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The Ahmadiyya



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Gazette

USA



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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: radhi allahu '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

يَبْنِي آدَامَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ
 الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوَاتِهِمَا إِنَّهُ يَرُوكُمْ
 هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ أَوْلِيَاءَ
 لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

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. (7:28)

COMMENTARY:

The Evil Spirit, called *Shaitan*, and those of his kind are generally invisible to the eye. They exercise their influence imperceptibly and search for the hidden weaknesses of man in order to confirm him in his evil ways. God has created Satan only as a trial for men - Satan serves the purpose of a hurdle in the spiritual race in which man is engaged. Hurdles are meant not to block but to make the competitors in the race more vigilant and to trouble their efforts. The careless and the negligent, who stumble over hurdles and thus lose the race, have themselves to blame and not the person or persons who put them in their way in order to try and prove their mettle.

Al-Hadith

عَنْ أَبِي أُسَيْدٍ السَّاعِدِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: بَيْنَ نَحْنُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ
 اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذْ جَاءَهُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ بَنِي سَلَمَةَ فَقَالَ: يَا
 رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! هَلْ بَقِيَ مِنْ بَرِّ أَبِي شَيْءٍ أَبْرَهُمَا بِهِ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِمَا؟
 قَالَ: نَعَمْ الصَّلَاةُ عَلَيْهِمَا وَالِاسْتِغْفَارُ لَهُمَا وَإِنْفَاذُ عَهْدِهِمَا مِنْ
 بَعْدِهِمَا وَصَلَةُ الرَّحِمِ الَّتِي لَا تُوصَلُ إِلَّا بِهِمَا وَإِكْرَامُ صَدِيقِهِمَا -

Hadhrat Abu Usaiddis-Sa'idi^{ra} relates that they were sitting with the Holy Prophet^{saw} when a man of the Bani Salamah came and said: "Messenger^{saw} of Allah! Is there anything through which I can exercise benevolence towards my parents after their death? He answered: 'Yes; by praying for them, asking forgiveness for them, fulfilling their pledges after their demise, exercising benevolence towards those related through them as they did when they were alive, and honouring their friends.' "

(Abu Dawud kitabul adab bab fi birrul waldain)

عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ
 النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: حَقُّ كَبِيرِ الْأُخُوَّةِ عَلَى صَغِيرِهِمْ كَحَقِّ
 الْوَالِدِ عَلَى وَلَدِهِ -

Hadhrat Sa'id bin 'Amr bin Sa'id bin Al-Aṣ^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "An elder brother has the same right over the younger as a father over a son."

(Murasil Abu Dawud bab fi birrulwalidain)

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{AS}

Concept of *Arsh* in Islam

The Holy Qur'an has made it clear that on the one side God has a close relationship with His creatures and that He is the life of every soul and the support of every being. On the other side, to safeguard against the error lest anyone should conclude from the relationship that God has with man, that God is the very man himself as do the *Vedantists*, it is also stated that He is above everything and is beyond everything and that His station is *Arsh* (Throne) The *Arsh* is not a thing created. It is the name of the Divine rank which is beyond of beyond. It is not a throne on which God is to be imagined as being seated. It is the station which is beyond of beyond from creation and is a station of transcendence and holiness. As the Holy Qur'an says, after establishing the relationship of Creator and created with everything, God settled Himself on the *Arsh*. That is to say, despite all relationships He remained apart and did not mix with His creation.

God's being with everyone and comprehending everything is His attribute of resemblance. He has mentioned this attribute in the Holy Qur'an to demonstrate His nearness to man. His being beyond of beyond from all creation and being above all and higher than all and farthest of all and being at the station of transcendence and holiness, which is far from creation and is called *Arsh*, is the attribute of transcendence. God has mentioned this attribute in the Holy Qur'an so that He should establish His Unity and His being without associate and having withdrawn from the qualities of creation. Other people have either adopted God's attribute of transcendence and have called Him *Nargan*, or they have accepted Him as *Sargan* and have attributed such resemblance to Him as if He was the very creation itself. They have not combined these two attributes, but God Almighty in the Holy Qur'an has shown His countenance in the mirror of both these attributes and this is His perfect Unity.

[*Chashma Ma'rifat, Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 23, pp. 97-99*]

Synopsis of Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} at Mubarak Mosque, Baitus Salam, St. Prix on October 10, 2008

Shermeen Butt

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} recited verse 27 of *Surah Al A'raf*. Its translation reads:

“O’ children of Adam! We have sent down to you raiment to cover your shame, and to be an elegant dress; but the raiment of righteousness – that is the best. That is one of the signs of Allah, that they may remember.”

Hazoor^{aba} said that with the Grace of Allah the French *Jama'at* has been enabled to build their first ever mosque. May Allah make this mosque a strong foundation for building further mosques which may not have any legal impediments and may the members of the *Jama'at* be also infused with a spirit of sacrifice to build more mosques. Hazoor^{aba} said the construction of this mosque has certainly proven that if one is resolute Allah removes impediments in the fullness of time. Hazoor^{aba} said due to the objections of the local people there has been some restriction on the height of the minarets of the beautiful mosque. However, at least permission has been given for this to be a functional mosque; *Insha Allah* the matter of the height of the minarets will also be resolved gradually.

Hazoor^{aba} said when this site was just a hall for offering *Salat*, there would be complaints from the local people and one day the Mayor of St. Prix, who Hazoor^{aba} said was present today, had also visited in anger. However, when Allah changed his heart with His Grace it was the Mayor who gave formal permission for the building of the mosque. Hazoor^{aba} said he remembered the Mayor had also come to a *Jalsa* some years ago and had removed his shoes before coming to the stage and had met Hazoor^{aba} respectfully. In this way the very person who was opposed to the construction of the mosque not only gave permission to go ahead with the construction but was also helpful in removing the impediments and is still being helpful. May Allah reward him and open up his heart further.

Hazoor^{aba} said all this is a blessing of Allah and is something that should make us grateful to Him and the way to be grateful is to worship Him in a better and enhanced way and to adopt *Taqwa* more than before. While a mosque facilitates worship of God and turning to Him it also draws one’s attention towards service to mankind. Thankfulness is likely when we come to the mosque for sincere worship of God and leave all worldly matters outside. He is the Lord of all the worlds and if we fully comprehend this we would think of none other when coming to worship Him and we will be saved from concealed/latent *shirk* (associating partners with Allah). Having accepted the Imam of the age and having pledged to bring about pure/pious changes in ourselves we should make it to the mosque for congregational Prayers, not just on Fridays but most days.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said that the heart is at the center of all worship and if the heart is not inclined to Allah then what avail would be any worship? He said there are thousands of mosques in the world but the worship that goes on in them is but a ritual. Hazoor^{aba} said the expectations that the Promised Messiah^{as} had from us are quite tremendous. He was greatly pained for us, his followers, to reform ourselves and build a connection with Allah and he counseled and advised us regarding this. Hazoor^{aba} said there are mosques that our mosques cannot compete with in terms of beauty. However, the real beauty towards which the Promised Messiah^{as} draws out attention cannot be found in those mosques because the people of those mosques have not accepted the Imam of the age in accordance with the commandment of Allah and His Messenger. With the construction of this mosque in St. Prix, Hazoor^{aba} said the responsibilities of the Ahmadis have increased. Now the eyes of the Muslims and non-Muslims will be on them. Indeed, Hazoor^{aba} said the Ameer Sahib had shown Hazoor^{aba} an article in a magazine of huge circulation, featuring an introductory article on the *Jama'at* with reference to the mosque. Introduction of the *Jama'at* opens ways and means for *Tabligh* as well as creates jealousy and envy which leads to enmity. The best way of protection from this is through prayer; turn to Allah with sincerity and pray with humility and earnestness.

Hazoor^{aba} said with the building of the mosque comes three challenges. The first challenge is to try and attend the five daily Prayers at the mosque with sincerity. Living in the Western world in general and near the city of Paris, which is associated with the razzle-dazzle of this world, in particular, turning to God would certainly attract His love. The second challenge, Hazoor^{aba} said is of *Tabligh*. Indeed the Promised Messiah^{as} said that anywhere an introduction of Islam is needed, a mosque should be built. Hazoor^{aba} said just as a magazine had published a piece on the mosque even before its formal opening. When the opportunities for *Tabligh* open the eyes of the world will be on us. Hazoor^{aba} said generally *Tabligh* has borne fruit in France but it is limited to a certain ethnic group, i.e. the Arabs. Hazoor^{aba} said it is the right of the Arabs that the message of the true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet^{saw} is taken to them. It is their favor on us that they brought the message of the Holy Prophet^{saw} to us and saved our lives and our Hereafter. Therefore it is our foremost duty to take the message of the true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) to the Arabs. However, we should always bear in mind that the advent of the Holy Prophet^{saw} was for the entire world and the Promised Messiah^{as} was commissioned to gather the world under the banner of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. It our task to pray for this – the fruition is in the hands of Allah, only His Grace can accomplish matters. The third challenge is to keep an eye on our practices, our deeds. The people we do *Tabligh* to will certainly watch how we conduct ourselves. Today we have to be watchful over our practices and turn to Allah with sincerity and save millions from the earthly and heavenly calamities and bring them under the banner of the Holy Prophet^{saw}.

Hazoor^{aba} said there should be no feeling of smugness at the completion of the building of the mosque. Each step of a believer towards piety draws his/her attention to further piety and as he/she develops in piety the sense of responsibility increases and there is greater aspiration to do good works. The Holy Prophet gave us the glad-tiding that one who builds a house of God on this earth will have a reciprocal house in Paradise, however it is conditional that the house of God (mosque) in the world is built purely for the sake of Allah. Hazoor^{aba} said one tries to offer Prayer with absolute sincerity in a mosque that is made purely for the sake of Allah and rather than feel pride over it one's heart is filled with humility and awe of God that He may accept the sacrifice one has made in the building of the mosque.

Hazoor^{aba} said the best way to offer thankfulness to Allah for this new mosque in France is to develop in *taqwa* and to make each act of one's worship to attain the pleasure of Allah. Hazoor^{aba} said that the Qur'anic verse cited at the start guides one to this by giving the example of clothing/apparel and its two attributes; to cover one's weakness and to adorn oneself. Hazoor^{aba} said clothing/apparel covers any physical flaw we may have and protects us from the extremes of weather. Beautiful clothing/apparel enhances one's personality. However, in the Western countries, especially this country, the clothing of women in particular has become most obscene and the more revealing they are the better they are considered. In particular in the summer months they are extremely exposing. Hazoor^{aba} said the reference to 'raiment of righteousness' in the verse draws attention that the function of apparent clothing/apparel is two fold but if there is a lack of *Taqwa* even these two functions cannot be fulfilled. Indeed the best clothing/apparel is that of *Taqwa*. Explaining the Arabic word '*reesh*' (elegant dress) in the verse Hazoor^{aba} said it also means 'feather, plumage of birds'. Indeed a bird without its plumage looks quite horrible. However, unfortunately these days the concept of a beautiful dress is in its nakedness. Sadly the odd Muslim and Ahmadi woman is also influenced by this and once they abandon their *pardah* it leads to further exposure. In response to a question raised by a new Ahmadi recently Hazoor had told him that children should be made aware of their personal sanctity from an early age; who they are and what God wants from them. They should be made aware about clothing from an early age of five to six years old that whatever their environment, they are Ahmadis and Allah likes clothes to cover our bodies. Hazoor said '*reesh*' also means wealth and explained the significance of not earning wealth through wrong means, through defrauding the government of taxes etc. Hazoor^{aba} said it is essential to adopt what is permissible to cover one's weaknesses and for this the clothing/apparel of *Taqwa* is the best. Hazoor^{aba} said just as our father Adam (on whom be peace) covered his weakness we should be mindful of this aspect and continue to protect ourselves with *Taqwa* and *Istighfar* (seeking forgiveness). This would save us from much of this world's absurdities.

The Promised Messiah^{as} explained that 'raiment of righteousness' means that one's spiritual elegance or beauty is only through *Taqwa*. The raiment of *Taqwa* can be taken on by fulfilling the pledge one makes to Allah. An Ahmadi may fulfill this pledge by adopting the modus operandi that the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) gave us in the form of the Ten Conditions of *Bai'at*. The first condition is to abstain from all forms of shirk. Worldly engagements can take us away from remembrance of Allah. It is in our real benefit to avoid latent/hidden forms of shirk. The second condition is to keep away from ills that we face daily, like falsehood, trespass of the eye, adultery. Hazoor^{aba} said adultery does not just connote the act in itself but also frequent bad thoughts. There is also cruelty, dishonesty, mischief, rebellion etc. that are to be abstained from. The third condition is the offering of the five daily Prayers. Now with the new mosque, Hazoor^{aba} said, this should be especially borne in mind. Attention should be given to offering *Tahajjud* and to invoke (*Durood*) blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet^{saw}. *Durood* advances one in spirituality. The fourth condition is not to harm the creation of Allah in general and Muslims in particular under any impulse of anger etc. Hazoor^{aba} said if this was adopted all the grievances of the world would disappear. The fifth condition is to remain faithful to God under all circumstances. The sixth condition is to restrain all worldly desires and obey God and His Messenger. The seventh condition is that arrogance and vanity should be completely given up and humility adopted. The eighth condition is to hold the honor of Islam dearer than one's life and property. The ninth condition is to try and benefit mankind and

the tenth condition is to have perfect obedience and love for the Promised Messiah^{as}. Hazoor^{aba} said after the Promised Messiah^{as} the rule now applies to *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*. Hazoor^{aba} said this pledge is indeed essential for *Taqwa*.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said that endeavors should be made to become righteous. He said righteousness is of two kinds; about knowledge and about practice. The truth is not disclosed to one unless one becomes righteous. Salat, fasting and general worship is flawed unless one is righteous.

Addressing the congregation Hazoor^{aba} said may Allah bless them all with the blessings of the new mosque and may they all live with love, affection and a sense of brotherhood, may the office-holders, in light of the system of the Community, conduct themselves with humility and the members, again in light of the system of the Community be compliant. May Allah increase the sincere connection with *Khilafat* of the old Ahmadis and may He also increase the sincerity of the new comers whose love and affection for *Khilafat* is evident from their faces. Hazoor^{aba} said just before *Jummah Majid* Sahib told him that it was in Dec 1984 during a visit to France that Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth had first mentioned his vision of seeing the digit of ten shining on his watch and with this the words 'Friday the 10th' coming to his mind. Hazoor^{aba} said today was also Friday the 10th and the inauguration of the first mosque in France was taking place. May all the blessings of 'Friday the 10th' the tidings of which were given to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth, and which Allah fulfills in many ways, be associated with this mosque.

Many centuries ago Muslims came to France through Spain but they faced difficulties. Hazoor^{aba} said materialism had become the dominant factor for them and they had to retreat. However the weapon of love, affection and prayers that the Messiah of Muhammad^{saw} has been given is a most purposeful weapon and wins hearts and can never be turned away and its effect is life-infusing. The Ahmadis of France, the servants of the Messiah of Muhammad^{saw}, should be mindful that this time the operation is to win hearts and minds and is not coming from outside but from within France Allah has facilitated arrangements for this. The standards of *Tabligh* should be raised so that pious souls may swiftly gather under the banner of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. May Allah enable the French *Jama'at* to do so.

Next Hazoor^{aba} announced the sad new of the passing away of Maulana Bashir Ahmad Sahib Qamar. He was the *Nazir-e-Ala of Taleemul Qur'an* for *Waqfe Arzi* in Pakistan. He was 74 years old. He served till the very end and had recently fallen ill. He dedicated his life in 1950 and had served in Ghana and Fiji. He had many good qualities and was very simple-natured. Hazoor^{aba} said in Africa Hazoor^{aba} personally saw him with great love for the Africans and working very hard. He lived alone so he would cook for himself. He wrote to Hazoor^{aba} a day before his passing away and wrote in broken words about his health and added that may Allah always grant Hazoor^{aba} pious, helpful people. Hazoor^{aba} prayed for his elevated status in Paradise and mentioned that he was the father of the *Vikalul Isha'at* in London Maulana Naseer Ahmad Qamar. May Allah grant patience and steadfastness to his bereaved family, he leaves behind three sons and four daughters.

Another missionary of the Community also passed away recently in Australia. He had served in the Ivory Coast, Fiji and Ghana. He was a very simple-natured person. He was diagnosed cancer recently. May Allah grant steadfastness to his wife and children.

KHILAFAT-E-RASHIDA (The Rightly Guided Khilafat)

**Maulana Ataul Mujeeb Rashed,
Imam of the London Mosque**

(Speech delivered on 26th July 2008 at the 42nd Annual Convention (Jalsa Salana) of Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK.)

The institution of *Khilafat* is that blessed heavenly system of guidance granted by Allah the Exalted to a community of believers for their spiritual permanence and development. The significance of this Divine bounty is like the 'rope of Allah'. Firmly holding onto it is a verification of their belief as well as a guarantee for their peace, security and spiritual advancement.

The blessed subject of *Khilafat* is indeed like a life line and a source of real inspiration. It brings with it a message of spiritual elevation which takes a believer closer and closer to Allah the Almighty and enables him to achieve the purpose of his creation. Without *Khilafat* there is no life, no joy and no spirituality. And, under the benign

shade of *Khilafat*, we are able to enjoy all the blessings of this life with a sure guarantee of endless blessings in the Hereafter. *Khilafat* is, indeed, a bliss unspeakable. It is like a mine of bounties which can never be exhausted.

Khilafat: Its Greatness and Blessings

The subject of *Khilafat* is mentioned very comprehensively in *Ayat-e-Istikhlaf* (The verse of *Khilafat*) in Chapter *Al-Nur* of the Holy Qur'an which I have recited at the beginning. The translation reads:

Allah has promised to those among you (i.e. the followers of Hadhrat Muhammad^{sa}) 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.

(Ch.24:V.56)

This verse contains most exquisite subject matters. In it Allah the Exalted has made a definite promise for the establishment of *Khilafat* for the community of believers and has made it conditional to belief and good works. Two grand blessings of *Khilafat* are cited; firm establishment of religion and the transformation of a state of fear into a state of peace. It is also mentioned that the lofty objectives and the sweet fruits of *Khilafat* are also two-fold; true establishment of worship of God and the Unity of God.

What is *Khilafat*?

The literal meanings of the word *Khilafat* are of vicegerancy and succession.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned this term in four different categories. Owing to the subject of my speech, I will be concentrating on that category in which this word is used for the deputy of a prophet and his successor.

The Promised Messiah^{as} says:

‘The meaning of *Khali-fah* is that of a successor who renews faith. Those who come in place of prophets to dispel the darkness that spreads after their era are called *Khalifahs*.’

(*Malfoozat Vol. 4, p.383*)

Need for *Khilafat*

Regarding the necessity and the wisdom behind the institution of *Khilafat* the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

‘A successor is called a *Khalifah*. The successor of a prophet in the real sense can only be the one who has the excellences of a prophet on a shadow-

like basis...in fact a *Khalifah* is the shadow of a prophet. As no person can live forever, therefore Allah the Exalted willed to establish the beings of prophets, who are the most eminent and the best among all the beings of the world, on a shadow-like basis till the Day of Judgement. It is with this objective that Allah the Exalted chose *Khilafat* so that the world may never and at no time be deprived of the blessings of prophet-hood.’

(*Shahadat-ul-Qur'an p.57 Ruhani Khaza'in vol. 6, p.353*)

Prophethood and *Khilafat*

The well-established way of Allah, the Almighty for the guidance of mankind is that the seeds of the Divine message of guidance are sown by His chosen prophets and the stem of guidance begins to grow. The advent of these prophets is actually the first manifestation of Allah, the Almighty.

When the time of their departure from this world arrives, Allah once again demonstrates a wonder of His power for the completion of the some-

what incomplete work of the prophets; to continue to nurture and develop their works and to take it to the point of culmination. This is the sign of Allah's second manifestation in the form of *Khilafat*.

The Election of Prophet and *Khalifah*

It is worth remembering that both the institutions of prophethood and *Khilafat* are from God but there is a difference regarding their election. Allah the Exalted elects a prophet directly because at that time of oppression there is no existence of a community of believers, whereas after the advent of a prophet a community of believers is formed. A community that satisfactorily fulfils the criteria of belief and good works in the sight of Allah is given the opportunity, as a mark of honour, to express its opinion at the time of the election of a *Khali-fah*. On the face of it, this appears to be an election but in reality it is a selection made by God. The pure hearts of the believers are, with the power and order of Allah the Exalted, inclined to choose that pure being which, in fact, is the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It may be noted here

that each *Khalifah*, who is the manifestation of the institution of *Khilafat*, is the *Khalifah* of the prophet who has passed away and is not the *Khalifah* of the *Khalifah* before him. That is why these *Khulafa* are always given the title of *Khalifatur Rasul*. It is in accordance to this principle that each *Khalifah* in the Ahmadiyya Community is called *Khalifatul Masih*.

The High Status of Khalifah

God, through His complete authority, bestows the office of *Khilafat* to the *Khalifah*. God makes a *Khalifah* and none has the authority to dismiss him from this office. He is helped by God. God's help is with him at every moment. God becomes his Teacher and Guide. He acquires religious knowledge and discernment from God. God Himself generates love and affection for him in others' hearts and these circles of love and devotion continue to widen. Illumined by the Light of God he becomes the fountain-head of light and then he is bestowed the miracle of acceptance of prayers. Obeying him is actually obeying the Prophet whose *Khalifah* he is and this very obedience ultimately guarantees connecting that per-

son with the obedience of God.

Distinctive Features of Khilafat-e-Rashida

Whenever *Khilafat* is established on the principles mentioned in the Holy Qur'an it is always the truly guided *Khilafat*. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} has listed the special features which distinguish *Khilafat-e-Rashida* from all other forms of government. I summarise his points here:

Election

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Verily Allah commands you to make over the trusts to those entitled to them... (Ch.4:V.59)

The *Khilafat-e-Rashida* is elective and Allah Almighty has left the method of election open to the believers.

Shari'ah

A *Khalifah* is under the yoke of *Shari'ah* (law.) He can reject the counsel of his advisers but he cannot ignore the laws of the *Shari'ah*. Thus, although he is a constitutional head, he is not absolutely free.

Consultation

In addition to the control of *Shari'ah*, he is subject to consultation as well. In all important matters, the *Khalifah* is bound to consult his colleagues and to follow their advice as far as possible. Finally he takes the decision under Divine guidance.

Morals

Apart from the *Shari'ah* rules and the requirement of consultation, since a *Khalifah* is the religious head as well as the leader of the obligatory prayers, he is morally and subconsciously obliged to lead a righteous path but this situation does not apply to a political leader, whether elected or not.

Equality

A *Khalifah* is equal to other fellow beings in human rights as prescribed in Islam. This is not the case of other rulers in the world. A *Khalifah* can secure his rights through the judicial system just as people can obtain their rights from him through the same process.

A Khalifah is granted a lesser infallibility.

As he is a component of the divine mechanism, a *Khalifah* has been promised a limited providential infal-

libility from major mistakes liable to bring about disastrous consequences. In such situations, he is assured of God's succour and help against adversaries. He is the one who enjoys Divine assistance. This unique position is not available to any other type of leader.

Non-political

The *Khalifah* is not aligned to any political party and his position is that of a father. It is not permissible, therefore, that he should incline towards any one party. Allah says:

"When you judge between men, you judge with justice" (Ch.4:V.59)

That is, a person in the position of a *Khalifah* should exercise complete justice, leaning neither to an individual nor a party.

(Al-Furqan, Khilafat Issue, July 1958.)

Khilafat-e-Rashida I

Allah Almighty has made a very clear and emphatic promise about the establishment of a spiritual system of leadership among the community of believers.

On the basis of this Divine promise, the Holy

Prophet^{saw} further mentioned this everlasting principle:

'That Prophethood is always followed by *Khilafat*.

(Kanzul-'ummaal, al-faslul awwal fi ba'd khasa'is-il anbi-yaa. Vol.11, p.476)

He further elaborated by saying:

'The *Khilafat* to be established after him will be based on the precept of Prophethood, upholding the same standard of values.'

(Musnad Ahmad, Mishkatul Masabih, kitabur-riqaaq, baabul-indhar wat-tahdheer, p.1479, Hadith 5379)

The Holy Prophet^{saw} further outlined the jobs to be performed by his successors. He said:

'O my Allah, have mercy upon my successors who will come after me, relating my sayings and my practices and teaching the same to other people.'

(Jami' As-saghir by 'Allamah Suyuti Vol. 1, p.60)

These two *Ahadith* elucidate the fundamental

principle that *Khilafat* in essence is a continuation of the mission of the Prophet. The objectives and the aims of *Khilafat* and Prophethood remain the same.

The Holy Prophet^{saw} further said that:

'The *Khilafat* to be established immediately after me shall continue for thirty years.'

(Mishkatul Masabih, Kitabul Fitan, Babul Malaham, p.1484 Hadith 5395)

Emphasising the importance of this period, he further said:

'Follow in my footsteps and the footsteps of *Khulafa-e-Rashideen* who would be fully guided to the right path.'

(Musnad Ahmad)

These clear elucidations left absolutely no doubt that a system of *Khilafat* was going to be established after the demise of the Holy Prophet^{saw} and certain individuals would be there as the spiritual embodiment of this system.

This is exactly what happened. Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddiq^{ra}, Hadhrat 'Umar bin Al-Khattab^{ra},

Hadhrat ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan^{ra} and Hadhrat ‘Ali bin Abi Talib^{ra} were chosen as *Khalifahs* one after the other. Their total period of *Khilafat* was nearly thirty years. This period of *Khilafat* is generally known and described as *Khilafat-e-Rashida*, the rightly guided *Khilafat*.

Points of Distinction

It is interesting and inspiring to note that the first era of *Khilafat-e-Rashida* has several unique points of distinction. For example, it is a period closely connected with the blessed period of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. It started just after his sad demise and as such, it was the very first practical manifestation of the promise given in the Holy Qur’an. (Ch.24:v.56) It is a period about which the Holy Prophet^{saw} made a precise prediction, even indicating the exact duration of it. Moreover, its name is derived from the wording of *Khulafa-e-Rashideen* used by the Holy Prophet^{saw}, obedience to whom was strongly stressed by him, mentioning it along with his own traditions. Another distinction of this period is that all four *Khalifahs*, who had this honour of being chosen as successors, were not only prominent companions of

the Holy Prophet^{saw} but also from among those who were given the glad tidings of paradise during their lifetime. Moreover, all four were closely related to the Holy Prophet^{saw}. The first two were his fathers in law while the later two were his sons in law. At least three out of four *Khalifahs* also have the honour of being mentioned as his successors by the Holy Prophet^{saw} himself.

Overview

It is not possible for me to go into the details of blessings and achievements of this period of *Khilafat* but I must say that during this period the whole world was able to witness that all the blessings promised in the Holy Qur’an were thoroughly enjoyed by the Muslims. During this blessed era Islam’s glory was established not only in Arabia but also in other parts of the world.

It was an age of advancement and climax of Islam that even the colossal opponents were powerless to contend with. Such was the state of the grandeur of Islam and the awe of the Muslims that the great empires of kings and emperors would tremble at their name and would bow down to

them. The truth is that during this golden era of the Rightly Guided *Khilafat*, Islam attained such glory and eminence that even today, when an impartial historian casts his eyes on this era, he is amazed. He fails to understand as to how the inhabitants of the desert of Arabia became the conquerors of the world. He does not realise that it was all the fruits of *Khilafat-e-Rashida*; that Rightly Guided *Khilafat* with which the destiny of the triumph of Islam was linked.

In the Eyes of the West

The *Khilafat-e-Rashida* was indeed a golden period of the history of Islam. The teachings of Islam were faithfully followed and put into practice. The *Khalifahs* through their unstinting loyalty to Islamic values, their personal nobility of character and exemplary adherence to the teachings and practices of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, served as role models for all. The nobility of the *Khalifahs* and their moral excellence has been acknowledged even by non-Muslim writers. I quote here just two short statements from famous historians.

Lieutenant-General Sir

John Glubb writes in his book: *The Empire of the Arabs*, p.26:

‘Both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar had been close intimates of the Prophet and were utterly dedicated to the service of Islam. Like the Apostle himself, they were indifferent to money and continued when they had attained power to live simple peasant lives. Clad in patched garments made of coarse woollen material, they were not above milking their own goats as they had always done.’

Edward Gibbon writes in his book *The History of the Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, p.869:

‘An historian who balances the four caliphs with a hand unshaken by superstition will calmly pronounce that their manners were alike pure and exemplary; that their zeal was fervent, and probably sincere; and that, in the midst of the riches and power, their lives were devoted to the practice of moral and religious duties.’

Khilafat-e-Rashida: A Continuous Blessing

It is of paramount importance to understand that

the blessing of *Khilafat-e-Rashida* is a continuous blessing. This is clearly established from the verses of the Holy Qur’an, the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{saw} and the explanations given by the Promised Messiah^{as}.

The Holy Qur’an

Let us look at the Holy Qur’an first. In the famous verse of *Khilafat* (Ch.24:V.56), Allah, the Almighty, has used the word *yastakhlifanna*. This means that Allah is definitely going to establish the *Khalifahs*. Now the expression used here *yastakhlifanna* has a meaning of repetition and continuity in it. It refers to the present tense and also to the future. Therefore, it does contain a promise which is bound to continue in future as well. Furthermore the use of the suffix *Nun thaqeelah* makes it all the more emphatic and prophetic.

It is also important to note that the word *minkum* used here also clearly establishes the continuity of this blessing of Allah. The word literally means “from among you” but it is wrong to take this reference only applicable to the Muslims present at the time of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. As a matter of fact, this is an ongo-

ing glorious promise of Allah, the Almighty, to all such believers in Islam who truly fulfil the requirement of faith and good deeds till the end of time. It would be a great folly to restrict the application of this promise to a limited period of time.

In the Holy Qur’an this expression has been used no less than 82 times. Except on two or three occasions, where specific exceptional reference is made, it has always been used in a manner that is applicable to all the Muslims till the day of judgement.

Looking at the verse of *Khilafat* once again, Allah, the Almighty, has mentioned here an analogy, saying: “as He made successors from among those who were before them.” We know that the system of succession continued for nearly 1400 years after Hadhrat Moses^{as}. How is it possible that in case of Islam it should be considered to be limited to only 30 years? The Muslims have been described in the Holy Qur’an as *Kuntum khaira ummatin ukhrijat linnas* (you are the best people raised for the good of mankind). (3:111) Allah, the Almighty, says to the Holy Prophet^{saw} great is Allah’s Grace on you (4:114).

These three verses taken together clearly establish the *Khilafat* to be a continuous blessing for the true followers of Islam who will fulfil the two required conditions.

The Hadith

There is a very prophetic and explicit saying of the Holy Prophet^{saw} narrated by Hadhrat Hudhaifa, recorded in Musnad Ahmad. It reads:

‘Prophethood shall remain amongst you for as long as Allah wills. He will then cause it to end. Then a *Khilafat* will be established in the precepts of prophethood which will last for as long as Allah wills. He will then cause it to end. Oppressive kingdom will follow [which will inflict great pain and misery on its subjects]. Its rule will last for as long as Allah wills. He will then cause it to end. After this, tyrannical monarchies will follow. Their rule will last for as long as Allah wills. Allah will then cause it to end. *Khilafat* will then be re-established in the precepts of prophethood. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet^{saw} became silent [and added no more comments].’

(Musnad Ahmad, Mish-

katul Masabih, kitabur-riqaaq, baabul-indhar wat-tahdheer, p.1479, Hadith 5379)

This profound *Hadith* clearly states that after giving the glad tiding of the re-establishment of *Khilafat* in the latter days, the Holy Prophet^{saw} did not specify any time limit for it nor did he add any other comment. This is a clear indication of the continuity of this *Khilafat* without any break or gap in it.

The Sayings

The Promised Messiah^{as} has also made it absolutely clear that the blessings of *Khilafat* to be established in the Muslim *Ummah* after the demise of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{saw} was destined to be perpetuated.

He says:

‘He (i.e. Allah) has established the institution of *Khilafat* so that the world should never remain without the blessings of prophethood. Therefore any person who believes in the *Khilafat* to last for only 30 years, totally ignores the very purpose of its establishment.’

(*Shahadatul Qur’an p.58*)

‘Allah has given His promise that He will establish the system of *Khilafat* in this religion after the Holy Prophet^(saw) and will extend it to the Day of Judgement. Just as there were *Khalifahs* and Kings for a very long period in the dispensation of Moses, He will do it the same way here in Islam and will not let this system be obliterated.’

(*Tabligh-e-Risalat Vol-3, p.60*)

The Middle Period

This whole discussion makes it clear that the *Khilafat*, promised in the Holy Qur’an, is basically a permanent blessing but it was made conditional to the right belief and good deeds. At the end of the first era of *Khilafat*, because of the degeneration and due to the absence of the required conditions, this blessing was, in a way, withdrawn from those people. But the history of Islam continued precisely in the same order as mentioned in the tradition of the Holy Prophet^{saw} quoted above. Oppressive governments came and went; dynastic monarchies and Muslim empires were established and faded away.

Ahmadiyya Khilafat

Finally the time came for the promised revival of Islam. The second spiritual advent of the Holy Prophet^{saw} took place in the person of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^{as}. He claimed to be the Imam of the age, the Promised Mahdi, and the awaited Messiah – a prophet of God, but in full subordination to the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad^{saw}. He initiated the Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at* in 1889. His main objective and the purpose of his advent was to revive the pure teachings of Islam, to revive faith in one God and to unify the whole of mankind by bringing them all under the banner of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{saw}, who is the final messenger of God for the whole of mankind with a perfect and everlasting message for all times.

After successfully accomplishing his mission and establishing a vibrant community of believers, he passed away in 1908. Before his demise, he wrote his famous book, *The Will* in which he made it absolutely clear that, in order to carry on his mission to its ultimate fulfilment, Allah the Almighty, following His own tradition, would show the second manifesta-

show the second manifestation of His power. It was a clear reference to the promise of Allah, the Exalted, contained in the Holy Qur'an, to bestow the blessing of *Khilafat* upon the community of true believers. Moreover, it was exactly in line with the prophetic statement of the Holy Prophet^{saw} that Allah the Almighty was going to re-establish the *Khilafat* on the precept of prophethood.

A very interesting point is to be noted here. The Promised Messiah^{as} has used a particular terminology of *Qudrat-e-Thaniyyah* i.e. the second manifestation of God for the establishment of *Khilafat*. It is indeed most befitting from this aspect as well that the establishment of *Khilafat* on the precept of prophethood was actually happening for the second time in the history of the world.

Upon the demise of the Promised Messiah^{as}, Hadhrat Maulana Nurud Din^{ra} was unanimously elected to be his first successor. He was entitled Khalifatul Masih to continue his mission. In 1914, Hadhrat Mirza Bashirud Din Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} was chosen as the second *Khalifah*. When he passed away in 1965, the third *Khalifah* was elected in the

person of Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmadth. Then, at his demise in 1982, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmadth was elected to be the fourth Khalifatul Masih. The fifth Khalifa and the current supreme head of the *Jama'at*, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba} was chosen in 2003.

This is how, by the grace of Allah, the institution of *Khilafat*, on the precept of prophethood, was re-established, fulfilling all the prophecies contained in the Holy Qur'an and the blessed sayings of the Holy Prophe^(saw).

Khilafat for ever

Hadhrat Promised Messiah^{as} has stated very categorically that now the *Khilafat* to be re-instated on the precept of prophethood, is bound to continue till the end of the time. He said:

‘Its coming is better for you for it is permanent and will not be cut off till the day of judgement’.

(The Will, pp.6-7)

‘Once I have departed, God will bring about for you the second manifestation of His power (i.e. *Khilafat*) and it will remain with you forever.’

(The Will, p.10)

Moreover, all the five *Khalifahs* of the Promised Messiah^(as) have also mentioned repeatedly that this blessing of *Khilafat* is everlasting and it will continue up to the day of judgement.

Khilafat-e-Rashida Re-instated

By the Grace of Allah, we know it for certain and believe it with profound conviction that this *Khilafat* which has been established in *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya is actually the second phase of the same *Khilafat-e-Rashida* which was established following the demise of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. It is truly the *Khilafat-e-Rashida* revived and re-instated in this age. It is, in fact, continuation of the same *Khilafat-e-Rashida* promised by Allah, the Almighty, to the community of believers if they truly believe and perform good deeds.

There has never been any shortage of such people or groups who aspired for *Khilafat* and even did their best to grab it. But all their hopes and efforts ended in smoke and this blessing was bestowed by Allah the Almighty, upon this community which truly satisfied the required conditions in the sight of God. This, as such, is a proof of the fact

that the only community fulfilling the required criteria is none other than the Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at*.

In the *Hadith* narrated by Hadhrat Hudhaifa, the Holy Prophet^{saw} referring to the *Khilafat* to be established following his demise named it as *Khilafat-e-Rashida* and also described the same as '*ala minhaaj-in-nubuwwah* (permanence). Now it is very important that in the same *Hadith*, while mentioning the re-establishment of *Khilafat* after a long interval, the Holy Prophet^{saw} spoke for the second time exactly the same wording of '*ala minhaaj-innu-buwwah* which is the other name of *Khilafat-e-Rashida*. So it is quite evident that this period of *Khilafat* in Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at* is definitely the continuation and revival of the same *Khilafat-e-Rashida*.

Secondly, the Promised Messiah^(as) explaining the system of *Khilafat* to be established after him, used the wording of *Qudrat-e-Thaniyyah*, the second manifestation of God. Elaborating it further, he cited the example of Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddiq^{ra}, the first *Khalifa-e-Rashid* of the Holy Prophet^{saw} and I

quote:

'At that critical hour, Allah made Hadhrat Abu Bakr^{ra} stand firm and through him He once again showed a manifestation of His Power.'

(*The Will*, p.9)

This specific reference of Hadhrat Abu Bakr^{ra} makes it clear, beyond any shadow of doubt, that the current system of *Khilafat* in Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at* is a replication of *Khilafat-e-Rashida*.

What's the proof?

An outstanding proof of the fact that today, it is the *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya which has been blessed with the true form of *Khilafat-e-Rashida* is the practical testimony of Allah, the Exalted. All the blessings of *Khilafat-e-Rashida*, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and *Ahadith*, are descending upon this *Jama'at* like a continuous heavy rain. Just to give you a taste of that I present briefly only three aspects.

The history of the Ahmadiyya Community is witness to the fact that under the guidance of the highly eminent personifications of His Second Manifestation, with the grace and blessings of Allah, the

Community has acquired a distinguished and eminent global identity. The whole world is well aware of its efforts in the fields of propagation of Islam, education and its work for humanity. The Community is spreading the beautiful teachings of Islam as the vanguard of high values of love, peace and tolerance and for upholding the law of the land. It is held in esteem for publishing the Holy Qur'an and other Islamic literature. Today, with the grace of God, this Community is well established in 189 countries of the world and its membership is in tens of millions and increasing every day.

Is it not enough proof that the blessing of consolidation of faith and its progress has been granted to the Ahmadiyya *Jama'at*?

Secondly, whenever the community had to go through a period of trial, every time Divine help came to its rescue. For example, the Community went through critical phases of its history in 1908-1914-1965-1982 and then in 2003. Today, each Ahmadi is a living testimony to the fact how God changed each fear into peace through *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya* and how He granted dignity and

stability to the religion of Islam. This is a great favour of Allah, the Exalted, that the sun of *Khilafat* continues to shine upon us day and night.

Thirdly, the history of the *Jama'at* is studded with repeated attempts of suppressing the *Jama'at*. In the recent past, in 1974 the opponents tried their utmost to blot out the community, but as always, they were unsuccessful and were disgraced. Then in 1984 an all-out infamous ordinance was enforced against the *Jama'at* and the opponents tried their level best to obstruct the advancement of Ahmadiyyat. But what happened?

Our Almighty, Powerful God blew to bits those who were impudent in their presumption to blot out Ahmadiyyat. Where is that tyrant who said that his power was very great and that he would ensure that the Ahmadis ended up with a beggar's bowl in their hand? Where is that despot, who, in the footsteps of the Pharaoh, had declared that he would erase the cancer of Ahmadiyyat? Observe, our God has obliterated these enemies of Islam from the face of the earth. One was seen on the hangman's scaffold and the

man's scaffold and the other's body was blown out into the skies, reduced to a heap of burnt dust and dispersed in the desert.

This magnificent and perfect spiritual system which has been vouchsafed to the world in the form of *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya* is no ordinary miracle. The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* has successfully emerged as the leading force among Muslims to follow the precepts set by the Holy Prophet of Islam^{saw}. It is engaged in establishing faith in the Unity of God all over the world. It teaches the Holy Qur'an, and promotes knowledge and wisdom. It is exerting to bring uniformity among the people belonging to various races and ethnic groups. It is promoting moral reformation of individuals, teaching mutual love and respect. Above all, the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* is helping man to establish a living and loving relationship with God.

The Closing

This is indeed a great bounty and favour of Allah, the Almighty upon all of us that we have been able to witness and experience this golden period of the second phase of *Khilafat-e-Rashida*. It is our good fortune

that we are present at this historic juncture when this *Khilafat-e-Rashida* has entered into its second century. Our hearts are filled with emotions and our whole being is in a state of total submission to Allah, the Almighty, with sincere thanks and gratitude. One century laden with bounties of Allah has passed away and we have entered into the second century with shining prospects of our ultimate victory knocking at the door. The whole of the last century of *Khilafat-e-Rashida* Ahmadiyya, rather each year of it, perhaps it is more true to say that each day of each year stands witness to the fact that Allah, the Almighty continued to bestow His sublime blessings upon us.

It is Allah's sheer Grace and Mercy that we are basking in the sunshine of *Khilafat*. I tell you honestly that words cannot capture and express how fortunate we are to live and experience this blessed era of *Khilafat-e-Rashida* Ahmadiyya.

It is time for us to submit most sincerely to Allah. It is time to remind ourselves of the great pledge that all of us made on the historic day of 27th May 2008, when the whole world of Ahmadiyyat stood

up at the call of their beloved Imam. It was a spectacle of a lifetime!

We all made a sincere pledge; we all entered into a solemn covenant, with flowing tears and throbbing hearts. Each and every word of this promise should remain permanently imprinted on our hearts and minds. Let us remember that day today and take stock of ourselves.

Let us set up an exemplary standard of complete fidelity and faithfulness; of total submission and obedience; of dedicated sacrifices in the cause of *Khilafat*. Let us not become slack and deficient in any way in discharging our responsibilities so that the great bounty of *Khilafat-e-Rashida* granted to us should continue to remain with us and that we remain dedicatedly attached to it for ever and ever.

May Allah enable us to do so. *Ameen*.

PAY

Zakat

The Grace of God Covers Everything

God is the light of the heavens and the earth. Every light that is visible on the heights or in the valleys, whether in souls or in bodies, whether personal or impersonal, whether apparent or hidden, whether in the mind or outside it, is a bounty of His grace. This is an indication that the general grace of the Lord of the worlds envelops everything and nothing is deprived of that grace. He is the source of all grace, is the ultimate cause of all lights and is the fountainhead of all mercies. His Being is the support of the universe and is the refuge of all high and low. He it is Who brought everything out of the darkness of nothingness and bestowed upon everything the mantle of being. No other being than Him is in himself present and eternal or is not the recipient of His grace. Earth and heaven, man and animals, stones and trees, souls and bodies, have all come into existence by His grace.

[Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya, Roohani Khaza'in, vol. 1, p. 191-192, footnote]

A RING

Khalil Akhtar, Atlanta, Georgia

A ring is used for beauty. Some people use a ring for the stone in it. Often, the stone is selected according to the date of birth. But according to Hadhrat Khalifatul Mesih IVth this is a sales trick. In the West, rings are exchanged during weddings.

Our Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} used a ring for giving the message of Islam to different kings, who paid no heed to letters received without a stamp. The ring was prepared of silver, showing the words

“*Mohammad Rasoolullah.*”

The word “Allah” was on top, and *Rasool* in the middle, and *Mohammad* on the bottom. As the ring was used as a stamp, the words were reversed. The Holy Prophet^{saw} used to wear this ring on his right hand. It remained with him until his death.

The ring was inherited by Hadhrat Abu Bakr^{ra} and after him it went to Hadhrat Omar, *Khalifatur Rasool II*. After him it went to Hadhrat Usman^{ra}. One day,

when Hadhrat Usman^{ra} was wearing it, the ring fell into a well named *Arceis*. Despite a thorough search that lasted three days, the ring could not be found. The stamp was used in letters to Qaisar of Rome, Kisra of Persia, the king of Egypt and of Yamama Najashi of Habsha, and others.

Hadhrat Masih Mau’ood^{as} also had three rings made of silver according to the *Sunnat* of the Holy Prophets.

The first ring was made after the death of his father. He wrote in *Kitabul Bariyyah* as follows:

“In a dream I had been warned that his death was approaching. I was then in Lahore and hastened to Qadian. He was suffering from dysentery, but I had no apprehension whatsoever that he would die the day after my arrival. In fact, there had been some changes for the better in his condition, and he could even sit for long hours. The following day, we were all with him at noon

when he kindly suggested that I should go to have some rest, for it was the month of June and the heat was intense. I retired into an upper room and a servant began to knead my feet. Presently I fell into a light slumber and then came to me the revelation:

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ۝

that is, ‘We call to witness the heaven where all the decrees originate, and we call to witness that misfortune which will fall today after sunset.’

“I was given to understand that this revelation was by way of commiseration on behalf of God Almighty, as my father would unfortunately die that very day after sunset. Holy is Allah! How glorious is the Great God that He commiserates on the death of a person who died sorrowing over his wasted life! Most people would be surprised at this interpretation of mine, that God Almighty commiserated with me. It should, however, be remembered that when God,

glorified be His Name, treats someone mercifully, He deals with him like a friend. We read in the traditions that on a certain occasion God Almighty laughed. This also is a similar kind of expression.

“To sum up, when I received this revelation, which presaged the death of my father, the thought passed through my mind, because I was only a human, that some of the means of income which were linked to my father would now be closed and we might be confronted with all sorts of difficulties. Thereupon I received another revelation, that is to say, ‘Is not Allah

الَّيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ ۝

sufficient for His servant?’ This revelation conveyed great comfort and satisfaction to me and it firmly fixed itself in my heart like an iron nail. I swear by God Almighty in Whose Hand is my life that He has fulfilled His comforting revelation in a manner that was beyond my imagination. I have been the recipient of His continuous bounties, which I find impossible to deny.

“My father died the same day after sunset. This was the first day on which I experienced a sign of

was the first day on which I experienced a sign of Divine Mercy through revelation concerning which I cannot imagine that I would ever cease to have effect during my lifetime. I had the words of the revelation carved on a semi-precious stone and set it in a ring, which I have with me securely. Nearly 40 years of my life passed under the care of my father, and with departure from this life, I began to receive Divine revelation continuously and abundantly.”

(Kitabul Bariyyah, Roohani Khaza'in Vol. 3 p. 162-195)

Hazoor^{as} sent Lala Malawa Mal to Amritsar to contact Hakeem Mohammad Sharif Kalanaury, who got the revelation engraved and the ring was prepared for 5 rupees.

In 1892, a second ring was made. A revelation of Hazoor^{as} was engraved on it. It reads:

أَذْكُرُ نِعْمَتِي الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكَ .
عَرَسْتُ لَكَ بِيَدِي رَحْمَتِي وَ قُدْرَتِي

which means “Remember My bounty on you - I cultivated you with My Own Hands, with My Mercy and Divine Power.”

A third ring was made in 1906 by a sincere goldsmith family from the District of Sialkot. This family sent a message to Hazoor^{as} — they wished to make a ring for him and they inquired as to what should be written on it. Hazoor^{as} advised that the inscription re:

“Maula Bus”

which means “God is sufficient.”

After the death of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}, these rings came into the possession of Hadhrat Amma Jan^{ra}, who distributed them among his sons by lottery. The first ring engraved with “Alaisallahu” went to his eldest son Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad^{ra}. The second ring with the long Arabic revelation went to Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad^{ra} and the third ring with the words:

“Maula Bus”

went into the share of Hadhrat Mirza Sharif Ahmad^{ra}. Now the first ring is with Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}.

Sweet Memories of a Loving and Dear Person

HADHRAT MIRZA TAHIR AHMAD, KHALIFATUL MASIH IV^{rh}

Amatul Latif Zirvi

I have been seeing Hazoor (Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{rh}) since my childhood. He was a student of my father, Hadhrat Malik Saifur Rahman Sahib. I studied in Rabwah till my matriculation. After that I left for Lahore for my further education. Just after finishing my education I got married and left for America. Thus I did not get the chance to meet many people in Rabwah. My *Nikah* ceremony took place in 1966. I came from Lahore for the *Nikah*. After the *Nikah* I had to go back to Lahore. My father told me that Mian Sahib (Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rh}) is going to Lahore in his car and you will go to Lahore with him. This was the first opportunity to see Hazoor^{rh} in such closeness. When I sat down in his car the first question he asked was, so you are the one whose *Nikah* has taken place with Zirvi Sahib's son. The second thing, which I remember about this journey is that after reaching Lahore we went into a villa, most likely it

was on Davis Road, and we had breakfast there. Then he drove me to the New Campus of the Punjab University and waited outside the car till I entered the Hostel.

At the time of 1980 *Jalsa Salana*, I went from America to Rabwah. In those days I was not feeling well. When the *Jalsa Salana* was over, my dear father told me that he had talked with Mian Sahib about seeing me and treating me with Homeopathic medicine; Mian Sahib has told him that he does not need to bring me to his office, he himself will drop by our house and see me. Thus, Mian Sahib came to our house and talked with me in detail about my illness. He also talked about his trip to America and had tea with us.

One day, my mother, two sisters and a sister-in-law made a program to visit a few families belonging to the Promised Messiah^{as}. I accompanied them. We vis-

ited different families. At the end, they decided to visit Mian Sahib's house. This was the first time that I had an opportunity to go to his house. When we rang the bell, it was Mian Sahib who opened the door. He met us with great love and said Aapa Shaukat (My mother was known as "Aapa Shaukat") is here. He took all of us inside and made us sit in his living room. His wife, Bibi Asfa Begum Sahiba, came and sat on a *Takht posh* (a sitting place) A female servant brought a trolley which had tea and few eatables. I specially remember that there was "*Gajar ka halwa*" (a sweet prepared from carrots). Mian Sahib himself served tea and other things to us. Mian Sahib said that it is good thing that you have come, I was planning to invite you to the *Waqf-e-Jadid* Office. Since I was very busy in *Jalsa Salana* activities and then I had to go on a trip, that is why I could not invite you. My sisters and my sister-in-law had brought gifts for

him. However, on my trip to Rabwah I had no intention of visiting him as I had never done it before. Therefore, I did not have any gift to present to him I just wrote a letter for prayer and included some money with it as a gift. After serving the tea Mian Sahib went inside another room and brought gifts for each one of us. After giving gifts to everyone, he gave me a pen as a gift and told me that this pen had belonged to Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} which after his demise was given to him at the time of distribution of his *Tabarrakat*'. I am giving this pen to you as a gift. This is greenish marble type pen/pencil upon which the revelation of the Promised Messiah^{as},

‘*Sultan-ul-Qalam*’

is ingrained. All my family members were astonished that Mian Sahib had given me such a precious gift. I was so happy and pleased that I cannot describe it in words.

During my stay in Rabwah, in those days, the train did not stop at the Rabwah Railway Station. To catch a train, one has to go to Chiniot. After *Isha* Prayer, my dear Mian Sahib came to see my father and said, Malik Sahib! Your daughter is leaving tomorrow don't you need a car

for that. My father said, I needed a car but I was hesitant to ask. Mian Sahib told him that in the morning the driver would bring the car to his house. This was my second journey in Hazoor'sth car.

In 1987, when Hazoorth visited Canada and America, I met Hazoorth many times. When Hazoorth was to leave for London I had a deep desire in my heart to meet Hazoorth once again. When he left for London I wrote him my impressions about his visit to Canada and America. In this letter I wrote a few Urdu couplets also. In response to my letter Hazoorth wrote a very beautiful letter in his own handwriting.

In February 1989, I went to London, During *Mulaqat* Hazoor said, Tifi! What made you come to London? He always called me as 'Tifi'. It was a very pleasant and memorable *Mulaqat*. I asked Hazoorth, can I meet you once again before going to America. He said, Yes. You can come for *Mulaqat*. At the same time he called the Private Secretary and told him to give me time for another *Mulaqat*. Thus, I got another chance to meet Hazoorth. Whenever, Hazoorth visited America/Canada we had *Mulaqat* and photos

taken with Hazoorth, By the Grace of God Almighty I attended UK *Jalsa Salana* from 1989 to 1995 and each time had a *Mulaqat* with Hazoorth.

A Long Letter

When my father, Hadhrat Malik Saifur Rahman Sahib passed away in 1989, I wrote a letter in memory of my father, I had a deep desire in my heart that when Hazoorth responds to my letter he writes a few lines about my father in his own handwriting. However, I did not mention my desire in my letter. When Hazoor'sth letter came, I was amazed and surprised to see that it was a beautiful tribute to my father in Hazoor'sth own handwriting. It was a six pages long letter. I just cannot express how happy I was to receive the letter. I cherish this letter very much. *Alhamdulillah*.

After 1995, I could not attend the UK *Jalsa Salana*. My husband, Dr. Karimullah Zirvi goes every year to attend UK *Jalsa Salana*. In one *Jalsa Salana*, during *Mulaqat*, Hazoorth gave a pen to him upon which, 'Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV' was ingrained. At the same time, he gave him another pen

and told him to give it to Tifi. I have this pen also saved with me.

Gift of Recitation of the Holy Qur'an

During my stay in London in February 1989, once I called Hazoorth and told him that I have a deep desire that he gives me a tape of his recitation of *Surah Al-Rahman*. He said, first of all he is very busy and secondly it is very heavy on him to sit specially for making a tape. The same day, in the evening when my brother-in-law, Sayed Mansoor Shah came back from the Fazl mosque he gave me a tape and said that Hazoorth has sent it for me. It had recitations of different parts of the Holy Qur'an by Hazoorth, which Hazoor often recited in Prayers. When Hazoorth started the Darsul Qur'an program on MTA International, Hazoorth recited *Surah Al-Rahman* also.

When my dear mother, Amatur Rashid Shaukat, who had been Editor of 'Misbah' for a long time passed away in 1999, Hazoorth talked very lovingly about her in the Urdu Class of February 6, 1999 on MTA International. My mother passed away sud-

denly due to a massive heart attack. It was a great shock for all of us. After hearing Hazoor'sth loving remembrance of my mother we felt a great healing of our grief. In this Urdu Class, Hazoorth also talked very lovingly about my father and there was deep sadness in his voice. He really loved my late father very much.

A Poem Written by Hazoor in the Memory of My Father

Several months after the demise of my mother I was writing about my memories of my late mother and I was mentioning my father also in these memoirs. At that time the Bengali Program was coming on the MTA International and someone from Bangladesh started reciting a poem in a beautiful melodious voice. I was surprised to hear it as it was the poem Hazoorth had written about my father on his demise. This poem was recited for the first time at the *Jalsa Salana*, Germany and its one couplet is:

'Ja'in Ja'in ham rooth gai'

The recitation of the poem has just started when Hazoorth asked the person who was reciting the poem

to stop and told in detail the background of writing of the poem and how he had written this poem at the demise of Malik Saifur Rahman Sahib. I felt very special feelings in my heart that while I was writing about my father the poem about my father was being recited on MTA International in the presence of Hazoorth, and Hazoorth was telling the background of writing the poem. The poem was recited beautifully.

In May 2002 I went to London to attend the wedding of my niece. I stayed there for 10 days. During this time I had the opportunity to have a *Mulaqat* with Hazoorth and had the opportunity to see Hazoorth closely in three functions. This was my last *Mulaqat* with Hazoorth and the last time that I saw Hazoorth. He had a very charming and magnetic personality.

**HUMANITY
FIRST**

NEEDS

**VOLUNTEERS
AND
DONATIONS**

GUIDED EVOLUTION: PROOF FROM PUNCTUATED EQUILIBRIUM

Ataul Wahid Lahaye and Zia H Shah

THE QUR'ANIC TEACHINGS ON EVOLUTION

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ ۝

All praise belongs to Allah alone, Lord of all the worlds. (Al Qur'an 1:2)

In the second verse of the first chapter of the Holy Qur'an we are introduced to our Creator where it is written. "All praise belongs to Allah alone, Lord of all the worlds." The Arabic word for praise is *Hamd*, and in this context it implies admiration, magnifying and honoring the object of praise, and lowliness, humility and submissiveness in the person offering the praise. The word translated as Lord is *Al-Rabb*. It means Lord, Master, Creator, the One who sustains and develops and brings to perfection by degrees. The Arabic word translated as world is *Al-Alamin* and it signifies all that is besides Allah, animate and inanimate bodies. So, the Holy Qur'an leaves no doubt or ambiguity as to who the Creator is, and what His attributes are.

Some people deny evolution at all levels and believe in spontaneity instead and are known as Creationists. Creation means that each animal was created separately in its finished form with all the organs it contains all at the same time. Islam does believe that there is a Creator; however, this is certainly not the Qur'anic concept of creation.

The word *Al-Rabb* is used numerous times in the Qur'an as an attribute of Allah. The closest meaning of this in English language will be "The Provident". Khalifatul Masih IVth, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmadth proposed that this attribute is a proof that God created life through the process of evolution. He writes in his book *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth*, "This attribute leaves no doubt whatsoever as to the fact that the Qur'an speaks of creation only in step by step progressive stages which are well provided for, categorically rejecting the concept of spontaneous generation. Spontaneous generation is further rejected by the Qur'an because it violates the dignity of God."¹

The following verse from *Surah Al-Inshiqaq* addressing humans, promises them that theirs is a continuous journey from stage to stage:

That you shall assuredly pass on from one stage to another. (Al Qur'an 84:20)

Again:

"Man, what has emboldened thee against thy Gracious Lord, Who created thee, then perfected thee, then proportioned thee aright? He fashioned thee in whatever form He pleased." (Al Qur'an 82:7-9)

According to Islam, there is an all-embracing plan of creation. At different stages of evolution, the processes that governed and shaped life were different but their direction remained the same—always pointing at man. Again, God informs us in the Holy Qur'an .

What is the matter with you that you expect not wisdom (intelligence) and staidness from Allah? While He has created you in different forms and ever changing states? Have you not seen how Allah has created seven heavens in perfect harmony, and has placed the moon therein as a light, and made the sun as a lamp? (Al Qur'an 71:14-17)

All these verses in unison leave no doubt whatsoever as to the fact that the Qur'an speaks of creation only in step by step progressive stages which are well provided for, categorically rejecting the concept of spontaneous generation. These verses suggest an evolution controlled and directed by the hand of the Creator.

William Paley in 1803 had in the secular arena started the discussion of Design in Biology. In recent times his concepts have been refined by a so called secular movement called Intelligent Design. In the verses mentioned above from chapter 71, both the concepts of Design and Evolution were introduced long before Darwin coined the idea and the Intelligent Design movement or the Discovery Institute challenged it.

The true Muslims see the guiding hand of God in the improbabilities involved in the creation of the universe and the life on the planet earth. In the words of the famous biologist Stephen Jay Gould:

"If dinosaurs had not died in this event, they would probably still dominate the domain of large-bodied vertebrates as they had for so long with such conspicuous success, and mammals would be small creatures in the interstices of their world. This situation prevailed for 100 million years; why not for 60 million more? . . . In an entirely literal sense, we owe our existence, as large and reasoning animals, to our lucky stars."² What he calls our lucky stars, Muslims consider to be God's Providence!

DEFINING EVOLUTION RELATED TERMS

The term "evolution" originally meant "change through time". However the definition is in constant flux. Descent through common ancestry, natural selection: Survival of the Fittest, random effects, like genetic drift, change of gene frequencies in populations and Chance have all been added since Darwin coined this concept.

There are two types of evolution: macroevolution and microevolution. Microevolution is "slight, short-term evolutionary changes within species." In contrast, macroevolution is "the origin and diversification of higher life forms or, "evolutionary change on a grand scale, encompassing [among other things] the origin of new species.

E. Mayr in his book *The Growth of Biological Thought* thinks a broader definition of evolution is needed which would include both multiplication of species and diversification within species. "microevolution and macroevolution" Thus, the definition of Evolution is still evolving.

What is the Darwinian principle of the ‘Survival of the Fittest?’ According to this principle, for the advancement of the quality of life, nature has worked out an automatic method of sifting. This slow continuous process of selection becomes pronounced when a species confronts challenges to its survival. It works in every area of animal activity.

If Allah was only the first cause of creation of the universe or if the universe came into being from nothingness by itself then the term used for evolution will be ‘Blind Evolution.’ On the other hand if Allah remained involved with the evolutionary process in the model of the ‘Personal God’ of Judaism, Christianity and Islam then that will be labeled as ‘Theistic Evolution’ or ‘Guided Evolution.’

The stages or states mentioned in the Holy Qur’an relating to the ‘Guided Evolution’ may apply to the groups of animals like fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals or the stages in time as outlined in the concept of ‘Punctuated Equilibrium’ which implies that life evolved on the planet earth in spurts and sudden outbursts rather than gradually. Several proofs can be offered for the concept of ‘Guided Evolution,’ here we will limit ourselves to ‘punctuated equilibrium.’

A TESTABLE HYPOTHESIS

Charles Darwin in his Origin of Species presented a challenge that few people know about. “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”³

With this statement, Charles Darwin provided a method by which his theory of evolution could be tested. The logic was simple: since evolution is a gradual process in which slight changes produce advantages for survival, it cannot produce complex structures in a short amount of time. It’s a step-by-step process which may gradually build up and modify complex structures, but it cannot produce them suddenly. This was the greatest contribution of Darwin that distinguished his theory from metaphysics, philosophy or religion as it could be tested. It was science! But it did evolve into fiction and rhetoric in the hands of his followers, the neo-Darwinists like Professor Richard Dawkins.

Now the question arises as to why life pursued a definite evolutionary course in a single direction as though none else was available. The only explanation offered by scientists relates to the role of natural selection. Though they fully recognize the dimension and the gravity of the problem, they would have us believe that at every crucial point of decision making it was natural selection which took the decision, always making the right choices out of a countless number of available options. However blind it may be, natural selection would always go for the right choice and only the fittest would survive in a competitive world. But this choice, on the part of natural selection, they agree, is not conscious. The limitations of this blind process should be apparent on even superficial reflection. Darwin himself delighted in showing that local adaptation often produced ‘degeneration’ in design, that he described as anatomical simplification in parasites, for example.⁴ The Holy Qur’an presents a different perspective on the issue of selection. It suggests ‘Guided Evolution’ rather than a blind process:

“And thy Lord creates whatever He pleases and selects whomsoever He pleases. It is not for them to choose. Glorified be Allah, and far is He above all that they associate with Him.” (Al Qur’an 28:69)

The purpose and philosophy of evolution is doubtlessly the creation and promotion of the senses. The creation of senses, each of which in itself is a masterpiece of creative wonders, stands witness to a well-executed design at the grandest scale, where harmony rules supreme. No wonder then, that the Holy Qur’an repeatedly sums up the outcome of evolution in just three simple terms: the creation and perfection of the faculty of hearing, seeing and understanding.

And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you ears and eyes and hearts, that you might be grateful. (Al Qur’an 16:79)

NATURAL SELECTION

Adam Smith (1723-1790) remains a towering figure in the history of economic thought two centuries after his death. He is primarily known for a single work, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), the first comprehensive system of political economy. He proposed that individuals in trying to improve and promote their personal situation work hard and find out the most advantageous methods to employ their capital and labor. They work with the intention of their personal gain and not for the advantage of the society. But if the mechanisms of personal struggle are allowed to run freely, good performers eliminate the less efficient and in so doing cause an unintended public advantage. He suggested that law makers should minimize their intrusions and let personal struggle or free market help nations become rich and powerful. He wrote, “I have never known much good done by those who affected trade for the public good.” It has been proposed that it is in Adam Smith’s economics transferred to nature that Charles Darwin found his principle of natural selection.

Again, it should be emphasized here that the phenomenon of natural selection under changing environments does not possess any instrument of effecting internal cellular changes to suit the external requirements. The chromosomes and the character bearing genes lie far beyond the reach of chaotic external changes. The natural laws which govern them are insulated from the whims of cold and heat, or dryness and humidity. They are two absolutely unrelated phenomena.

Hence, in a game of chance, as indeed it is a game of chance, it is highly implausible for the game of chance to always take the stride in the right direction as needed by the dictates of evolutionary requirements at that point in time. It is unfortunate however; that most scientists shut their eyes to the inevitability of the Hand of a Conscious Wise Selector Who will always take the right decisions at the right moment and will not leave them to the throw of a dice.

How can it be possible for evolution to continuously march forward in the direction of man while at each moment the possibilities of its taking the wrong steps backwards are overwhelmingly larger?

At each step forward, evolution driven by chance should have slipped a hundred thousand steps backwards. But for life with no prefixed direction, as some naturalists believe, the concept of a step forward simply does not arise. Forward in which direction and to what end, are the questions which can never be answered in relation to chance being its creator. Every step it took could be in any direction. Man not being the ultimate goal of evolution, life would lose its bearing in the wilderness of chaos, squandering each quality it had gained, by chance, to the stormy aimless winds of annihilation.

Stephen Gould at times accepts the limitations of the natural selection, he writes:

Darwin's independent criterion of fitness is, indeed, "improved design," but not "improved" in the cosmic sense that contemporary Britain favored. To Darwin, improved meant only "better designed for an immediate, local environment." Local environments change constantly: they get colder or hotter, wetter or drier, more grassy or more forested. Evolution by natural selection is no more than a tracking of these changing environments by differential preservation of organisms better designed to live in them: hair on a mammoth is not progressive in any cosmic sense. . . . Darwin delighted in showing that local adaptation often produced "degeneration" in design -- anatomical simplification in parasites, for example.⁵

To summarize our thoughts about "natural selection" we borrow the punch line again from Stephen Gould, "Human beings evolved from apelike ancestors whether they did so by Darwin's proposed mechanism or by some other, yet to be discovered."⁶

PUNCTUATED EQUILIBRIUM

According to the conventional theory of evolution, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else in time and all species have come into being in this way. According to Darwin this transformation proceeded gradually over a very long period of time.

Darwin stressed the gradual nature of the process several times in his writings. At one instance he highlighted this by quoting, "Nature does not like to jump."⁷ A little later, he clarified himself further by saying,

"Why should not Nature take a sudden leap from structure to structure? On the theory of natural selection, we can clearly understand why she should not; for natural selection acts only by taking advantage of slight successive variations; she can never take a great and sudden leap, but must advance by short sure, though sure steps."⁸

About the slow development of individual organs Darwin writes in *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*:

"If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely breakdown."⁹

If such gradual development of the organs and the species, was the practice of nature,

then numerous intermediary species should have existed and lived within this long transformation period. For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in the past, which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Naturalists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as "transitional forms". If such animals had really existed, there should be millions and even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. The number of these transitional forms should have been even greater than the present animal species and their remains should be found all over the world. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

“If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.”¹⁰

When terrestrial strata and the fossil record are examined, it does not bear out the gradual development. The study of fossils suggests that all living organisms appeared almost simultaneously. The oldest stratum of the earth in which fossils of living creatures have been found is that of the Cambrian period. The Cambrian Period is often divided into the Early Cambrian Epoch (540 to 520 million years ago), the Middle Cambrian Epoch (520 to 512 million years ago), and the Late Cambrian Epoch (512 to 505 million years ago). Rocks formed or deposited during this time are assigned to the Cambrian System. The living creatures found in the strata belonging to the Cambrian period emerged all of a sudden in the fossil record – there are no pre-existing ancestors. The fossils found in the Cambrian rocks belonged to snails, trilobites, sponges, earthworms, jellyfish, sea hedgehogs, and other complex invertebrates. This wide mosaic of living organisms made up of such a great number of complex creatures emerged so suddenly that this miraculous event is referred to as the "Cambrian Explosion" in geological literature.

Darwin was aware of the absence of transitional forms linking different species. It was his hope that they would be found in the future. Therefore in his book *The Origin of Species* he wrote the following in the chapter "Difficulties of the Theory":

“Why, if species have descended from other species by fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? Why is not all nature in confusion, instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined?... But, as by this theory innumerable transitional forms must have existed, why do we not find them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?... But in the intermediate region, having intermediate conditions of life, why do we not now find closely-linking intermediate varieties? This difficulty for a long time quite confounded me.”¹¹

The single explanation Darwin could come up with to counter this objection was the argument that the fossil record uncovered so far was inadequate. He asserted that when the fossil record had been studied in detail, the missing links would be found. Believing in Darwin's prophecy, evolutionists have been searching for fossils and digging for missing links since the middle of the 19th century all over the world. Despite their best efforts, the data found so far to support gradual development is rather scarce.

Richard Monastersky, the editor of *Earth Sciences*, which is one of the popular publications of naturalist literature, states the following about the "Cambrian Explosion" which came as a total surprise to naturalists:

“A half-billion years ago, the remarkably complex forms of animals we see today suddenly appeared. This moment, right at the start of Earth's Cambrian Period, some 550 million years ago, marks the evolutionary explosion that filled the seas with the world's first complex creatures. The large animal phyla of today were present already in the early Cambrian and they were as distinct from each other as they are today.”¹²

A famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager says:

“The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find—over and over again—not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.”¹³

Another evolutionist paleontologist Mark Czarnecki comments as follows:

“A major problem in proving the theory has been the fossil record; the imprints of vanished species preserved in the Earth's geological formations. This record has never revealed traces of Darwin's hypothetical intermediate variants - instead species appear and disappear abruptly, and this anomaly has fueled the creationist argument that each species was created by God.”¹⁴

How the earth came to overflow with such a great number of animal species all of a sudden and how these distinct types of species with no common ancestors could have emerged is a question that remains unanswered by evolutionists. The Oxford zoologist Richard Dawkins, one of the foremost advocates of gradualism and the writer of *Mount Improbable*, admits, “The Cambrian strata of rocks, vintage about 600 million years, are the oldest ones in which we find most of the major invertebrate groups. And we find many of them already in an advanced state of evolution, the very first time they appear. It is as though they were just planted there, without any evolutionary history. Needless to say, this appearance of sudden planting has delighted creationists.”¹⁵

This lack of fossil data of slow progress has struck a big blow to the Darwin's and Dawkin's concept of gradualism. Darwin himself recognized the possibility of this when he wrote: "If numerous species, belonging to the same genera or families, have really started into life all at once, the fact would be fatal to the theory of descent with slow modification through natural selection.”¹⁶

This lack of fossil data has led to a new theory named Punctuated Equilibrium. This new theory gives up on one of the important components of Darwinian theory, namely gradualism. Yet, the proponents of this new theory have chosen to retain the paternal umbrella of Darwin's evolutionary theory, because of its popularity in Scientific circles and to distinguish themselves from the Creationists. Stephen Gould has been the most famous proponent of Punctuated Equilibrium. According to this theory the discontinuities of the fossil record are not artifacts created by gaps in the record, but rather reflect the true nature of morphological evolution, which happens in sudden bursts associated with the formation of new species.

In the words of Encyclopedia Britannica online regarding Stephen J Gould, “He joined the faculty of Harvard University in 1967, becoming a full professor there in 1973. With Niles Eldredge, he developed in 1972 the theory of punctuated equilibrium, a revision of Darwinian theory proposing that the creation of new species through evolutionary change occurs not at slow, constant rates over millions of years but rather in rapid bursts over periods as short as thousands of years, which are then followed by long periods of stability during which organisms undergo little further change.”¹⁷

Dawkins and Gould disagree with each other over their respective theory of evolution. Dawkins says evolution must have been slow and gradual for the ‘blind watchmaker’ to get the design work done. Gould says that the fossil record reveals that evolutionary work was not slow and gradual, but happened in geologically instantaneous bursts. So, evolutionists do differ on the details of the process. “If rival models of evolution cannot even in principle explain complexity, Dawkins’s blind watchmaker model deserves to be called the theory of evolution.” that is exactly what Dawkin’s protégé Helena Cronin wrote in her book *The Ant and the Peacock*, where she referred to the Dawkin’s model simply as ‘modern Darwinism.’ Gould in his angry review of Cronin’s book denied that most evolutionary biologists accept the gene-selection model as presented by Dawkins and declared that genes cannot possibly be the exclusive unit of selection. Gould asserted forcefully that most important bodily characteristics are ‘emergent properties’ of organisms which are not produced in any direct way by individual genes or even combinations of genes. Instead, these properties are products of such complex interactions among genes that they cannot even in principle be adequately known or predicted at the genetic level.

Both Dawkins and Gould are right about the other’s position and therefore both are wrong about their own. It is not ‘Blind Evolution’ they are looking at ‘Guided or Theistic Evolution.’ The hand of God can be assumed in these sudden severe jumps and changes. This is, however, not the ‘god of gaps’ (religious followers trying to see god in the present day gaps of scientific understanding), as we acknowledge that God always works through natural mechanisms and never through supernatural.

According to the *New Encyclopedia Britannica* published in 1993, “Whether morphological evolution in the fossil record is predominantly punctuational or gradual is a much debated question. The imperfection of the record makes it unlikely that the issue will be settled in the foreseeable future. Intensive study of a favorable and abundant set of fossils may be expected to substantiate punctuated or gradual evolution in particular cases. But the argument is not about whether only one or the other pattern ever occurs; it is about their relative frequency.”

The discovery of Burgess Shale in 1909 set the ground work for the theory of Punctuated Equilibrium. The Burgess Shale is an exceptional Middle Cambrian age (about 540 million years ago) fossil locality located in Yoho National Park in the Rocky Mountains, near Field, British Columbia, Canada. The locality is special because of the soft-bodied preservation of a wide diversity of fossil invertebrate animals. The locality has been intensely studied since its discovery in 1909 by Charles Walcott, and has been declared a World Heritage Site. A popular introduction to the Burgess Shale can be found in Steven J. Gould's book, ‘Wonderful Life.’¹⁸

It is possible that these periods of intense activity leading to numerous activities suggest intervention of the Deity in the creation process, like He would influence nature at the times of Prophets in worldly affairs. We need to study these sudden bursts associated with the formation of new species, more intensely, without ever suggesting that God works through supernatural mechanisms.

WHAT STORY DO THE FOSSILS TELL

Darwin recognized that the fossil record did not contain fossils of these “intermediate” forms of life. Here is his confession from the Origin of Species:

“The number of transitional varieties, which have formerly existed on the earth, [must] be truly enormous. However, Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory.”

He thought that the explanation to this criticism lies in the extreme imperfection of the fossil record, that had been discovered till then. An additional 150 years of discovery of new fossils have not changed the situation. These observations lead Eldridge and Gould to propose the theory of Punctuated Equilibrium.

According to paleontologists, almost all of the major living animal categories appear in the fossil record during the Cambrian Period, about 550 million years ago. This takes place within a 5-10 million year period which has been called the ‘Cambrian Explosion.’ It is unlikely that any theory of ‘Blind Evolution’ can account for the lack of transitional forms, because it must create too many complex life forms too quickly:

Before the Cambrian, very few fossils having anything to do with modern animal categories are found in the fossil record:

“Most of the animal categories that are represented in the fossil record first appear, ‘fully formed’ and identifiable as to their categories in the Cambrian some 550 million years ago...The fossil record is therefore of no help with respect to the origin and early divisions of the various animal categories.”¹⁹

The suddenness of the appearance of animal life in the Cambrian, ‘the Cambrian explosion’ has now earned titles such as ‘The Big Bang of Animal Evolution’ (Scientific American), ‘Evolution’s Big Bang’ (Science), and the ‘Biological Big Bang’ (Science News).²⁰

The Cambrian Explosion is by no means the only ‘explosion’ in the fossil record. Plant biologists have called the origin of plants an ‘explosion,’ saying, the spreading of land [plant] species is the terrestrial equivalent of the much-debated Cambrian ‘explosion’ of marine plants.

Others have called the origin of our own modern man, ‘a genetic revolution’²¹ where “no [ape] species is obviously transitional” leading one commentator to call it, like others

called the Cambrian Explosion, a ‘big bang theory’ of human evolution.²² The pattern of rapid appearance of diverse life forms without transitions remains an important pattern in the fossil record. Gould, Eldredge and others have formed a different response to this difficulty: punctuated equilibrium. According to which long periods of no evolution are interrupted by brief periods of very rapid evolution.

Though it does make certain predictions, punctuated equilibrium (rapid evolution) provides a poor way for proving Darwin’s theory as the mechanism of evolution and confirming Darwin’s strong prediction that transitional stages of change existed. In other words, punctuated equilibrium (rapid evolution) shows that Darwin was mistaken, as far as blindness and spontaneity and gradualism of the process of evolution are concerned.

In 2001, evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr wrote in his book, *What Evolution is*, “New species usually appear in the fossil record suddenly, not connected with their ancestors by a series of intermediates.”

Origin of Fish and Amphibians: The earliest reported jawless fish in the fossil record are found near the early-middle of the Cambrian Explosion with absolutely nothing resembling a fossil ancestor. The fact that such a complex organism as fish seem to pop up at the very beginning of the animal fossil record is nothing short of a huge challenge to a gradual evolutionary account. Various evolutionists have conceded that the origin of fishes is a major mystery as far as their ‘Blind Evolution’ is concerned.

Quoting from *The Diversity of Fishes*, “No intermediate fossils between jawed and jawless forms have been found--early fossils of jawed fishes had jaws, teeth, scales and spines. The origins of jaws and other structures that characterized the early gnathostomes are lost in the fossil record, belonging to some group about which we know nothing.”²³

Amphibian to Reptile Transition: This alleged transition is pretty much non-existent in the fossil record. According to vertebrate paleontologist Robert Carroll, “The earliest known reptiles are immediately recognizable as members of this group because of similarities of their skeleton to those of primitive living lizards.”²⁴

“The early reptiles are sufficiently distinct from all previous amphibians that their specific ancestry has not been established.”

Phillip E. Johnson, the pioneer of ‘Intelligent Design’ and ‘Discovery Institute’ also notes that number of difficulties that are presented when an amphibian tries to become a reptile:

“Amphibians lay their eggs in water and the larvae undergo a complex metamorphosis before reaching the adult stage. Reptiles lay a hard shell-cased egg and the young are perfect replicas of adults no explanation exists for how an amphibian could have developed a reptilian mode of reproduction.”²⁵

Reptiles and Birds: Turtles pop out of the fossil record in the late Triassic without any predecessors or transitional forms. You’ve probably never heard this before, but it just so

happens that evolutionarily speaking, nobody has any idea where the dinosaurs came from. The major dinosaur groups appear in the late Triassic fossil record without any recognizable ancestors. Despite all the talk of dinosaur fossils leading up to birds, there is actually a huge gap (40-50 million years) in the fossil record between the time of the supposed bird-like dinosaurs (i.e. Archaeopteryx) to the appearance of the first true birds. At supposedly about 70-80 million years ago, almost all modern birds groups appear without any direct recognizable evolutionary predecessors.

Evolutionist paleontologist Larry Martin, a challenger of the dinosaurs-to-birds theory, was quoted as saying that such comparisons “are riddled with characters based on mistaken anatomy” and such theories of dinosaur origins of birds are a good example of “garbage in, garbage out.” Again in his words, “The theory linking dinosaurs to birds is a pleasant fantasy that some scientists like because it provides a direct entry into a past that we otherwise can only guess about. But unless more convincing evidence is uncovered, we must reject it and move forward to the next better idea.”²⁶

Mammal History: Apart from the whale, the evolutionary fossil changes leading to almost all other mammal groups are generally not even claimed to exist. Similar to the Cambrian Explosion, paleontologists call the appearance of mammals in the fossil record something like a ‘Mammal Explosion.’

There are no fossil transitional forms leading to bats and they basically appear in the fossil record as “modern” bats.

Plants: Plants have what paleontologists call a very ‘poor’ fossil record. Or do they? Soft algae fossils are thought to be found as far back as 600 million years ago, so it is clearly possible to find plants if they are there. However, all major groups of plants appear in the fossil record without recognizable transitional forms between one another.

By denying the existence of a Creator who has to be a being with a conscious mind and all the power to implement his decision, the scientists try to replace him with a formless idea. This idea of ‘Blind Evolution’ finds no support in either fossil evidence or biological evidence. Islam regards the idea of life with no Creator idolatry and answers these scientists in the following verse.

“Have they feet wherewith they walk, or have they hands wherewith they hold, or have they eyes wherewith they see, or have they ears wherewith they hear? Say, call upon the partners you associate with God, then contrive ye all against me, and give me no time.” (Al Qur’an 7:196)

Formless ideas can have as much time as they may, but God with his creative facilities can create in practically no time, as the fossil evidence clearly shows us.

For decades, scientists have been collecting evidence that contradicts both Darwin’s theory and the grand materialistic gloss that usually accompanies it. Many physicists and cosmologists now recognize that the universe had a beginning and that many physical laws look suspiciously ‘fine tuned’ for the existence of intelligent life. In addition, biochemists

and biologists have discovered a microscopic world of mesmerizing complexity belying the simple blobs of protoplasm that Darwin imagined.

The concepts of punctuate equilibrium and fossil record can be best understood in religious terms in the light of the following verse:

“All praise belongs to Allah, the originator of the heavens and the earth’ 35:2)

CONCLUSION

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝

Allah is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has full knowledge of all things. (Al Qur’an 57:4)

The universe has been designed and created by ‘the Hidden’ God through natural mechanisms, with the underlying purpose of ensuring free will for man and omnipresence and omnipotence of the transcendent God. “His is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He gives life and He causes death, and He has power over all things.” (Al Qur’an 57: 3) The Holy Qur’an very precisely states that Allah is Transcendent and Unknowable through human efforts alone:

“Eyes cannot reach Him (Allah) but He reaches the eyes. And He is the incomprehensible, the All-Aware.” (Al Qur’an 6:104)

So how are we to see the hand of God in the creation of the universe and life on this planet? The answer does not lie in denying the clearly established facts of science as many a fundamentalist religious people including many of the adherents of the Intelligent Design theory are likely to do. One can see the hand of the Creator or God only in the improbabilities of the events leading to the creation of the universe and life. There is a common saying that every day is not a Sunday. When we throw a dice the chance of getting a six is 1/6 to get two sixes in a row the chance diminishes to 1/6 * 1/6 that is 1/36. To get three sixes in a row the chance diminishes rapidly to 1/216. The chance of a useful mutation is one in a trillion, to have two useful mutations the odds become a trillion square. How many of the same mutations are going to be useful for the same purpose becomes a further catch. In ordinary life no one bets against such odds but in their zeal to deny a God, atheists knows no limits or bounds! If they discover a mechanism of anything they rush to the judgment that an actor does not exist. Who is to tell God, how He may or may not create?

In the words of Professor Kenneth Miller:

“If as Gould argues, the evolutionary tape were played again, human life would not be expected. In fact, even if it were replayed a million times or more, man would not be expected again.”²⁷

Punctuated equilibrium by taking away from gradualism a strong axiom of Darwinism

diverts our attention again towards a potential creator! If God had resorted to only slow gradual changes similar to what Dawkins proposes, in his book *Climbing Mount Improbable*; then, the only place we will find evidence for the theory of 'Theistic Evolution' will be at the time of the first stroke. However, we know from the history of the prophets that the Gracious and the Merciful God has remained involved with the affairs of humans in an intimate fashion through out the history of the prophets of more than 6000 year. This creates hope that God not only participated in the first stroke leading to life but continued to participate at other key junctions. This creates a paradigm that by continuing to work on the details of evolution of life into different forms and the improbabilities involved we will continue to accumulate indirect additional evidence for the theory of 'Theistic Evolution.'

However, in the final analysis, as "Eyes cannot reach Allah," scientist can never show the hand of God working in a materialist paradigm. Regardless of the specific religion the only certainty for an honest believer is, "Allah is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a thing, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is. (Al-Qur'an , 2:118)

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A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Aliya A. Latif

...Missionaries from as far as Nigeria and Guatemala, dignitaries of Benin and the Ivory Coast, state legislators and even a Queen...

While attending the 2008 International Ahmadiyya Muslim Convention in UK, teeming with more than 40,000 people, I met with all these personalities. The common thread, the overwhelming sentiment that flowed through every interaction, was that each person was humbled and expressed their excitement and connection to the Ahmadiyya community through our beloved leader Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}. Even with countless memories of my visit, one event made the most lasting impression; the international *Bai'at* (initiation ceremony) with the leader of tens of millions people worldwide. It is a minority community in comparison to the majority Sunni Muslims, but at that moment, nothing seemed larger.

The International *Bai'at* is difficult to explain in words and must be felt to

truly be realized. The hush that fell over the crowd, the rapt attention and the sense of awe and unity was exhilarating. I reached out my hand to hold the shoulder of a woman I did not know but felt intensely close to. I looked to my left and right and saw other sisters merging, hands to shoulders, heads bowed with tears flowing. People, who never met and may not be able to share a single word in conversation, were here together, in the beautiful English countryside, crying and praying, expressing their commitment. Without language this was understood.

As the words were repeated..."I have wronged my soul..." I felt the energy and remorse, the naked emotion of thousands of people who simultaneously wanted to be forgiven and renewed by reaffirming their connection with their Creator. Rows upon rows of sisters fell helplessly to their knees in *Sajdah* (the prostration position of formal Islamic prayer) as tears flowed freely. The yearning in my heart was unlike any

feeling I can recall. I do not remember when I felt so deeply aware of my own shortcomings while also feeling such an intense love for God and my Community.

The vulnerability of prostrating also brought to mind the persecution of Ahmadi Muslims the world over. Such persecution is especially violent and punitive in Pakistan, where Ahmadi Muslims can be imprisoned for declaring themselves Muslims. Just a few years ago, during *Ramadhan*, the holy month of fasting, gunmen entered a tiny Ahmadi mosque at the pre-dawn prayer and opened fire on the attendees. The government supports this violence through legislation like its Blasphemy Law, which declare Ahmadi Muslims heretics. Earlier this week, the 15th doctor since 1982, was killed while doing rounds at a local Pakistani clinic he'd help establish, often providing medical treatment for free.

That same level of concern for humanity and

generosity this doctor displayed was seen in England as well, in more than just a few instances.

From volunteers working tirelessly to see that our every need was met to the many invitations to visit, have dinner, tea, a tour; so many examples of kindness and hospitality. I was moved by the undercurrent of sisterhood sitting quietly in Fazl Mosque, the first built in Western Europe back in the 1920's, during a poem competition, quietly passing notes and smiles with a teenage girl from Germany. Neither of us understanding the classical Urdu being spoken but both of us enjoying being in the peaceful surroundings of that historic mosque.

Amid all of this, I could not help but wonder how so many countries could turn a blind eye to the violence and persecution against Ahmadis. As riots, mobs, deportation, imprisonment and even murders occur in countries like Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, there is never a violent response from the community, only patience and prayer. That is what leadership insists upon to maintain peace at all times, and followers dutifully obey,

despite the opposition.

But more troubling than national responses, are the adherents of the religion itself who choose to claim brotherhood and peace yet condone or commit violent crimes against others in the name of religion. The contradiction frustrates and confuses me and I find it difficult to profess a feeling of unity with the masses. As a person belonging to just about every minority group imaginable; a woman, but specifically an African American, and a Muslim, but clearly an Ahmadi Muslim at that, I am acutely aware of the issue of marginalization.

In the face of bitter opposition, the Ahmadiyya Community is the fastest growing sect in Islam today, for me, proving the validity and necessity of the Arabic word Islam or peace.

**SUPPORT
HUMANITY
FIRST
WITH
DONATIONS**

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

It needs no argument that the true and perfect God, to believe in Whom is the duty of every creature, is the Lord of the Worlds. His Providence is not confined to a particular people, age or country. He is the Sustainer of all peoples, of all ages, of all places and of all countries. He is the fountainhead of all grace. Every physical and spiritual power is bestowed by Him, the whole universe is sustained by Him and He is the support of all.

God's Grace comprehends all peoples, all countries and all ages, lest any people should complain that God bestowed His bounties upon others, but not upon them, or that others received a Book from Him for their guidance, but they did not, or that in other ages He manifested Himself through His Revelation, Inspiration and Miracles, but that He remained hidden in their age. By bestowing His Grace upon all He obviated all these objections and out of His vast qualities He did not deprive any people or any age of His physical or spiritual bounties.

O My Lord! My God

Sayyarah Hikmat

Accept my hand; accept me with all my faults!

On the dust of life, I stumble, I fall

Forgive me for those dark days; I passed forgetting you!

Let the Sunbeam of Your Grace be my Blessing!

I chased the voices, that drew me, yet led nowhere

Now, when my eyes are opened, the Curtain has been lifted

Dust of desires has blown like mist

Shroud of darkness has been uplifted from my soul

And I have come to know the Truth

Now, Let me sit in peace and listen to Your Words in my soul's solitude!

Don't turn away Thy Face from my heart's dark secrets!

But burn them till they are alight with Your love's fire.

THE WORD OF GOD AND MEIR BEN ISAAC NEHORAI'S POETRY

Muhammad Zafrullah, at Pocatello

Recently a friend sent me the following piece:

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.
- Meir Ben Isaac Nehorai

I doubly enjoyed it because it reminded me of a verse from the Holy Quran. This is verse 110 of Chapter 18 (*Surah Al-Kahf*) of the Qur'an:

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادَ الْكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفَذَ
الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَذَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا
بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا ۝

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

I think every Christian should read the chapter *Al-Kahf*, it talks about the people of the catacombs and what they stood for and reading it imparts a lasting impression of the greatness of God. The verse, from the Qur'an, that I have quoted above is a treasure in itself. It seems to indicate that we humans are free to discover scientific facts (the words of God), but while there is no end to what we can achieve we cannot fathom it all. That to my mind is another way of differentiating between the finite and the infinite. It is like what I often say: Every natural number that you can pick is finite but the set of natural numbers is infinite, keep on counting if you do not believe.

Of course anyone who reads *Surah Al-Kahf* will draw benefits from it, for it delves into several important topics. For Muslims the Holy Prophet^{saw} has prescribed recitation of the first ten and the last ten verses from this chapter, for immunity from the onslaught of *Dajjal* or anti-Christ.

Now the Qur'anic reference does not end here. As is usual with the Qur'an the same idea is repeated elsewhere for effect. Yet this time it is in the form of a challenge that seems to say that whatever of God's creation we may be able to put on record, there is much more that will be left. In other words when we discover a fact we are actually drawing upon an infinite pool that has no bottom.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَ
 الْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ، مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرِمَا تَفَدَّتْ
 كَلِمَتُ اللَّهِ دَائِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّتْ حَكِيمٌ ۝

And if all the trees that are in the earth were pens, and the ocean were *ink*, with seven oceans swelling it thereafter, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise. (31:28)

As the reference indicates it is the 28th verse of the 31st chapter (Luqman). Luqman is another powerful chapter, named after a non-Arab sage and starts with his advice to his son. It indicates that belief in the Unity of God is the main pillar of faith and assures us the readers that we cannot escape His watchful eye. Mentioned next to the main article of faith is kindness to humankind, especially to one's parents and humility.

Now a word about the piece that my friend sent me, it is all over the internet, as the third verse in the "Love of God" by Frederick Lehman.

The Love of God

The love of God is greater far
 Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
 It goes beyond the highest star,
 And reaches to the lowest hell;

Refrain

*O love of God, how rich and pure!
 How measureless and strong!
 It shall forevermore endure
 The saints' and angels' song.*

When years of time shall pass away,
 And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
 When men, who here refuse to pray,
 On rocks and hills and mountains call,
 God's love so sure, shall still endure,
 All measureless and strong;
 Redeeming grace to Adam's race—
 The saints' and angels' song.

Refrain

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,
 And were the skies of parchment made,
 Were every stalk on earth a quill,
 And every man a scribe by trade,
 To write the love of God above,
 Would drain the ocean dry.
 Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
 Though stretched from sky to sky.*

The third hymn is reported to be a Jewish poem called Haddamut, that was written in Aramaic by a cantor (Jewish religious singer) in Worms, Germany in 1050 CE. Some claim that he had rendered the Aramaic poem into German. There seems to be an air of confusion about the origin of the third hymn. In any case the third hymn is an English rendering of the Haddamut. As it stands it is a beautiful piece. I searched the internet for more information. The best I could find is the following piece by Douglas Kutilek, in "As I see it", Volume 1 number 8, August 1998.

"One final quotation from Johanan ben Zakkai is of interest. His teacher was reportedly the great Rabbi Hillel. Of Hillel, Johanan ben Zakkai is recorded as having said, "If all the heavens were parchments, and all the trees quills, and all the seas were ink, it would still be impossible to write down even a part of what I learned from my teacher. "

(The Encyclopedia of Talmudic Sages, P. 156).

When I first read these words, I was struck by how closely they parallel words in the third verse of the Gospel song, "The Love of God"--

"Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made, Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade; To write the love of God above, Would drain the ocean dry. Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky"

I have heard conflicting accounts of the origin of this third verse. One account is that it was found written on the wall of a prison, composed by an unknown and unnamed but forgiven convict. It was then supposedly added to the original two verses. The other account is that it was attributed to "Meir Ben Isaac Nehorai" (see Hymns of Faith, Wheaton: Tabernacle Pub. Co., 1980; #286). I have been unable to locate any reference to such a man, though the elements of the name sound typically Mishnaic/Talmudic. There is a famous Rabbi Meir and a lesser known Rabbi Nehorai quoted in the Mishnah (completed A.D. 200) and Talmud (A.D. 500), but I could not find anything like this quotation mentioned in connection with either of them (I did not check every reference to Rabbi Meir in the *Mishnah*, nor to either in the Talmud). If a Talmudic Rabbi is the source of the words of the third verse of the song, then they were borrowed from a non-Christian source, and pre-date any convict's wall graffiti by many centuries." This can be found at: http://www.kjv-only.com/doug/aisi1_8.html

I note with regret that Ben Zakkai's quote, mentioned above, does not have the praise of God in it that is found in the third hymn of "The love of God" or in the two verses of the Qur'an. In fact the Ben Zakkai claim strikes as a boast about learning so much. It would be interesting to know if there is a credible biblical source for the alleged Ben Zakkai quote or the third hymn of the "Love of God. It does not matter to me as a Muslim if some verses of the Qur'an seem to be similar to biblical verses, because according to my belief Qur'an was revealed by the same source, God Almighty, Who was responsible for the earlier scriptures. But there seems to be no harm in seeking clarity

WHAT DOES BARACK OBAMA'S VICTORY MEAN?

Mansura Bashir Minhas

When Barack Obama's dad came to the US from Kenya almost five decades ago, could he have imagined that one day his son would be the president of this great country? The fact that he landed in the US the land of great opportunities, did turn his son's story into a fairy tale. I'm sure that had he landed elsewhere, Obama could not have reached such astounding success.

Despite its shortcomings, the American system offers opportunities to all who dare to dream and aspire. Some say that three sections of the population were overlooked in the "WE" in the Declaration of Independence – the women, minorities and youth. It took the US 232 years, but it did eventually embrace these sections over the course of time. What a defining moment- to see an African American rise to the most coveted post in the world, only some 50 years since the Civil Rights movement, is a great feat in itself, one that has no parallel in the history of the world.

The US is undoubtedly the greatest nation, having allowed so much, changed so much, integrated its people, melted and fused them irrespective of their backgrounds. It gives every citizen a chance and the opportunities that it offers are boundless. The American dream is for those who dare to aspire and are not afraid of hoping and striving for excellence. But the foremost beauty of the system is that it allows different segment of the population to integrate, while allowing them to retain their core identity. It gives commonality of purpose and a direction towards excellence without compromising the individual spirit. Many people believed that the country had lost its strategic advantage and essence in the post 9/11 era. But in Obama, they visualized a return to the very same ideals that are the building blocks of this nation.

In America, success comes only to the people who are not daunted by the enormity of the challenges, who rise to the challenges, who believe in the ultimate triumph of the human spirit, its resilience and ability to attain the highest. People had been losing hope and were in dismal shape and questioning the overall direction in which the nation was headed. Obama took the nation by storm and his was a 'movement', a steady wave that built up its momentum and led to the point that will leave many historians in awe, and they will be analyzing this extraordinary phenomenon for ages to come. What made Obama so popular? It is his authenticity, humility, steadfastness, ambition and resilience, but foremost his ability to connect to people by the sheer force of his message, the calmness of his persona that never wavers despite the grimness of the challenges that come his way. Obama's optimism was contagious, and his sincerity of purpose ruled out the cynicism.

Obama's ultimate strength has been his 'unifying' message; and anyone who has followed this race closely can testify to that. His followers were from across the board and their exact numbers have even astounded the pundits. He outperformed in all segments and that was

because his appeal was universal. In fact, his message is not only confined to the borders of the US, it's resonating across the world. He has not only electrified his own countrymen, but has also managed to deliver abroad. He faces enormous challenges ahead, and only time will tell if he is able to actually deliver. But what he has managed to achieve is commendable; giving people the commonality of purpose and unity to work towards the greater good of the nation in a time when divisiveness was beginning to encroach and set its roots.

On a personal note; I have never been an optimist, and my chronic cynicism prevails when confronted with mere rhetoric. But from the onset of this campaign, I had been extremely captivated by Obama's message, to an extent that I had been repeatedly questioning my enthusiasm. Undeniably, it was the simplicity and authenticity of Obama's words that moved me along and gradually I became a part of his movement. It never occurred to me that he could come so far, despite having faith in his message. I wanted to believe but could not. The foremost reason being, that there was no precedence for this!

Cliché statements like 'historical moment', 'history in the making' became a hallmark towards the end of this presidential race. But to have actually witnessed a glimpse of this moment, indeed does allow one to know what kind of energy and force it entails. I'm glad that I witnessed such a defining moment. The mere fact that one day when history books will mention it and I would be able to relate, makes me proud that I was act ally amidst all this. I will for ever remember the looks on the faces of the people who had gathered in Chicago, when Obama's victory was announced. For some it was such a surreal moment that they could not just display their emotions right away. It took some time for the reality to sink in, hence the restraint (especially on some African American faces). It was moments of disbelief, before euphoria finally set in!

And the most interesting part of Obama's fairy tale; In his own words, "If this funny looking guy with a funny name can do it, so can we! Yes we can!"

Evils of Associating Partners with God

I regret that I have not found words in which I should set out the evils of leaning towards anyone except God. People go to others and flatter them and supplicate them which excites the jealousy of God Almighty. This is the Prayer of these people from which God withdraws and which He casts aside. I set out the matter in a crude way, though it is not its true reality and yet it is easy to follow. A self-respecting man's jealousy would not tolerate another person establishing a relationship with his wife, as in such a case, he would consider his wretched wife worthy of being killed and very often that is what happens in fact. Similar is the jealousy of the Divine. Servitude and prayer are reserved for His Being. He does not approve that anyone else should be worshipped or should be called on in supplication. So remember well that to lean towards any beside Allah is to cut asunder from Him. Prayer and Unity--for Prayer is the name of the proclamation of Unity in practice--are without blessing and vain when they are empty of humility and nothingness and are not pursued with a single-minded heart !!!

[Malfoozat, Vol. I, pp. 167-168]

NIZAM-E-WASIYYAT

Syeda Aziza Khan

As I was walking back home
Thinking of words to complete my poem
I held my pen to write my thoughts
Then in an instant all was forgot
The minute the ink met the line
Many entanglements fogged up my mind
Two oceans diverged within my heart
One, worldly, the other not.

Somewhere in my search for peace of mind
I lost myself in this race for time
Like the glittering stars lighting up the
Darkness of the Milky Way;
Or like the flickering glow in the heart
Of darkness held at bay
Somewhere my soul cried out to be free
From the tumultuous waves whipping ferociously.

I believe that it was Masih-e-Mau'ood^{as}
Who put it best
Where is it that you want your soul to rest?
For if you want your final abode to be
A home with God
You must keep all your covenants
And sacrifice what you've got

Wasiyyat was a scheme begot
Inspired and cultivated by
The hands of God
Whoever joins it is blessed
Both in this world
As well as in the next.

I then made a choice to flee
From this world, a captive in its fallacies
With an earnest prayer
And a yearning in my heart
I gave consent for my soul to rise
And then to ascend
To release myself from the
Ensnarement of discontent.

To submit myself
To my beloved God
By giving everything and all I've got
In this world I've chosen not to be lost
To follow the straight path is what I've sought
Doing my best to avoid thorns, dried snagged
branches,
Pebbles and rocks.

I believe that it was Masih-e-Mau'ood^{as}
Who put it best

Where is it that you want your soul to rest?
For if you want your final abode to be
A home with God
You must keep all your covenants
And sacrifice what you've got.

Wasiyyat was a scheme begot
Inspired and cultivated by
The hands of God
Whoever joins it is blessed
Both in this world
As well as in the next.

First to God you make sure
You always look
And through out the day
You live by His Perfect Book
Just remember your wealth and children
Are but a trial
In this world which leaves
Us all much beguiled.

Who will lend to Allah
A goodly loan?
So, to paradise they will be shown
Who will spend in His cause?
So, that on the Day of Judgment
They won't be lost
Only with Allah lies the true reward
Where the righteous servants will be well pleased
In a heavenly garden
With faces radiant and at ease.

I believe that it was Masih-e-Mau'ood^{as}
Who put it best
Where is it that you want your soul to rest?
For if you want your final abode to be
A home with God
You must keep all your covenants
And sacrifice what you've got

Wasiyyat was a scheme begot
Inspired and cultivated by
The hands of God
Whoever joins it is blessed
Both in this world
As well as in the next.

Verily, there is ease
After hardship
Aye, there is ease
After hardship.

KHILAFAT CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

St. Paul Jama'at, St. Paul, MN

Imran Hayee (Duluth MN) and Syed Sajid Ahmad (Fargo ND)

During the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* Centenary year of 2008, St. Paul, MN, *Jama'at* held two public events celebrating the hundred years of *Khilafat* in the Ahmadiyya Community. In both events, non-Ahmadi Muslim, and Non Muslim friends of local Ahmadis were invited. By the Grace of Allah, both events caused the message of Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam, to reach many ears. Some highlights of the two events are given below.

Interfaith Symposium 2008 Highlights

By the grace of God, an interfaith symposium was organized by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, St. Paul Chapter, on July 20, 2008 at 1:00 pm in the auditorium of the Hennepin County Library in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. In addition to having speakers from six different faiths (two denominations of Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism, and Islam),

a total of about 75 people attended the symposium, which lasted about 3 hours. Most of the attendees were non-Muslims with a few non-Ahmadi Muslims from the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Q & A session and refreshment hour, which followed the well-prepared presentations by the guest speakers, were filled with vibrancy. The topic of the symposium was, "*Living in Harmony Amongst Diverse Faiths*". With this topic in mind, each speaker accounted for the need of all members of society, and in particular the members of their own respective faiths, to actively bring about a peaceful co-existence with their neighbors on the basis of a shared belief in God.

The Jewish speaker, Rabbi Joseph Edelmet, a prominent Holocaust and Genocide Studies professor at the Minnesota State University, St. Cloud, talked about how the "tolerance for each other" is becoming

popular but he disagreed with that phrase and mentioned that more sensible phrase should be "Acceptance for Each Other"—a one step higher than mere tolerance. He quoted various excerpts from a current news magazine in making his point and also emphasized the need of moderation in religions. He also narrated a few passages from the Old Testament of the Bible that encouraged human beings to be peaceful and considerate toward their neighbors in an effort to coexist.

The first Christian speaker, Pastor Rachel Morey from a local United Methodist Church, utilized numerous quotations and stories from the New Testament of the Bible to elucidate the main point of her presentation, that the way to peace was through acceptance of the Prophet Jesus^{as} as lord and savior. The speaker, while delineating the reasons why all human beings are forever tainted

by sin, repeatedly came back to incidences or quotations from the life of Prophet Jesus^{ss} as examples of how to conduct oneself. In short, the speaker made the point that the tolerance of faiths and coexistence was started 2,000 years ago by Jesus himself who had a consultation with two Jewish women in spite of hurdles from his own disciples, and the speaker emphasized that we need to continue to follow the same pathway.

The second Christian speaker, Dr. Bernard Brady, the chair of the theology department in St. Thomas University in Minnesota, emphasized harmony among adherents of diverse religions in a more philosophical way. He defined and explained various stages of harmony consisting of pre-harmony, harmony 1 and harmony 2, and solidarity. According to him, pre-harmony is such a stage in which majority defines the culture and the minorities are suspect. The next stage, i.e., harmony 1, tolerates others and allows free expression, and harmony 2 advances inter-group relationship from tolerance to respect based on the knowledge of other groups. And finally the last stage of solidarity in which the groups experience each other as persons and neighbors and

cease looking at them as an object of external identity.

The Hindu Speaker, Dr. Shashi Sane, a medical doctor by profession and priest in the largest Hindu temple in Twin Cities, started with quoting his own story when he was a young doctor and how he had a chance to save some young people's future who damaged and smeared the Hindu temple, and brought about a change in their lives by forgiving them. He emphasized that beyond tolerance and beyond acceptance, we should really go ahead and try to forgive each other and love each other to achieve true harmony among ourselves.

The speaker representing Sikhism, Mr. Charan Jit Singh, who works in New York State and lives in Twin Cities Metropolitan area, had an information-filled Power-Point slide presentation which urgently called attention to the need to establish continuous dialogue between members of different faiths, to avoid discrimination against all members of society, and to understand shared objectives that we may have. In addition, the Sikh speaker was very happy to give the audience some background information on his faith, including the spiritual reasons as to why Sikh males

appear as they do, along with the historical and geographical origins of Sikhism.

Finally, the Muslim speaker, Missionary Azhar Haneef, delivered a very direct, powerful, and heartfelt presentation on Islam's view of the necessity of fostering peace in society through declaration of faith, that is, to believe in Allah and his Messengers. The speaker quoted the message from *Paigham-e-Sulh*, the last book penned by the Promised Messiah^{ss} which sought an agreement from people of diverse faiths that they should respect the leaders and founders of each others' religions and should never try to taint their characters. Missionary sahib successfully persuaded the non-Muslim attendees to discard their preconceived notions about Muslims and Islam, if for only a few moments, in order to fully appreciate the role that true religious teaching plays in achieving peace.

The Q & A session afterward featured both speaker-specific as well as general panel questions on topics ranging from building bridges between people of different faiths, to inter-religious efforts to solve world problems, to the

spiritual deficiencies of those around the world seeking to take advantage of religion in order to sow disharmony and chaos amongst their presence. After the Q&A session, refreshments were provided for all of the attendees as well as the speakers, while both parties shook hands and discussed the day's proceedings cheerfully. The program ended at its scheduled time of around 4 P.M. The president of the St. Paul Chapter, Dr. Muhammad Abdul-Khaliq, presented a copy of the Holy Qur'an to all the guest speakers, and led silent prayers at the conclusion.

Khilafat Banquet

St. Paul Chapter of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA arranged a *Khilafat* Banquet in celebration of one hundred years of Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* on October 5, 2008 in Best Western Hotel, St. Paul. The Banquet was attended by a total of 95 people including 65 non-Ahmadi Muslims or Non-Muslim guests from many faiths. The Banquet was arranged in two separate halls—one for men and one for women. There were about 60 men and 35 women who attended the Banquet. The banquet star-

ted at 6:00 pm with on time arrival of most of the guests. The signature feature of the Banquet was the address of our Regional Missionary, Imam Azhar Hanif who eloquently elaborated the subject of *Khilafat* and peaceful agenda of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He emphasized the good works the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is performing under the Humanity First throughout the world. He used quotes from world leaders, including John F. Kennedy, the former president of USA, to illustrate his point that a divine guidance is the need of the hour. After about 40 minutes of address, the dinner started. During the dinner, at least one Ahmadi member was sitting on each table to engage the guests in the discussion about the *Khilafat* and Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Missionary Sahib took time to visit each table for introduction of all Ahmadi guests on men's side. The general impression of the guests was very positive in spite of the fact that some of the guests had traveled well over a hundred miles to attend the banquet.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

God Almighty has granted my son Dr. Khalid Mahmood Zirvi and Dr. Kaukab Zirvi their third child, a daughter. Earlier they have two sons. The daughter has been named, Aleesa Noor.

Aleesa Noor is a granddaughter of Dr. Karimullah Zirvi. She is the great granddaughter of Hadrat Malik Saifur Rahman Sahib and Soofi Khuda Bakhsh Zirvi Sahib.

Please pray that God Almighty grants the newborn a healthy long life, make her a true servant of Islam and also *Qurratul A'in* for the parents and grandparents. *Ameen.*

Amatul Latif Zirvi
Fair Lawn, NJ

Prayer for Mercy Upon One's Parents:

رَبِّ اَرْحَمُهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا ۝

My Lord! Have mercy on them as they nourished me in my childhood. (17:25)

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahe wa barakatuhu.

With the grace of the Almighty Allah, the New York Jama'at has printed its 21st annual calendar for 2008. The theme for this year's calendar is "Distinctive Features of Islam". As in previous years, we have invested great efforts to make the calendar attractive, useful and accurate.

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Kindly pray for the success of the 2009 Calendar and the people who worked diligently to produce it. Since there wasn't any sponsorship, only a limited amount of Calendars were printed. May Allah reward them all. Ameen. The main reason why we have finished printing the Calendars in the month of December is because we hope that you may utilize the calendars as a form of tabligh by giving them to your non Ahmadi friends and neighbors. We wish you and your auxiliary a Happy Eid, blessed and prosperous New Year.

Jazakallah!
Wassalam.

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