Chanda*. It is an extraordinary way of adopting a mind set, humility in service to Allah and of inclusion in a special select group by what is your day-to-day conduct. By the way you view everything, you view it through the prism or through the color of *Wasiyyat* in your entire life. That is what *Wasiyyat* is all about. Hazoor^{aba}, as a matter of fact, encouraged that young people should become *Moosies*. As he pointed out that *Wasiyyat* is a matter of living your life that way. And although there is no stopping or discouraging somebody who might be towards the end of his life and wishes to join the rank of *Moosies*. But Hazoor pointed out that the optimum is when

a young person does it, and then Allah gives him Grace and strength to live his life. That way, that is what is the ultimate that we need to achieve. So that there is one more drive, one more "*A'maale Saliha*" that you can consider in your own hearts and thoughts. And I hope you will go and not make a decision just on the spur of the moment but with deliberation, with thoughtfulness, even with discussions. May Allah enable you to do *Wasiyyat* such that you will be able to live through your entire life gracefully, with commitment and dedication. May Allah accept it from each one of you. *Amen*.

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood's^{as} prayers were mentioned a short time ago in "*Zikre-Habib*"; we are nowhere near there. We are though under these tents gathered in his name and his memory, and his directions and his desires. I read it in his writings that anyone who comes in his house is of him. I hope each one of us is of him, and we are in his house as we are gathered here. And Allah will have His Mercy and Blessings on us. *Ameen*

You must pray for others. When we pray and Allah

accepts the prayer to make it easy and better for His creatures, then the doors of Allah's Mercy open for them. And the doors of Allah are not like my checkbook or your checkbook – they are big, and that Mercy then also comes down upon us even though we might not be praying for ourselves at that time. But the fact that we prayed for others around us, those away from us, the Mercy of Allah does extend to us as well. So, Please when we do join our hands together in collective prayers, pray passionately for others. May Allah's Mercy extend to each one of you in the process. *Ameen.*

I would like to just remind our African-American brothers, and I do this with some trepidation because complex emotions are many times generated whenever this is mentioned as an issue. Allah knows that I am not trying to create that. I am just looking for the betterment of our African-American brothers. They are in a great amount of pain and suffering for a long time and do not always understand the complexity of their difficulties. We see something, but we are not able to relate to all of it. But I want to remind all of you that your improvement, your deliverance from this misery and poverty that seems to encompass many of you is by following the dictates of Promised Messiah^{as}, by living your lives the way he asked you to live by being tightly tied together to Khilafat, as I know most of you are, if not

all of you. I am not questioning that. I am just emphasizing that the deliverance from this difficulty is going to come from Allah. I am not saying we don't use the means, which are available in the neighborhoods and states and the cities for your benefit. I think we should use them. But I want to emphasize that in the end that itself is not going to solve the problems. The solution is going to come from Allah, and there is no question about it that it will come. I hope and pray, and hope all of us will join together in praying for the betterment of our African-American community, our Ahmadi brothers. Allah improve their lot and give them solid flourishing communities of Ahmadies, which will be a source of pleasure to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, and will be pleasing in the eyes of Allah. *Ameen.*

I also want to emphasize that we must remember in our prayers all members of the Jama'at who are infirm. May Allah make them well and strong. We need to pray for humanity at large that Allah make it easy for everyone, that He open His doors of Mercy so that understanding and goodwill are spread among mankind and take us away from all the hatred and acrimony and bizarre behavior that we see around us. We need to pray for our leadership in USA, that Allah guide them. There is so much at stake for everyone, here in America, as well as overseas. We are a part of America.

Lastly, but now more importantly, I request that you pray for all our devotees, Missionaries and workers. Some of them might not be here listening around these tents, but every one, wherever they are, they have put an enormous amount of work in the service of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}. They have tried their very best to make things comfortable for each one of you, and may Allah be with them, and may Allah take care of all their affairs, and may doors of Mercy open for them. Pray for our young people who are facing a very strong drift in the society around us. It is like a storm, which tends to carry away into the rough seas those around us. Pray that Allah be their guide and keep them steadfast and even stronger in their belief in God and Promised Messiah^{as}, and Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. Pray for our women. We do not always respect the fact that our women not only have to deal with what we throw at them at our homes but that they have to deal with the society at large, which looks at them as being different. To put it mildly, that they do not follow the norms around us, much more so than the men.

There are issues about marriage, which seem to affect our girls more than boys. Although I think the problem is on both sides. Pray for them that Allah make it good for them and make it work for them as well, and ultimately we have a strong and flourishing Jama'at here in USA. Please join me in silent prayers.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MIR MAHMOOD AHMAD NASIR PRINCIPAL, JAMIA AHMADIYYA, RABWAH

Tehmeena Luqman, Portland Oregon

Syed Mir Mahmood Ahmad Sahib Nasir is one of the persons who were very close to Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IVth. He is a nephew of Hadhrat Amma Jan^{ra1} and also a son-in-law to Hadhrat Khalifatul Mash II^{ra}. He has served the USA Jama'at as a Missionary, Missionary-in-charge and National Ameer. Mir Sahib is currently the Principal of Jamia Ahmadiyya in Rabwah, Pakistan. He visited USA last year and during his visit, spent a few days in Portland, Oregon. During his stay in Portland we presented him with several questions about Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmadth and Mir Sahib's relationship with Hazoorth. He wrote very brief answers in Urdu in response to our questions. Following is a compilation and English rendering of Mir Sahib's answers to our questions.

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It was probably 1935 (I was born October 1929) and I was barely five years old. We moved out of the house, which later became known as *As-Saffah*. Our house was being built in *Darul Anwar* under Hadhrat Amma Jan's^{ra} supervision and was not yet complete. So we were staying on the bottom floor of Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood's^{ra2} home in the portion where Hadhrat Umme Tahir^{ra3} used to live. Here, I became acquainted with Hadhrat Mirza Tahir

Ahmadth and lived with him for six months.

During this time, we lived in harmony and played together. Not even once did we fight or have a disagreement like many children do. He was just one year older than me. Six months later, we moved into our house in *Darul Anwar*. Then, we would meet occasionally.

I have two impressions of his youth, which remain with me until his last moment: his regularity in congregational prayers and his extraordinary intelligence.

After migrating to Rabwah, we continued to meet. We would both compete in speech competitions in Khuddam Ijtema'at. Then we studied together in *Jami'a* for a period of time. Besides the two previous impressions, I still have the impression of his extraordinarily active life. He would take part in Khuddamul Ahmadiyya's activities with great fondness.

Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} went to London in 1955 for treatment. I had already arrived in London at the end of 1954. Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} instructed Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmadth to remain behind in London. At Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood's^{ra}

instructions, we both enrolled in the University of London. We both attended the same class. His intelligence, nobility and gentility, kindness, regularity of congregational prayer, beautiful orations (even in English language), and pure, but amusing sense of humor that delighted the heart, have left a deep impression.

In London, Hazoor'sth life was that of a true believer. Along with working hard day and night, and continued good deeds, his disposition remained pleasant. The Western society did not have any effect on him. In London, Hazoorth paid attention to learn the correct English pronunciation. Also, he learned to play squash from Hashim Khans⁴.

His sense of humor had an aspect of reformation. If anyone told a joke making fun of someone else, he would pleasantly, without creating ill will, turn the joke back on the person who made the joke.

Before Khilafat, while performing responsibilities of Waqf-e-Jadid, his continuous engagements and hard work included travels where one day he would be in Peshawar, the next in Karachi and the following day in Rawalpindi.

I went to Pakistan from the USA just two months before he became Khalifa and found him always busy in the service of faith and the public (particularly with homeopathy). With all of that, he still continued to be regular in prayers and his pleasant nature and sense of humor were still apparent.

After Khilafat, he became even busier. The hard work of day and night increased even more. I left for Spain just a few days later and did not experience the early days of his Khilafat first hand. I was in Spain when he migrated to London and shortly thereafter I returned to Rabwah. After Khilafat, obviously, my love for him increased but that also involved respecting him.

My last meeting with Hazoorth was in 2000. I came to the USA for eye treatment. I am not a poet but incidentally wrote one poem. Somehow, Khuddamul Ahmadiyya magazine '*Khalid*' got hold of it and printed it. Hazoorth sent a letter from London full of love and kindness praising the poem. I received the letter while I was in Bait-ur-Rehman mosque for *Asr* prayer. On the way back from USA, I stayed in London for perhaps one day. Despite his illness and the fact that *mullaqat* (visitation) time was over, when he was informed that I had come, he graciously met me. He spoke to me lovingly and said about the poem, "You inherited from Khawaja Mir Dard⁵".

Notes by the compiler:

1. *Wife of Hadhrat Promised Messiah^{as}.*
2. *Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II^{ra}.*
3. *Mother of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IVth.*
4. *World famous squash playing family.*
5. *A famous poet in Mir Sahib's ancestors.*

Review of Religions

The Promised Messiah^{as} started the publication of *Review of Religions* in 1902 from Qadian, India. The purpose of this English monthly magazine was to spread the message of Islam to the West. This is the only journal of its kind that is being published continuously for over a century. During this span of time, it has enlightened millions of hearts. At a critical juncture of time, when a closer look at religious ideologies has once again become crucial, the magazine can serve as a very useful source of information.

In addition to regular features from the writings of the Promised Messiah^{as} and his Khulafa, spiritual and intellectual articles on current topics are published in the magazine.

The articles published in the *Review of Religions* present the true Islamic teachings as compared to other religious magazines. Alexander Dowie and his Zion, The Immaculate Conception, Economic Justice, and Who are the Amish?, are few of the many interesting topics, which have been recently published in the

Magazine.

The Promised Messiah^{as} wished to have 10,000 subscribers of the *Review of Religions*. The *Review* is now printed in Islamabad, UK and distributed in the United States from New York. Members of the USA Jama'at are urged to subscribe towards the magazine. Furthermore, they are requested to increase circulation of the magazine by promoting its subscription at the local libraries and other institutions.

Annual subscription for the magazine is \$30 (thirty dollars), which includes mailing expenses.

Please make checks payable to:

AMI (Review of Religions)

Send checks to address given below.

Jazak Allah!

**Review of Religions
Baitul Zafar
86-71 Palo Alto Street
Holliswood, NY 11423**

WHEN

When our tears begin to flow in the wrinkled crevasses of our faces

And

We are no longer thankful for what we have been given,

WE WILL HAVE ALLAH TO CALL ON.

When we no longer recognize the beauty of sunrise, twilight and sunset

And

Our sleep is no longer peaceful,

WE WILL HAVE ALLAH TO CALL ON.

When we no longer hear sounds of peace, love and kindness in our hearts,

and our eyes fail to see the beauty of Allah's creation.

WE WILL HAVE ALLAH TO CALL ON.

When we no longer enjoy seeing the ballets of the leaves

And feeling the gentle touch of the wind, rain and snow,

WE WILL HAVE ALLAH TO CALL ON.

When our hearts are not strangers to the truth,

and we remain humble,

Then, we still have Allah to call on.

YUSEF A. LATEEF

A FAREWELL & WELCOME OF MISSIONARIES IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

Munum A. Naeem, Na'ib Amir

The Houston Jama'at paid their tribute and held a farewell for Maulana Zafar A. Sarwar on July 18th, 2004. Missionary Zafar Sahib arrived in Houston in 1996 from Maryland and replaced our previous Missionary Syed Samsah A. Nasir. He served the Houston Jama'at for nearly 8 years. During his time the Jama'at grew from 300 people to 424. Missionary Zafar Sarwar Sahib was a great help in organizing Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV'sth visit to Houston in 1998 to lay the Foundation Stone of the Baitus Samee Mosque. Missionary Zafar Sarwar was a quite man with a unique affection for all. He provided assistance to the Jamaat in holding various events and assisted many seekers of truth to join the fold of Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam. In the year 2000 the phase one construction of the Mosque (Meeting Halls & Missionary's House) began and he was relocated to the new site in September 2001. Throughout the year 2003, he was instrumental in helping the Mosque construction project. By the Grace of Allah, the inauguration of Baitus Samee Mosque was held in March 2004, prior to the departure of Zafar Sahib. As mentioned above, the Houston Jama'at organized a farewell

event during the Regional Ijtema of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya & Lajna Imaillah, South Region. People from Houston, Dallas and Austin attended this event. Representative people from Austin, Dallas and Houston spoke at this event to extend their thanks and appreciation to Missionary Zafar Sarwar Sahib for his services. The Houston Jama'at presented a large picture frame with a photograph of all present at the event and signed by all present as a farewell gift.

On July 21st, 2004 Missionary Zafarullah Hanjra Sahib from Dayton Ohio arrived in Houston Texas with his family. Zafarullah Sahib served the Dayton Jamaat and Midwest Region for 4 ½ years. He took keen interest in the Tarbiyyat related issues in the Jama'ats he was serving. He made several visits to each Jamaat to provide them his assistance and keeping the membership active. He has also been serving as the editorial team of the Ahmadiyya Gazette-USA. Prior to Dayton he was in Washington for 6 months and before that he served the Jama'at in Sierra Leone from 1991 to 1997. The Houston Jama'at extended its warm welcome to its new Missionary. He led the

first *Jumu'a* on July 30th, 2004. He was formally introduced to many members at the First General meeting held on August 15th, 2004. Missionary Zafarullah Sahib's family arrived from Pakistan in June of 2004 as a pleasant addition to the Houston Jama'at. He has four school going children.

May Allah bless our Missionaries who devote their life in the service of Islam and help them achieve the noble mission of being a very successful Missionary. Ameen

NOW AVAILABLE

**Welcome to
Ahmadiyyat,
the True Islam**

(Second Edition)

Contact:

Dr. Zaheer A. Bajwa:

**2141 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008**

Tel: (202) 232-3737

THE JESUS IN ISLAM SYMPOSIUM

Report by Shahed Ahmed, Houston

As part of its Tabligh initiative, the Houston Chapter co-hosted the "Jesus^{as} in Islam" symposium at the Houston Baptist University on 23rd September, 2004. The theme of the symposium was to present a three-fold lecture which detailed the religion of Islam, Jesus in Islam and survival of Jesus from death on the Cross using medical and Biblical evidence. The event had been well publicized in the local church communities as well as in the press and media. The event was covered by the Houston Chronicle, as well as by MTA. It is estimated that there were between 350 and 400 people in attendance comprising mostly of students and members of the public including those from the Ahmadiyya community. As part of an incentive, the students were also given two course credits for attending.

The event opened with a welcome address from Professor David Capes, Chair of the Department of Religion and Humanity Studies, thanking everyone for attending. The Main Program then started with a recitation from the Bible followed by the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and its translation. This was then followed by a welcome address by Na'ib Ameer, Munum Naeem, who gave a brief history of Ahmadiyyat and em-

phasized the motto "Love For All Hatred For None" The moderator then introduced the first of the guest speakers, beginning with Maulana Azhar Haneef, who presented an interactive presentation on the religion of Islam dispelling most of its myths. The next speaker, Anwer Khan Sahib of California, presented a lecture on the Muslim view point of Jesus^{as}. The lecture provided an insight into the qualities of this true messenger of Allah. The last of the Ahmadi speakers, Dr Kaleem Malik, delivered a convincing proposition of Jesus^{as} survival from death using both medical and Biblical evidence. The Christian speakers, Mr. Ian Coulter and Professor David Capes, individually presented the Christian perspective of Jesus^{as} in relation to his crucifixion and personage. The Question and Answer session followed soon after and as such only a handful of questions were presented to the Ahmadi speakers due to time constraints. However, it was agreed that any remaining questions, of which there were approximately 60 questions, would be forwarded to the intended speaker and the answers would then be published on the University web site.

The Symposium ended with closing remarks from Professor David Capes.

Thanking the Ahmadi speakers for sharing their views he also thanked the organizers from both the University and the Ahmadi community. Afterwards, refreshments were served in the foyer for people wanting to remain behind and ask questions. A bookstall displaying literature from the Ahmadi community was also accessible to people.

Overall, the event was a success both in terms of its organizing and the intended message that was delivered by the speakers. An analysis of this success was measured by a survey, which the students and guests had filled in after the event. One such result showed that about 68 percent of the people now had a better perception of Islam after the Symposium than they did before – What an achievement! We have also had some people from the University visiting our Mosque, and one enquiry about converting to Islam made to one of our Ahmadi speakers.

Finally, I would like to mention that this Symposium would not have been possible if it were not for the dedicated team of volunteers from the Houston Jama'at that worked with me and I want to especially thank each and every one of them.

MEMORIES OF MY DEAR FATHER

Dr. Saliha R. Ahmed

My father Chaudhary Riaz Ahmad Ghumman passed away at the age of 70 years on 9/17/04. *Innalillah-e wa inna ilaih-e raji'oon.*

He became a Moosi some four decades ago, led all his life righteously and remained a dedicated practitioner of Ahmadiyyat, the True Islam. In 2002, by the grace of Allah, despite his failing health he performed Hajj. He was buried in that section of Laurel Grove Cemetery, Totowa, NJ, which is reserved for the laying of the Moosian to perpetual rest.

My father was the son of the late Col. Nazim-ud-Din. He was born in Sialkot, Punjab. After attending various schools and colleges, he finally bagged his bachelor's degree from Talim-ull-Islam College, Rabwah. Later he received Master's degree in Political Science from Punjab University. At the Jalsa Salana in December 1960, he got married to my mother, Sajida Begum, daughter of late Ch. Azam Ali (District and Sessions Judge). They were blessed with five daughters, who among them are now raising his ten grandchildren.

After retiring from Shah-nawaz Ltd. in 1995, he migrated to America.

The History of Ahmadiyyat has recorded the incident illustrating my father's selfless service to the community. He, along with another young Ahmadi, risked their own lives and managed to save that of an elderly Ahmadi, who was from Turkey, and was trapped in the upper floors of the Ahmadiyya Mosque, Muree Road, Rawalpindi that was set on fire by Anti-Ahmadiyya gangsters. The two selfless warriors finally had to run for their own lives too, their clothes drenched with their own blood.

My father took great pride in raising the five of us, thus perpetuating the love of education in all of his daughters. He always quoted Hadith about raising daughters, to people, and jokingly used to say, at times, to exchange sons with daughters if one was given the choice. That was to earn Paradise by providing equal opportunities in upbringing and education for sons and daughters.

He always expressed gratitude to Allah for countless blessings, and never ever expressed the wish of having a son so as not to hurt our mother's or our feelings. Even in his frail condition towards the end, he constantly gave

thanks to Allah, and used to say that this lessens the extent of pain and suffering. He taught us to do the same. I remember during our numerous long trips he would make us recite Du'as after him, instead of indulging in useless activities. He taught us humility, and kept us reminding how Allah has blessed all of us with rewards we never deserved or even dreamt of. He was extremely straightforward and spoke out his mind directly without fearing anybody's displeasure, that is a trait which is fading away with our forefathers. He was strict in our training but always respected our rights to express opinions, and make choices accordingly, whether in education or matrimonial matters.

Of his several exceptional characteristics, laughter doubtlessly was his greatest gift. Family, Friends, work or wherever he happened to be he displayed his remarkable ability of stringing words together from here there and everywhere, sending audience in roaring laughter with his monologues packed with humorous exaggerations. In family gatherings, he also recited poems because he had a melodious voice. He proudly remembered the time at T.I. College, Rabwah when

Khalifa-tul-Masih IIIth was the principal, and had asked him multiple times to sing, mostly folk poetry at college functions. And He was a true pal to all those who were in his next generation including daughters, nephews and nieces, son-in-law and even grandchildren. It amused the onlookers to see how much he indulged his grandchildren in the debating talk backs, perhaps subconsciously inculcating among them the art of effective communication skills.

The spiritual, educational, professional and familial life that my father led made him and endearing soul who loved while he lived, and will forever be missed since he is gone. He was a remarkable illustration of the famous Arabic prayer that ran something like this:

'God, there was that one day when all around me were laughing when I came to life crying

God, bring me that other day when all around me will cry when I bid farewell to life laughing'

Like he was in this life, may Almighty God grant him lofty place and position in the paradise too, living happily, laughingly and eternally, forgiving and covering up all his human weaknesses, raising his rank ever so high, and joining with other saintly forefathers in whose homes he prided to have been born and inducted. Ameen.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF HAJJ

To perform a pilgrim-age of the "*Khanah Ka'bah*", which is also called "*Baitullah*", in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, is called *Hajj*.

Like the month of fasting, the time appointed for the pilgrimage, ten weeks after the Festival of the breaking of the fast (*Eidul-fitr*) is fixed according to the lunar calendar, and rotates throughout the year. The pilgrimage thus falls in all seasons of the year.

1. *Hajj* is obligatory on a Muslim when the following requirements are met:

- The person is an adult.
- The person is healthy.
- Can afford traveling expenses to *Hajj* and the living expenses of the family left behind.
- There is peace on the way to *Hajj*.
- A safe mode of travel is available.

If any one of the above conditions cannot be met then *Hajj* is not obligatory.

2. One is required to perform *Hajj* at least once in his lifetime if economic and other conditions are favorable.

3. If a person cannot perform *Hajj* due to ill health, but has deep desire to perform *Hajj*, the person can ask someone else to perform *Hajj* on his behalf. This is called *Hajj-i-Badl*.

4. *Hajj* can be performed only on the fixed time, while '*Umrah*' can be performed at any time during the year.

5. There are three months of *Hajj* (*Shawwal, Dhul Qa'dah, and Dhul Hijjah*) during which one has to wear the *Ihram*.

The pilgrims do not wear any sewn garments; rather, they dress in two loose sheets which are called *Ihram*. Women dress themselves in simple clothes, and are not required to cover their faces.

6. The components of *Hajj* include, circuit of *Baitullah*, brisk walk between *Safa-* and *Mar-wah*, Prayer at *Muqam-i-Ibrahim, Rami-ul-jumar* (Stoning of the Satans) and stay in the field of '*Arafat*' on 9th *Dhul Hijjah*.

(*Dini- Syllabus for the Training of 'Nou Muba'in', (in Urdu-), Naza-rat Nashru Isha'at, Qadian, pp 36-37; Welcome to Ahmadiyyat, 2nd Edition.*)

RELIGIOUS FOUNDERS' DAY

North New Jersey Jama'at

The Religious Founders' Day was held on October 3, 2004 at Wellesley Inn in New Jersey. The event was presided over by Brother Munir Hamid, Na'ib Amir USA. The event started with the recitation of the Holy Quran and its English translation by Hammad Malik. Aamir Khokhar Sahib welcomed the guests and introduced the event's history to the people in attendance.

The first speaker of the event was Father Peter Souritzidis, representing the Greek Orthodox Church. He said that man was created in the likeness of God and was put in heaven but fell from that high status into a sinful existence. This created the need for a redeemer and a liberator to restore to man his high status. He said that Christ came according to the prophecies of earlier prophets. But his crucifixion confused his disciples. In this state of fear, after 50 days of crucifixion, God's Holy Spirit visited the disciples. Between Christ's first coming and the second, the Holy Spirit is people's protector. God the father is the creator, the son is the savior and the Holy Spirit is the protector. He said that the church lives between the first and the

second coming of Christ. He mentioned that there are around 400 predictions in the Old Testament about Christ. The Second coming of Christ is the fulfillment and completion of the kingdom of God but no one knows the time of the Second coming, not even Christ himself.

The second speaker was Mr. Diwakar Shah, representing Jainism. He said that Jainism is one of the oldest religions. He further said that Jainism is a universal religion. According to Jainism, there are 8.4 million types of life. Everything has a soul and the soul cannot be destroyed. The soul transfers from body to body until "Nirvan" is reached. According to Jain teachings, if the Messiah and Liberator dies and reaches "Nirvan", then he cannot come back.

Mr. Doug Popper was the third speaker, representing Buddhism. He said that Buddha was completely committed to bringing salvation to everyone. Buddha spoke of former, middle and latter days. He said that in the latter days, his teachings will lose force and then another spiritual leader will come to revive the law for another ten thousand

years. According to the speaker, this person was born in Japan in the 12th century.

Dr. Mahendra Jani spoke next as the speaker representing Hinduism. He said that the infinite God "Brahman" cannot enjoy itself without being finite, so it created the universe. Once the creation came, then along with it came the issue that sometimes darkness overpowers light. Whenever darkness overcomes light, then God incarnates Himself to guide people. There are many incarnations of God and Hinduism recognizes all prophets as God's incarnations.

The next speaker was Father Ron Pecci, representing the Christian Catholic faith. He said that Christianity ultimately is about redemption. Jesus redeemed humankind. He told his followers that they will not see him for a while before his crucifixion. He said that Christians live in the hope of being fully reunited with God through the second coming of Christ.

Mr. Srebro was the next speaker, representing Judaism. He said that Judaism does not accept Christ's divinity nor

David was a king who ruled the Jews according to the Torah. After him were other kings who did not rule according to the law of the Torah and were seen as sinners. God punished the Jews as a result. Thus, there is the belief that there will be a king who will rule according to the Torah and will restore Jews to their high place and their land in Palestine. He said that the Messianic era will result in an end to strife and fighting and it will cause there to be social justice. There has been a reinterpretation among the Jews as far as the coming of the Messiah is concerned; nowadays modern Jews do not necessarily believe in one person as the Messiah but think of it as a state of social justice.

The next speaker represented the Sikh faith and delivered his address in Punjabi. His speech was translated by Dr. Gurjit Singh into English. He said that the Sikh faith believes that God is omnipresent and omnipotent. God is present everywhere – in earth, water, near and far. He said that Sikhism does not believe in prophets and prophecies. According to Sikhism, each one of us is capable of being one with God by remembering God. He related the incident that when Guru Nanak Sahib visited Mecca, he was asked by the pilgrims, who was better – a Hindu or a Muslim. Guruji replied that without good deeds, none is better.

The final speaker was Maulana Inamul Haq Kauser who represented Islam. He mentioned that the Religious Founders' Day event had brought all people under one roof to bring harmony and understanding between the followers of all religions. He said that Islam recognizes all the religions' founders as appointed by God. He pointed out that the recent times are unprecedented in violence and anarchy. All religions talk about the second coming of a divine being – the Hindus are waiting for the second coming of Krishna; Sikhs are waiting for an "avatar", Buddhists are also waiting for a second coming of a spiritual leader. Jesus talked about the latter days too and mentioned a lot of tribulations. Imam Kauser said that all these tribulations have come to pass in the last hundred years. Signs of punishment always come after the divine person's rejection – for example, the flood came after Noah and not before him, he said. Thus all the current tribulations are also coming after a divine person's passage – the Second Coming of the Messiah. All the signs mentioned for the Second Coming have been fulfilled – meteor shower, passage of a comet, eclipse of the sun and the moon, pestilences, earthquakes, etc.

Following the presentations by all the speakers, there was a question and answer

session. After that Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary, President of North Jersey Jamaat, spoke briefly and repeated the Promised Messiah's^{as} claim in his own words. He asked people to ponder over the claim since Hazrat Ahmad^{as} is the only claimant for the office of the Second Coming of Christ.

Finally Naib Amir Sahib thanked all the speakers and asked them to invite the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to their events also. Then, Naib Amir Sahib presented all the speakers with gifts. After the gifts distribution, there was a silent prayer and then an early dinner was served for all.

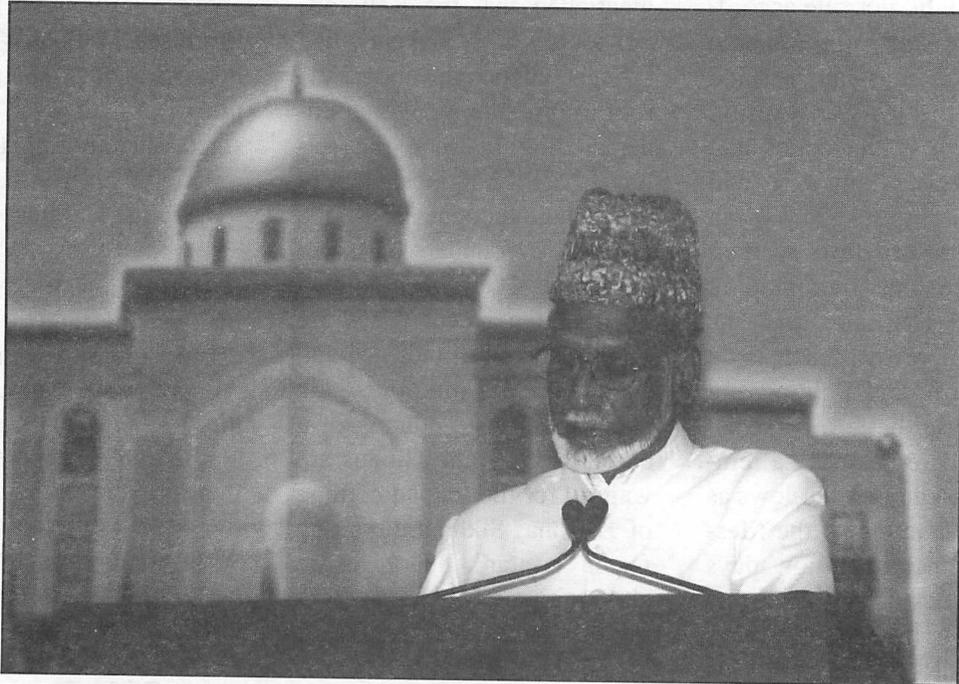
===== **Birth Announcement**

Owais Ahmad of Silver Spring Jama'at (son of Nasim Ahmad, Prof. Mathematics, Minnesota) and Aaliya Ahmad (daughter of Kalim Ullah Khan, President, Laurel Jamaat), are requesting prayers at the happy occasion of the birth of their beautiful daughter, Amani Ahmad, born Thursday, October 21st, 2004.

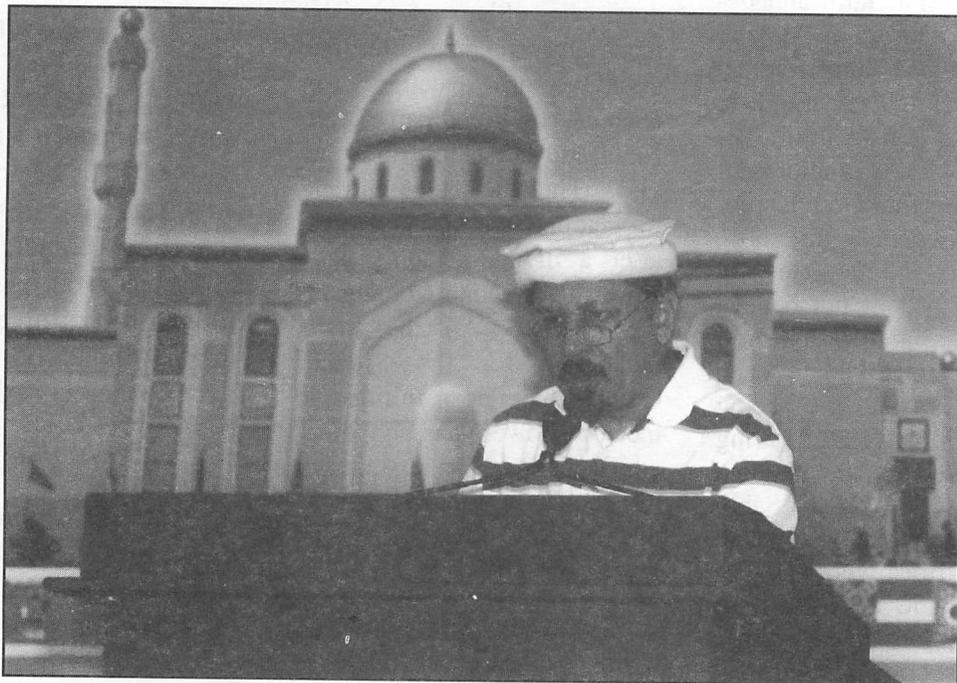
Jazakallah

Nasim Ahmad,
Professor of Mathematics,
Argosy University,
Minnesota

OTHER SPEAKERS ADDRESSING THE 56TH AHMADIYYA ANNUAL CONVENTION
September 3,4, and 5, 2004



Maulana Daud Hanif, Naib Amir and Missionary Incharge, USA



Sahibzada Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad



The Amir,
 Jama'at Ahmadiyya
U.S.A.
 Through Additional Wakilut Tabshir London

T- 10674
 26.05.04

Dear Amir Sahib,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

With reference to my circular dated Feb 21, 2004, in which I have conveyed the following instruction of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih V aba that,

“Some members of the Jama'at invite those who have been penalised by the Jama'at in their social and other functions. This should never be done. Being on speaking terms is one thing, but to cultivate social relationship with them is quite another. Such people are not to be completely boycotted, but it is important to make them feel our displeasure, or else they will never come to realize their error. Not only are their contributions like Chandas, etc., not accepted, they should also not be invited to participate in social gatherings, so that they may feel remorse for their wrong-doing and repent and offer *Istighfar*.”

On the verification request of Amir Sahib U.K., Hudur aba has further instructed that,

“The office bearers of the Jama'at and of the Auxiliary Organizations should immediately walk out of marriage ceremonies at which rites and rituals as are against the spirit of Islam and Ahmadiyyat are practiced.”

You are requested to kindly pass on this instruction of Hudur to all members of the Jama'at.

Wassalam,

Hameedullah

(Ch. Hameedullah)
 Wakil A'la,
 Tahrik Jadid Anjuman Ahmadiyya Pakistan,
 Rabwah.
 Dated Wednesday, May 26, 2004

INLAND VALLEY Daily Bulletin

MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 27, 2004

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Monday, September 27, 2004

★★★★ A3

New imam urges harmony

He hopes to repair damaged Chino mosque

By **JOE FLORKOWSKI**
STAFF WRITER

CHINO — Following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Shamshad Nasir set out to help other religious leaders and residents in Maryland better understand the Muslim faith.

Now he hopes to do the same in the Chino Valley.

Nasir, 53, who was recently installed as imam at the Baitul Hameed Mosque just outside Chino city limits, plans to reach out and establish relationships with other religions within the Inland Valley.

"The problem is (people in) the world do not understand each other," Nasir said. "Respect and understanding is required."

Nasir's efforts to reach out to other groups in Montgomery County, Md., after the Sept. 11 attacks earned him numerous awards and commendations from civic and county groups.

"He is highly respected here," said Peggy Fitzgerald-Bare, chief

of staff for Montgomery County Councilman Steven Silverman.

Nasir worked with county officials and other religious leaders to educate residents about Islam and condemn terrorism, Fitzgerald-Bare said.

"He and other religious leaders tried to help foster understanding that these actions were condemned by people of Muslim faith," she said.

Nasir, soft-spoken and polite, belongs to the Ahmadiyya sect of Islam.

Because the Ahmadiyya sect recognizes and follows different beliefs than other Islamic groups, its members in some parts of the world have been persecuted by some Orthodox Muslims.

The sect has members in nearly 200 nations and conducts missionary work in many of those countries.

Nasir was transferred to the Chino mosque of the Ahmadiyya movement in July after spending eight years as imam in Mont-

gomery County.

Born in Pakistan, Nasir moved to the United States in 1987 after serving in different areas of Pakistan as imam — the leader of prayers in a mosque.

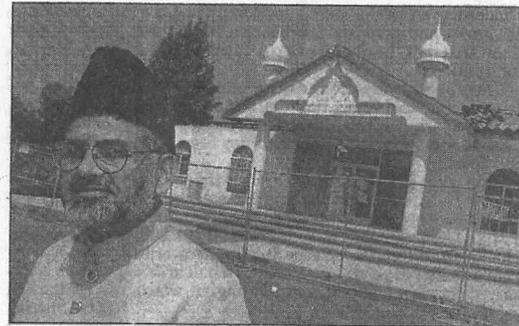
Nasir lives at a home at the 17-year-old mosque in Chino and has spent some time traveling since coming to the Inland Valley.

As imam, Nasir hopes to see the reconstruction of the Baitul Hameed Mosque, damaged in an April 2003 fire that was ruled an accident.

Since the fire, the mosque's offices, meeting room and library have been unusable, but the mosque has filed plans with San Bernardino County to rebuild, Nasir said.

Added vegetation, flowers and other amenities will be used to beautify the 5-acre property, he said.

"We will make this place look beautiful so other people will want to come and see it," Nasir said.



WILL LESTER • STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Islamic religious minister Imam Shamsad Nasir hopes to rebuild the Baitul Hameed Mosque just outside Chino as soon as possible. The mosque sustained heavy damage from a fire in 2003.

Nasir said he has not faced many challenges or difficulties since the attacks in 2001.

If anything, it's helped him build better relationships with other religious groups, he said.

"After 9-11, they came with much interest to know about Islam," Nasir said.

As imam, Nasir welcomes vis-

itors to stop by and learn more about his faith.

"Everybody is welcome to come see the mosque and get a better understanding," he said.

Joe Florkowski can be reached by e-mail at joe.florkowski@dailybulletin.com or by phone at (909) 483-9391.

English translation of the letter received from Hadrat Khalifatul Masih V,
confirming the office bearers for the Ahmadiyya Medical Association

London: Dec. 3, 2004

Dear Amir Sahib, USA

Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahe Wa Barakatohu

A report has been received from you, giving the results of the elections of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Medical Association. *Jazzakum Ullah, Ahsanul Jaza*

According to the majority voting, the following positions are approved:

Dr. Muhammad Ali Mumtaz.	President
Dr. Mansoor Qureshi	Vice President
Dr. Afzalur Rahman	General Secretary
Dr. Abdul Hakeem Nasar	Secretary Finance

May Allah bless it and may He empower them to fulfill their duties and obligations in the best possible manner. Ameen.

Wassalam,

S/d

Mirza Masroor Ahmad
Khalifatul Masih V