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AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

*Muslims who believe in the Messiah,
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani^{ra}*



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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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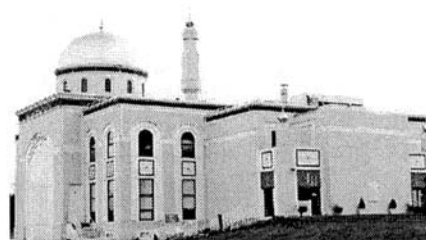


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Al-Qur'an

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ۚ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ۚ لَيْلَةُ
الْقَدْرِ لَا خَيْرَ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ۚ تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَكَةِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِمْ ۚ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرِ ۚ سَلَامٌ قَفٍ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ۚ

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. surely, We sent it down on the Night of Destiny. and what should make you know what the Night of Destiny is? The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months. Therein descend angels and the Spirit by the command of their Lord -- with every matter. *It is all* peace till the rising of the Dawn. (97-1-6)

COMMENTARY:

Generally *Lail* and *Lailah* both mean night, but according to the famous lexicographer, Marzuqur, *Lail* is used as opposed to *Nahaar* and *Lailah* as opposed to *Yaum*. *Lailah* possesses a wider and more extensive meaning than *Lail*, as *Yaum*, which is its opposite, has a wider sense than *Nahaar* which is the opposite of *Lail*. *Lailah* has been used as many as eight times in the Qur'an (2:52; 2:188; 44:2; twice in 7:143 and three times in the verses under comment), and everywhere it has been used in connection with the revelation of the Qur'an and other kindred subjects. The word thus refers to the dignity, majesty and greatness of those nights in which the Qur'an was revealed.

Qadr means worth; sufficiency; dignity; decree; design; power (Lane). In view of the different meanings of *Qadr* and *Lailah* the verse may be interpreted as follows: The Qur'an has been revealed in a night which had been specifically set apart for the

manifestation of special Divine powers; or in a night which is equal in worth to all the other nights put together, or in a night of dignity, majesty and honor; or, in a night of sufficiency. i.e., the Qur'an fully meets all moral and spiritual human needs and requirements. Or, the meaning is that God has revealed it in the Night of Decree or Destiny, i.e., the Qur'an was revealed at a time when man's destiny was decreed, the future pattern of the universe was settled, and the right principles of guidance for humanity were laid down for all times to come. The time of the appearance of a great Divine Reformer is also called *Lilat al-Qadr* because at that time sin and vice hold widespread sway and the powers of darkness reign supreme. It has also been taken to mean the particular night among the odd nights in the last ten days of *Ramadan* when the Qur'an first began to be revealed. Or, it may signify the whole period of 23 years of the Holy Prophet's ministry when the Qur'an gradually was being revealed.

The blessings of the Night of Decree are beyond count or calculation,

Alf (a thousand), being the highest number of counts in Arabic, signifies a number beyond count, and the verse means that the Night of Decree or Destiny is better than countless number of months, i.e., the period of the Holy Prophet is infinitely better than and superior to all other periods put together. The verse embodies an allusion to the appearance of Divine Reformers among the Muslims when the latter would stand in need of them. One thousand months roughly makes one century and the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that God will continue to raise from among his followers, at the head of every century, a Divine Reformer who would regenerate Islam and give it a new life and new vigour. (Majah).

Al-Ruh here signifies a new spirit, awakening, zeal or determination. In the Night of Decree the angels of God descend to help the Divine Messenger or Reformer to promote and further the cause of Truth and his followers are inspired with a new life, and a new awakening to spread and propagate the Divine Message.

In the time of a Prophet or Divine Reformer a peculiar kind of mental peace descends upon the believers amidst hardships and privations. The heavenly happiness, which inspires them at that time, transcends all material and sensuous joys.

'Rising of the dawn' signifies the passing of the night of hardships and the rising of the dawn of predominance and ascendancy of the cause of Truth.

Al-Hadith

عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: تَسَحَّرُوا فَإِنَّ فِي السُّحُورِ بَرَكَهً -

Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "Take breakfast (before the fast begins); as there is blessing in taking breakfast."

(Bukhārī kitābuṣṣaum bāb baraktassahūr, Muslim)

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَجَّلُوا الْفِطْرَ -

Hadhrat Sahl bin Sa'd^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "My people will adhere to good as long as they keep hastening the breaking of the fast."

(Bukhārī kitābuṣṣaum bāb ta'jīlul ifṭār)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِذَا نَسِيَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَآكَلَ أَوْ شَرِبَ فَلْيَتِمَّ صَوْمَهُ، فَإِنَّمَا أَطْعَمَهُ اللَّهُ وَسَقَاهُ -

Hadhrat Abū Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "Should any of you eat or drink in forgetfulness, he should complete his fast, for Allāh has fed him and given him to drink."

(Bukhārī kitābuṣṣaum bābuṣṣā'im idhā akul au sharab)

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{AS} FASTING

The sick and the travelers should not keep fast. This is a command. God the exalted did not say that the one who wishes to can keep fast and the one who does not wish to does not have to keep fast. In my opinion a traveler should not keep fast. Since, in general, a lot of people keep fast, therefore, there is no harm if someone keeps fast thinking it as a practice. However, he should keep in mind:

فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ

Whosoever bears all the suffering by fasting while travelling it is as if he does not want to win the pleasure of Allah by following His Command, rather, he wants to win it by dint of hard work. It is wrong. The true faith is to follow the commands and prohibitions described by Allah the Exalted.

(Al-Hakam, January 3, 1, 1899, Malfoozat, Vol. 5, p. 321)

My faith is that the human being should not bear a lot of hardships. Anything which is called travel, whether the distance travelled is two or three *koas* (a measure of the distance) one should act upon the teachings regarding *Qasr wa Safr* (shortening of Prayers while travelling)

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

Sometimes, I walk two to three miles in the company of my companions but none of us had ever thought that we are travelling.. When someone walks carrying his luggage with the intention of travelling then he is travelling. The foundation of *Shari'at* is not based on time. Whatever you consider travel that is travel. As one acts upon the commandments issued by God Almighty the same way one should act upon His prohibitions. Both, the obligations and concessions are from God Almighty

(Al-Hakam, February 17, 1901, p. 13)

The fact is that to avail the permissions granted by the Holy Qur'an is righteousness. God Almighty has granted permission and leave to the traveler and sick person that they should keep fast on some other day, therefore, one must obey this command. I have read that most of the nobles have the point of view that anyone who keeps fast while he is sick or travelling is committing a sin. The goal is to achieve the pleasure of Allah and to fulfill one's own wish and the pleasure of Allah lies in obeying Him. Whatever command He gives must be obeyed literally without adding one's own interpretation. God Almighty has commanded:

وَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ

He did not make it conditional that travel should be such and such and sickness should be such and such. I do not keep fast when I am travelling. Similarly, I do not keep fast when I am sick. Today I was not feeling well so I did not keep fast.

(Al-Hakam, January 31, 1907, p. 14, Malfoozat, Vol. 5., p. 67)

Synopsis of Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, on August 12, 2011 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, Morden, UK Shermeen Butt

‘I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me.’ (2:187)

Hazoor^{aba} recited the following verse at the start of today’s Friday sermon: **‘And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: ‘I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.’ (2:187)**

The more the world needs to turn to God the further it is going away from Him. People severely lack to make connection with God so that they can be saved from disorders and calamities and improve their future; people whom God created as the most eminent of all creation. Those who appear to have a connection with God also do not seem to understand that outward faith and worship are not sufficient. What is needed is to search for the essence of the spirit which leads to faith. On the other hand, about three quarters of the world population either associates partners with God or rejects His existence altogether. Not only do they reject God’s existence, they also lead the world astray. Among all these is a small section of people who believe in and has faith in God and corroborates the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. These people accept that when the world forgot its Creator or had no insight or perception of His Being, as an expression of His quality of *Rabubiyyat*, (quality of sustaining) and to take the world out of the state of disorder, God sent the *Imam* of the age. With the Grace of God, this section of people is the Ahmadiyya *Jama’at*. However, Hazoor^{aba} remarked, was it sufficient to be firm on the belief that the Promised one^{as} has come and now a few of his followers will work to end the disorder of the world? If we had, such a thought it would put us in the same category as those who claim to have faith and perform worship but their practices are far-removed. If we do not keep an eye on our own condition, if neither we have a living connection with God nor do we inculcate it in our next generation and if we do not make those around us aware of the message of the Promised one, then having found it, we have now lost it. In this way, we have incurred the enmity of the world and have not found God either. After taking the *Bai’at* of the Promised Messiah^{as} we need to instil the true spirit of *Ibaadur Rahman* (servants of the Gracious God) in ourselves. The spirit for the application of which, the Holy Prophet’s^{saw} advent took place. When the Holy Prophet^{saw} was informed by God about his future *Ummah*, he became concerned, but God assured him with the following verse: **‘And among others from among them who have not yet joined them, He is Mighty, the Wise’.** (62:4) Thus removing his concern by stating that just as God had made ignorant, depraved and idolatrous people into godly people [in early Islam], similarly, in spite of deterioration, through an ardent and true devotee of yours among the latter-ones, people of the *Ummah* will once again become *Ibaadur Rahman* and will once again be the devout people. After the temporary decline, the Wise and Powerful God will decree that the faith of Muhammad^{saw} will be the only hope to remove the disorders of the world. Thus, now it is the Muhammadan Messiah and his followers who have to play the role in forging a connection with God.

The Promised Messiah^{as} wrote:

‘In His word *Rabbilalameen*, Allah, the Holy, points out that He is the Creator of everything and from

Him has emanated everything that is in the heavens and in the earth. The word *al-alameen* encompasses all that is found in the world, of the groups of the guided as well as the parties of the misguided and the lost. At times, the *alam* (realm) of misguidance and disbelief and transgression and excess flourishes until the earth becomes full of injustice and tyranny and people abandon the ways of Allah, the Lord of Majesty. They appreciate not the true nature of the relationship subsisting between the Creator and His creatures and do not render that which is due to Him as Provider and Sustainer. The world becomes dark like the blackest night and faith is pulverized under this affliction. Then Allah initiates another *alam* (realm) and the earth is replaced with another earth and a fresh decree descends from heaven and men are granted perceiving hearts and eloquent tongues to render thanks to Allah for His bounties. Then they make their selves lowly like frequented paths, before the Lord of Greatness and run to Him in fear and hope, their eyes downcast with modesty and their faces turning wistfully to the Provider of all needs with a resolve in submissiveness that knocks at the very top of the heights. Such people are needed most when the nadir of misguidance has been reached and through degradation of their condition people turn into beasts and animals. It is at this moment that Divine compassion and His eternal favor urge that a person be raised in heaven, who should dispel darkness and demolish that which Satan has built. Then an *Imam* (leader) descends from the *Rahman* (the Gracious One) to fight the armies of Satan and these two forces join battle - only those perceive them who are gifted with insight - until falsehood is fettered and its mirage-like reasoning is obliterated. That Imam dominates the enemy and lends constant support to the rightly guided, raising aloft the banners of guidance, reviving the seasons and gatherings of piety, until people come to realize that he has succeeded in capturing the ringleaders of disbelief, fastening hard their fetters and has rounded up the beasts of falsehood and has placed halters round their necks and has destroyed the structures of innovations, dismantling their domes.' [Commentary on the Holy Qur'an, pp. 91-92]

Hazoor^{aba} explained that this revolutionary change came to pass through the Holy Prophet^{saw}, but it was not a temporary revolution because he was/is the Seal of all the Prophets and his time is going to last till the Day of Judgment. As Hazoor^{aba} mentioned before, God gave the Prophet^{saw} the news that in the latter-days a person would come to continue this revolution. As the Promised Messiah^{as} explains:

'Allah, the Holiest, has indicated in His word Lord of the worlds, (*Rabbil Aalameen*) that He is the Creator of everything and is praised highly in the heavens and in the earth and that His praise is celebrated constantly by His servants who are ever occupied with His remembrance. There is not a thing but celebrates His praise and glorifies Him all the time. When one of His servants discards his own desires, is emptied of his passions, is wholly centered in Allah, His ways and His worship, and knows His Lord Who nurtured him by His favor, he glorifies Him all the time loving Him with all his heart, even with all the particles of his body. Such a one also becomes an *alam* (a world) one of the *aalameen* (the worlds). It is thus that Abraham was named *Umma* (a people) in the Book of the Most Knowledgeable of all the knowledgeable (16.121).

Of the *aalameen* there was an *aalam* when the Seal of the Prophets was raised. There was also to be another *aalam* when Allah was to bring forth the other party of the faithful, in the latter period, as a mercy for the seekers. There is an indication of that in His Word: **To Him belongs all praise in the beginning** and in the end (28.71). Here Allah has referred to two Ahmads describing them as His two great bounties. The first of them is Ahmad the Mustafa (the chosen), our elect Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of Allah) and the other is Ahmad of the latter days, named Messiah and Mahdi by Allah, the Gracious.' [Commentary on the Holy Qur'an, pp. 93 – 94]

Hazoor^{aba} further explained that it was owing to the perfect devotion and ardent love of the perfect servant of God, of negating his own wishes and desires and by completely and wholly absorbing himself in the Being of God that God sent the Promised Messiah^{as} in the latter-days. The revolutionary change that Lord of all the worlds has announced to come about through the second Ahmad, has now to be maintained by his followers. These are the people who truly accept him and try and be counted among *Ebaadur Rahman* and also help others become *Ebaadur Rahman*. The Promised Messiah^{as} undertook the great task of the second phase of Islam and by virtue of his holy company, his companions became *Ebaadur Rahman* and highly spiritual people. Thus, the

prophecy of the latter-one was fulfilled. But the progress and advancement of the *Jama'at* is to go on till the Day of Judgment. Therefore, mere mention of it all is not enough, we have to understand our responsibilities as well as the significance of continuity of the level that we see in the lives of the companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Today, it is the duty of each Ahmadi to save the world from troubles and to connect it to God and we cannot truly fulfill this obligation until we attain high standards in our worship of God and until we try and be those *Ebaad* of God who abide by '**...they should hearken to Me...**' and who are a model of, '**...and believe in Me...**'.

Hazoor^{aba} said we are fortunate to have experienced yet another *Ramadan*, during which greater paths to attain spiritual development are opened. Those who will achieve the epitaph of '**My servants**' in this *Ramadan* will certainly be fortunate. The Promised Messiah^{as} said, 'this month is a fine instance for illuminating the heart'. Hazoor^{aba} remarked what makes Ramadan an excellent month? Explaining, he said that it is because in this month God has combined two forms of worship, i.e. Fasting and *Salat*. We should enhance our *Salat* during *Ramadan* and offer it with such devotion and purity that God may listen to us in accordance to His assertion '**...I am near...**'. Fasting should be with the intent that whatever pure changes it brings in our life will be enduring and for further strengthening our faith. All this is because today our longevity as well as that of the world is in that we become true servants of God and are thus able to show the world the way. God sent the Promised Messiah^{as} to further the task for which the advent of the Holy Prophet^{saw} took place. The questions that were put to the Holy Prophet^{saw} by those who wished to seek God were the same questions that people asked his ardent devotee (on whom be peace) and he told them the ways of reformation and attaining God's nearness and thus formed a community. Today the world puts the same questions to the community of believers and they can only give the right answers when each one of them develops in his or her spirituality. God listens to our supplication, when we have a correct perception of '**...I am near...**' Hazoor^{aba} said today there is disorder all over the world, be it the West or the East, Muslim countries or developed Christian countries. A sense of restlessness has engulfed the world. The recent riots and disturbances in this country have been an eye-opener for people here. They realize it is not just the underdeveloped countries where peace is in danger, it is also in danger here. Hazoor^{aba} said there is only one remedy for this and that is to make the world servants of God. But how can this be done? Neither we have any worldly power nor can one lead people to God by means of worldly power. The only way to do this is to also seek God's help through prayer. Wherever one takes the message of peace one should enhance one's efforts through prayers. Acceptance of prayer as well as Divine help is given to those who strengthen their faith.

The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained to us various ways and means for acceptance of prayers. The first of these is *Taqwa*. One should always have fear of God and humility in view and be aware that God is ever watching over us, lest we do something which incurs His displeasure. Our physical body and its various parts, our overall morals and our interaction with God's creation should be in accordance with His commandments. This is real *Taqwa*. Our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, hands and feet all should do what pleases God. This is possible when one has perfect belief in the Being of God. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that perfect belief in God is essential for acceptance of prayers. Belief that there is a God and all the universes and everything that we have knowledge of, as well as that which we have no knowledge of, is created by God and He is the Master of all powers. He gives life and death and can create a revolution through prayers which infuses new life in the dead. The Promised Messiah^{as} said 'God listens to those prayers which He deems better'. Another requirement of prayer is that it should have tenderness and pathos. One's heart should have a melting quality and one should weep with the thought that God is one's last support and is the One Who would listen to prayers; there should be an anxiety that if God's succor is not forthcoming one would be doomed.

Another condition for acceptance of prayer is humility and it is this trait that takes one near God. In a poetic composition the Promised Messiah^{as} expressed what can be broadly translated as:

*Deem yourself to be worst of all
For this may take you to the abode where you meet God*

Hazoor^{aba} explained that an arrogant person does not stand a chance of gaining nearness to God. And

where there is no nearness and union with God, there cannot be acceptance of prayer. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that a prayer that is filled with humility and anxiety gains acceptance. This too cannot be achieved without the grace of God. Hazoor^{aba} explained that this means one should also pray to be enabled to make prayers that gain acceptance with God and with such a view point there can be no question of negligence of prayer. The Promised Messiah^{as} also said that prayer is one door that has been opened by God for the good of people. When man enters through this door while weeping, he is given a covering of purity by God and is awed by the greatness of God to such an extent that he becomes remote and distant from bad practices. Hazoor^{aba} said fortunate are those who purify themselves with weeping and crying and are brought closer to God. However, to attain this station, one has to make an effort and turn to God first. This is the rule of *Shariah*.

Another requirement for acceptance of prayer is to pay the dues of God and dues of mankind. The Promised Messiah^{as} said, 'be such that there remains no residual of God's dues or mankind's dues for you.' The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also said that God has mercy on one who fears Him in times of peace and wellbeing as if he is faced with trouble and God does not forget one in his or her troubled time who does not forget God in good times. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that it is important for acceptance of prayers that one brings about pure change in oneself. If one does not avoid ill and breaks God's boundaries, one's prayers are not accepted. He said we should inculcate God's greatness in our hearts and should keep His majesty in view. Hazoor^{aba} explained that God's commandments are stated in the Holy Qur'an in their hundreds and the Promised Messiah^{as} has said that we should make our lives subservient to the commandments of the Qur'an. He said, 'worship God because the Creator has a right over you to be worshiped'.

Hazoor^{aba} prayed that may we understand this point during this *Ramadan* and gain the pleasure of our True Benefactor. Combining *Ramadan* with acceptance of prayer, adherence to commandments, strengthening of faith and attainment of guidance, God has made it evident that He is ready to dispense good and save His creation from trouble and torment. However, people too need to associate with special people and abide by the teaching which God's special people bring so that many can become *Ibaadur Rahman* and as a result this world can be a model of Paradise. Listening to the call of the age and accepting it and having compassion for creation of God demands of us to be included in the sincere servants of God, those servants whose prayers gain acceptance with God, who bring about revolutionary changes in themselves and who, out of compassion for humanity try and save it from God's chastisement. This *Ramadan* has come to give us training in these very matters as well as to strengthen our faith and burnish it. No worldly means are needed to save the world from disorder; the weapon of prayer is sufficient. Hazoor said along with prayers for ourselves and our next generations, we should also pray for the world to be saved from destruction.

Our God listens to prayers and there is no need for despair. Most certainly, we have not lost hope. Most certainly all the Promised Messiah^{as} told us regarding the progress of the *Jama'at* will come to pass and the day will come when the banner of the Holy Prophet^{saw} will be raised over the world and the majority will be of those servants of God who are guided. Hazoor said he would remind us yet again never to forget to pray that may God include us in those people who are His guided and sincere servants. May God continue to enable us to seek the beneficence of this *Ramadan*.

Next Hazoor^{aba} announced two funeral Prayers in absentia.

Subedar Raja Muhammad Mirza Khan Sahib passed away in Rabwah on 4th of August at the age of 90. He was in the army and had served in WWII. Later, he came to Qadian and served under Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra}. He was a devout worshiper, a content person who was eager and keen in *Tabligh* matters and had a great bond with *Khilafat*. May God elevate his station.

Ameena Begum Sahiba passed away in Rabwah on August 7. She was one of the earliest residents of Rabwah who had migrated from Qadian. She had a fervent bond with *Khilafat*, had served *Lajna* and attained commendations for this. She had a very good relationship with her neighbors and was a *Moosia*.

OBSERVATION OF FAST

Hadhrat Dr. Mir Muhammad Isma'il^{ra}

Translated by: Arifa Haleem

Many misconceptions regarding fasts in the month of *Ramadan* were spread to the extent of exaggerations which were removed by the Promised Messiah^{as} and his *Khulafas* also but some mistakes are such that for their removal the knowledge of the physicians works. So today I will explain something about the mistake.

God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: "*The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation - the feeding of a poor man. And whoso does good of his own accord it is better for him. And fasting is good for you, if only you knew. The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur'an was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proof of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful.*" (2:185-186)]

God Almighty has said that fasts are not for the entire life. They are only for a few counted days. If there is anyone who is sick or traveler among you then he should complete fasting in other days and those people

who do not have the ability to keep fast due to old age, chronic disease or continuous travelling, they should feed one poor person. But if you had this knowledge, then you could know this fact that fasting is a great virtue, so you could not have skipped the fasts on account of ailment and journey. There is one such kind of journey and disease that even in which fast can be observed.

This is the meaning of this verse but the people misunderstood while acting upon it

Fasting of a Genuine Patient or Traveler

First of all there are those people who in reality are sick and travelers but they due to their own forcefulness, habit or due to people's regard or fear of their reproach observe fasts while travelling and ailment but by doing so; they disobey the commandment of God Almighty. Some of them think, it will be difficult to fast afterwards, on some other day. Nowadays the weather is cold. The well prepared meal is available for keeping fast at the *Sahri*. So in spite of illness it is convenient to keep fast. The weather may become hot in the coming days and it may be displeasing for the wife to get up at the late hours of the night and prepare meals for the *Sahri*. There is

nothing troublesome in it, so now it is better not to miss the fasts, we are uselessly lying in the bed and the doctor has also advised that it is better to skip the meal. So let us keep fast or anyhow the night will pass away while travelling.

Food is available on the stations and we have to go only up to Lahore. Then what is the harm in it if we observe fast. But the answer of these both the excuses is

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These people for their own self and for the sake of their wife's comfort or due to this fear and shame lest anyone might say that this is a minor sickness or an ordinary journey but our *Maulana* does not observe fasting, they definitely observe fast. So these are the disobedient people. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra} used to say, "Once I was sick due to diarrhea. The month of Ramadan approached and when after two or three days' fasting I came to know that there is some betterment in the condition of diarrhea then in spite of being genuinely sick, I by mistake started fasting, with the result that all my sexual power was totally consumed. Not only my own self was weakened but I became a usurper of the rights of others also. Then after a lot of Prayers, earnest request and great lamentation that mistake was forgiven and that lost power came back. The *Fatwas* of the Promised Messiah^{as} and the caliphs about such people do exist with all their firmness and detail, so they should be acted upon.

Those Who Do Not Fast on False Pretext

There is another group of youngsters who by lame excuses want to get rid of the fasts and who under the cover of minor reasons and unjustified excuses miss the fasts. The influence of European habits of overeating, variety of food and craving of tasty flavors has overpowered them. So these Fatwas which were for the first group, they have started to take unjustified benefits out of them. Due to which the balance has started to tilt on the other side. The first group had gone wrong in the fondness of virtue, but these ones by hating the virtue and declaring this hatred justified are becoming more sinful than this (the former group) and I am talking about them, and this part of verse is for them. It means, Fasting is a great blessing and a great virtue. For you there is no other reason for making lame excuses except compulsion i.e. genuine ailment and genuine journey because God Almighty Himself is the reward of Fasting. So in order to achieve this reward it was required that whether he was a patient, or a traveler he also might have died or killed by observing fast but he could definitely get this retribution and reward but this is our command that a patient and a person on journey should not observe fast. The reason is that from our point of view falling ill and to be on journey in *Ramadan* is equal to fasting. These people should not endure double labor but they should keep this desire of fasting in their hearts and it is our command to terminate fasting and after *Ramadan* start keeping fasts again. We will bless them with the same reward with which We bless the fasting ones. But do not make sickness and journey a lame excuse

because in any case, fasting in respect to its reward is a magnificent thing and to skip it due to any lame excuse is not lawful. On journey to Haj, in spite of being on journey and

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ailment, some fasts have to be observed.

Journey as an Excuse

Now first of all let us take the journey as an excuse. The Promised Messiah^{as} decided himself about it and said that a person who for the sake of his livelihood or duty has been travelling regularly and habitually, e.g. the employees of the railway or the workers of mobile post offices, or those people who have always been on journey for their livelihood e.g. the hawkers, traders etc., neither the Prayer is *Qasr* for them nor fasting is excused. This is the *Fatwa* (religious edict) of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Further it is derived from it that if it is a journey for livelihood, you must fast and if it seems to be difficult while on the journey, then leave the journey, but if the journey is accidental then it means that it has been forced on you and compulsion and helplessness is also from God Almighty, then in this condition do not fast. Opposite to this, if a person goes to Gurdaspur for getting his pension not due to compulsion, but only due to his own will, then during the journey he should either keep fast or he should not travel, because the pension can easily be obtained at another

time also. He can get it the next month or in the same month after *Eid*. But if there is a rule that if it is not obtained in *Ramadan*, it will be confiscated, then two ways are open for it. If after its confiscation he can easily make both ends meet then certainly he should not go for it or if he is used to donate the pension money for the sake of community work, then certainly he should go because the community-service is a priority rather than the spiritual reward for himself. If due to the confiscation of the pension the family suffers and there is no provision at home then he should act according to the command of

يَسْرِدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيَسْرَ

and should not observe fast. This is almost a supposition because there is no such pension that can be confiscated like this but on the basis of this hypothesis other matters can be deliberated. The money collectors of the community who have always been on tour, are also like railway employees but those *Murrabis* who accidentally go on any journey they are exempted from it but those who are the employees but only for the tours, they should not miss the fast except in this condition that by observing fast they will not be able to deliver the speeches and have the debates which have been assigned to them for this *Jalsa*. So for this purpose full knowledge of *Fiqah* is needed but what type of *Murrabi* of the community is he who does not possess so much knowledge of *Fiqah* or knows its fine points? This is such a matter in which a community *Mufti* cannot be consulted because he is not the predictor of the internal affairs. In this field the injunctions of external *Shariah* are solved by the injunctions of the internal *Sharia* which come out

of man's own self and it reveals separately for every man according to his condition and this is the way where a *Mufti* who has thorough divine knowledge is being asked a question. So after deep deliberation and prayer try to find out the Will of God Almighty and you will be guided to the right path. It may be through the medium of divine knowledge, some friend's utterance, *Fatawa-e-Ahmadiyya*, somebody's lecture, advice, wisdom or through the *Malfoozat* Masih Mau'ood^{as} which have been publishing in *Al-Fazl*. In short there are many methods through which the way to these matters open, otherwise follow that which is the easy one. Anyhow

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are the principle commands but only this much should be thought, is not it that I am making lame excuses. Then the question of *Taqwa* arises and without *Taqwa* man makes thousands of excuses and believes that he is not making excuses but he is acting upon *Shariah*. So pray to God Almighty, May He bless both of us, you, me and the whole *Jama'at* with insight and *Taqwah* so that our actions should be accepted and we could see the importance of fasting and we should be sure that God Almighty Himself is the reward of fasting. The Holy Prophet^{saw} said, as the fasting person himself at the time of breaking fast reminds God Almighty His promise of

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and when he says this

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i.e., Oh Allah I had fasted only for you by making sure that you are the reward of my fasting, so meet me and come close to me. Then in reply God Almighty also says

وَ إِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ

i.e., Oh man, now by reminding me of My Promise you have asked Me for this, so see I have come to you and become close to you and in return of the fasts of the full month of Ramadan I will always be close to you. So you will not have any need to say this, Oh Allah! Accept my certain prayer. Your every prayer has already been granted because you are with Me and I am with you. The other result of being close to God is this that as a result of fasting, the words of God are revealed in the form of realities, divine knowledge and revelation. So this is the reward of fasting, that fasting which some people want to evade by making excuses.

Excuse of Ailment

Now I come to the excuses of the patients which are my main subject. So it should be kept in mind that some patients are very big excuse makers, some ailments are also an excuse and some ailments teach to make excuses. As some diseases make man stubborn, disobedient and force the patient to keep fast.

Just opposite to it, some sick person or the so called sick person creates in himself strange types of excuses. He may miss three meals one after

the other but even the word fast makes him very fearful. In order to watch the cricket match he may tolerate a journey as well as hunger but when the time of fasts comes close then out of fear he starts trembling. Some people are so worried about their weakness that they consume eggs, butter, highly rich diets, dry fruit and tonics in abundance. Though the reason of all their ailments is gluttony and a rich diet yet still they fear to observe fast because they will be deprived of these blessings and only two meals will be left for them. Morning butter, two half cooked eggs, cake, biscuits, along with afternoon tea and eating again and again like this will be prohibited and probably after observing these thirty fasts and by leaving these heavenly blessings, they will become weak and die. They are such type of weak people that they terminate the fasts but their sexual relations continuously go on. To stand up at night for prayer becomes difficult but they go on reading novels, stories and magazines till 2 o'clock at night. Eating only twice makes them weak but the day a fight takes place with their wife due to finding some fault in the meal, then even for two days they can survive without food. Though they do not keep fast due to disease but when for the same disease a bitter medicine is given then for many days that full bottle remains on the bed side. This result shows that this ailment was only for not observing fast and for not taking medicine.

Detail of the Diseases

Now I want to make this matter very clear and this should be remembered that there are many kinds of diseases for fasting:

1. That disease which in reality is a disease and which patient and doctor, all call it a disease, all those diseases are included in it which have apparent signs, e.g., diarrhea, nausea, fever, cough, cold, wound, dysentery, pain, swelling and such signs and defects which are apparent to the people, patient and the doctor and there is no doubt about them. Fasting is totally prohibited to such a patient. If he keeps fast then it will be an unlawful act.

2. Secondly, that patient, who himself is doubtful about it, but the doctor not only calls his ailment a disease, but also a serious one and instructs him not to fast with the condition that he (the Doctor) is not a Hindu, Sikh, Christian or opposed to fast because of being against the fasting gives such permission. But he says with good intentions that you in reality have such a such disease and if you observe fast then you will be harmed. So fasting should be left on the decision of the doctor and one should have the intention that if I was well I definitely would have observed fast. The one time such a decision should not be considered enough for your whole life but after every few fasts you should go on getting his decision so that you should be considered a fasting person in the eyes of God Almighty.

3. The third type of diseases is that in which neither those signs of the disease itself are visible nor many doctors can diagnose anything but it can be heard from many of them that it may be our imagination or a minor weakness but there does not seem to be any particular disease or defect in the digestive system, so it is better to have light food. Stop eating meat, exercise more, minimize your waist line,

or walk more etc., etc. It is proper for such people that they should ask the doctor, whether it is better for me to observe fast or not. Most of them will say yes, most likely it will be beneficial. So such a person should start fasting with good intentions and then after every fast he should be careful that no particular harm has been done or any new signs beside minor physical weakness are not occurring e.g. headache, stomach pain, or the seizures of any other kind. That is he is not developing the diseases listed in point number one of this list. If this is the case then he should quit fasting; otherwise if he goes on feeling better then he should understand that fasting is beneficial.

What Should Those Do Who Feel Weakness Due to Fasting

4. Those people who used to feel weakness before and the hakims and doctors had told them that they were not sick and even after fasting they do not fall sick i.e. no visible signs of any disease occur but what they feel is only weakness, they must keep fasts with the condition that there is no question of old age, pregnancy, fosterage, or any particular religious *Jihad*. If these people feel too much weakness then instead of terminating the fast, they should terminate other activities because if the fast weighs one mound (forty *Ser*) and the other activities also weigh one mound and that person can lift only one and half mound, then it is not lawful that he should throw away the

burden of fast by saying that it is beyond my tolerance. So he should lift one mound of fast and from the rest of one mound activities throw away twenty or thirty *Ser* (two pound weight) because fasting is obligatory and from rest of the activities, some activities are *Nafl*, some are *Sunnah* and some are *Farad*. For example a clerk of *Nazart-e-Mal* becomes weak by keeping fast and can neither do his office work nor bear the weakness of fasting, then such a person should get leave from the office and observe fast. If the *Nazir* says that we cannot grant you leave even for one day then he should say to them, I have to observe fast and by working I cannot keep fast. Even after this if by thinking over this matter he does not grant you leave due to the community interest, then he is helpless. Now the clerk should start throwing away other optional weights, e.g. should not go to *Dars* and sit there but he should go home and take rest by lying in bed because *Dars* is not obligatory but fasting is obligatory or he should not say *Tarawih* at night and say *Tarawih* and *Tahajjud* by sitting at home because they are also not obligatory. He should not himself do market work and bring any groceries, his son will do this. He should not wander here and there so that the natural heat or energy of his body should become less. So he can leave all the activities except obligations (*Fard*). If fasting still cannot be observed then he is incapacitated. Actually the people commit a mistake by adding fast on top of their everyday activities and so they harm themselves and fall sick. Then they terminate the fast. They do not do what they should, that is, throw away their other optional and unnecessary loads and they do not act upon

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but on the previous unnecessary burdens, they load this new burden and do not use as much intelligence as a donkey owner or bull cart owner uses daily at the time of loading his load.

While fasting, someone heard that a *Murrabi* is coming from the station. In order to earn blessings, he immediately departed for the 12 o'clock train to welcome him. When he came back, due to the heat of Sun he got a fever. Neither could he observe fast nor could do office work of the community. So compare two virtues and adopt the one that is more important, and the weak people should abstain from too much walking, too much working and too much talking except in such condition that they are employed for that. For example *Maulvi* Rajeiki Sahib^{ra} in spite of this age, is delivering *Dars-e-Qur'an* also and does not want to end his speech until *Imamus Salat* forces him.

If all the people act upon this principle then twenty five per cent more new fasting persons will be born who do not observe fast now because of the fear of disability and illness. So keep this reality in mind that for the sake of *Ramadan* whatever are your activities except these obligations which you consider equal to fast, leave all of them, or so many of them that your load would become bearable. Sometimes it is also not enough because you are capable to lifting only a fifty *Ser* load and the fast weighs forty *Sers* and after removing the rest of the load, still fifteen *Sers* are left, which you cannot leave. The total weight is fifty-five *Ser* which is more than your energy i.e. a little more than fifty-five *ser*. There is also a solution which is that instead of throwing away five *Ser* of obligations, you get five *Sers* more energy. It can be done

like this, that in this condition if you can digest it then use some milk, almonds, energy producing diet or some tonic like fish oil, or butter. So for this five *Ser* load you will have more energy and you will be able to lift more loads. If you do not have money for this then you are incapacitated.

I have repeatedly seen in the jails that when the prisoners go on a hunger strike to observe political fasts, then they immediately lie down in bed and by covering themselves with a blanket, day and night remain lying peacefully. Because they know very well that too much movement will not let them be successful in fasting. So who so is weak, whenever he observes a fast, then he should terminate the rest of the unnecessary activities, otherwise one month's fasts will not only be difficult to observe but also become impossible.

There is a third situation, that sometimes by giving some rest to the bullocks on the way they easily start pulling the cart and this method for the weak fasting person is that he should not terminate all the fasts but after skipping one day he should go on fasting. After difficulty in observing one fast, he terminated the fasts of the whole month. This should not be done. The landlords call this "*Dam dayna*" or in Punjabi "*Saah hi kadhna*" which means to give some rest or to relax for some time but for some people it becomes harmful to change the meal timing daily. So such people should eat the

Sahri and evening meal with the fasting people but the day on which they do not want to observe fast, so there should not be any change in the daily meal timings so the stomach should not become upset.. They think, "if I do not observe fast and do not eat *Sahri* and *Iftari* also, then I would-completely become an infidel." So act upon this very phraseology.

Those Falling Sick due to Fasting

5. There is also another class besides this one and that is of such people, who are somewhat healthy but when they observe fast, they start suffering from acute headache, nausea or giddiness. These people are definitely suffering from stinking of the intestines. When they observe fast, fresh food from outside does not go inside. The intestines again start absorbing the stool of inner rotten food and the previous night's eaten food and that is poisonous and because it has not been diluted with the fresh meals, so this poison travels to the head and the head becomes affected. The first charge that is leveled against such people is that when they already know about their sickness and many *Ramadans* have passed without fasting like this, then why do not they in the rest of the eleven months pay attention to their treatment but if they have immediately taken measures to get treated their disease which was their right to do, and the doctors have declared them incurable, and then in reality they are incapacitated, otherwise not. Is by observing fast i.e. for the pleasure of God, even so little effort not obligatory for us that we should remove its obstacles and do Jihad against this disease till the doctors declare it permanently incurable.

Secondly such patients should keep this in mind that sometimes before Ramadan or during fasts by taking purgative and cleaning the intestines one feels comfortable. They can do it in this way, that after taking purgative, they should observe some fasts. Then again take one purgative and do not observe fast on that day but again start observing fasts. So In short if it is possible then go on doing like this.

The third method is that the intestines always become rotten almost due to meat, eggs, milk, and sweetness and sourness and these things give birth to harms and headaches. (These may have been the medical views when the article was written but current medical facts do not support them today. Editor) So if these people abandon these things for the sake of their health and God's pleasure, then not only their ailment will go away but they will also get ability and God's favor for fasting. For the above given matters they should not treat themselves on their own but treat themselves after consulting a doctor or hakim. In spite of repeated efforts if there is failure then certainly they are incapacitated. It will be compulsory for such good diet eaters that they should consider meat, egg or, every such thing unlawful to them, which is the cause of their ailment, and ruins their intestines and if for this cause they abandon some things for their whole life, they will not be in loss because after faith, physical health is the most precious thing and this body is the most precious trust out of all the trusts of the world. So it is obligatory for us that we should protect it for the sake of our *Deen*, keep it well and make it capable of working and should arrange the dining table with simple meal as directed by *Tehrik-e-Jadid*.

Intoxication Addicted People and Fasting

6. At the end there are some people who are addicted to intoxications and who due to the excuse of sickness terminate fasting. Whereas their intoxication is the cause of their not fasting, e.g., those people who are habitual tea drinkers, users of tobacco, *Huqa*, cigarettes and opium. So keep it in mind that whether there is a question of fasting or not fasting, it is compulsory to abandon these intoxications completely except by those people who are of advance age and weak. To abandon the slavery of habits is also important to our community.

One day I read a saying of the Promised Messiah^{as} in *Al-fzal* and that was about beetle leaves, *Zarda* and tobacco etc. that they should be abandoned. Though I was not used to eat *Zarda* yet on the spot I gave up the habit of daily eating beetle leaf. Yes I use it as a medicine and not as a habit. In the same way I thought about tea. For the last sixteen years I had been taking good strong tea regularly once or twice a day and gave it up repeatedly, but every time headache made me helpless and after two or three days I had to break the promise. At last one day I thought about it and came to know that it is all due to its sudden quitting. It should be quitted slowly. So the time I understood this philosophy then in a week I reduced it to 1/7 i.e., every day by reducing 1/7 I gave it up completely without any least trouble. Nei-

ther had I suffered from headache and lethargy nor contortion in the calf of the legs. So where eagerness and excitement fail, there philosophy and intellect work and now I take tea in a party or as a medicine for some disease and do not take it as a habit. I consider both beetle leaf and tea as lawful and at the time of necessity consider them permissible because I have seen the Promised Messiah^{as} and his two caliphs using these two things at the time of need but tobacco, *Huqa*, cigarette or opium, all these are abominable intoxications and except because of sickness even any one's going near them is shameful. The senior people who have been in these habits for many years or they use them as a medical treatment and cannot get rid of them, then they are incapacitated. In their hearts they should keep hatred their and always use them privately and also go on begging for forgiveness.

7. The seventh thing is that fasting itself causes dehydration, especially in summer fasts, because less water goes inside the body particularly in summer fasts but even in winter one gets constipated due to it and those people who suddenly become affected with constipation, they always suffer from it in fasting. It will be better for them that they should use some purgative medicine, so that they could easily go on passing stool. Secondly they should drink maximum water. For example this is also a way of *Sunnah* i.e., to break the fast only with water but it should not be cold in winter or at the *Sahri* time there should be less food and more water, or instead of dry food, you should drink more milk and eat bread instead of rice.

8. Some fasting people fall sick because as the month of Ramadan approaches, rich and indigestible heavy

food is being cooked. First of all they eat a heavy *Iftari*, then after offering *Maghrib* Prayer, an hour later a heavy meal is being eaten. Then at the *Sahri* time their well-wisher wife places *pratha* and rich meals in front of them so that they should not become weak. In short from the time of *Maghrib* to *Sahar* three stones enter into their stomach which is beyond their tolerance and its result is that after observing a few fasts, they start suffering from nausea or loose motions or severe indigestion, fever, dysentery and the other diseases or their liver becomes affected and misfortune overtakes them and it all happens because they do not care about fasting and give preference to the idea of their becoming obese. If they had daily thought about it that, "Pray to God we should not fall sick, so that we may not be deprived of fasting", then they could have kept an eye on their eating, drinking and stomach, but with the beginning of *Ramadan* both husband and wife start thinking that they should not become weak and in whatever way it is possible they should face this weakness of fasting for which this fast has been ordained and should break that purpose for which *Ramadan* has come.

9. The ninth type of people are those who totally do not possess reserve power or if they have, it is very little, such as very old persons, long time patients, the pregnant or foster mothers, they are not allowed to observe fasts but they observe it out of eagerness or passion.

10. Those boys and girls who are under age and students although, they have a lot of energy, yet if they will keep all the fasts before the age of eighteen, then there is a danger that their nerves can be harmed because

they are just like a raw fruit or green twig. Yes, sometimes they can also observe fast out of fondness but not continuously.

Friends Should Deliberate

I have written all these things, so that the friends should deliberate over them. If they can get any benefit out of them, they should get it, so that their insight and divine knowledge should enhance because sometimes except Divine knowledge many difficulties come in the way of apparent *Sharia*, particularly where there is comparison of two virtues. This is the place where the test of sagaciousness is taken. So solve your problems with the apparent injunctions of *Sharia*, then with your insight and Divine knowledge and then with prayer, so that God Almighty's blessings and mercy descend on you and you could get the ability of fasting, and act rightly upon that which is the command of God Almighty. See, when the fasts of the people are presented before God Almighty, then He asks the angel, how many fasts were obligatory for Zaid? The angel replies respectfully, they were thirty. Again he is questioned, how many fasts did he observe? He answers, "Twenty". Due to this result ten marks become minus then He asks about Bakr, how many fasts were obligatory for him? It is replied, "Twenty", because he had been sick for ten days. It is said, how many fasts did he observe, its reply was, "thirty", with the result that his marks are also deducted. Then the account of Khalid is present-

ed that how many fasts were obligatory for him? The angel respectfully replies, Hazoor "ten" because he had been sick for a few days and was old and weak. Then again it is asked how many fasts he observed. He gets the reply, "ten". As a result he gets hundred percent marks and he gets a bigger status than those who observed twenty or thirty fasts. So you should also go ahead and in the matter of commands do not lag behind so that you can get full reward. Remember you cannot win the pleasure of God Almighty with your arrogance but you can get it by humbly acting upon His commands and His will and favor.

Breaking Fast Due to Ailment

There is another misunderstanding that has spread among the common people that from the time when fast has been kept until evening it has become like a bridle on the mouth. The man may fall sick or he may be in critical condition and if any one due to sickness breaks the fast especially in the afternoon then he deserves shame, shame and shame. However I myself have seen Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} that exactly at that time when the sun was going to set down, he got a fit of head ache. At that time Hazoor was in Ludhiana. He immediately asked for the small box and took medicine. At home some people said that now in a short time the fast is going to break. Perhaps only a few minutes are left, but he did not agree and immediately gave preferences to treatment in severe pain and showed that we consider the opinion of the world like dust and in this way we act upon *Sharia* that is why we are Masih Mau'ood^{as} and that is why our praise in the Heavens is renowned like this, that he will make *Deen* alive and establish *Shariah*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RAMADHAN.

Muhammad Idris Chaudhry, Valdosta, GA

The Holy Qur'an is the last and revealed book of Allah. In His book Allah has made mention of the Holy Qur'an as Al-Qur'an sixty eight times. The word Qur'an is derived from *Qara* which has dictionary meaning as 'to collect'. This word also means to read time and again. Thus Encyclopedia Britannica calls it: The most widely read book.

In the Holy Qur'an Allah says:

O' ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you guard against evil (2:184).

Allah also tells us in the Holy Qur'an:

"The month of *Ramadhan* is that in which the Quran was revealed as a guidance for mankind and clear proof of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month let him fast therein (2:186).

Allah further say:

'Surely we sent it down during the Night of Decree/ And what shall make these know what the Night of Decree is? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months/ Therein descent angels and the Spirit by the command of their Lord. With Divine Decree every matter. It is all peace till the rising of the dawn/ (97:1-6).

Here in *Ayat* 4 it is noteworthy that in the blessed month of *Ramadhan* we can look for the Night of Decree. The importance of this Night is made clear by using the word *Alf*

which means a thousand or beyond count. This verse means that the Night of Decree or Destiny is better than countless number of months, i.e., the period of the Holy Prophet^{saw} is infinitely better and superior to other periods put together. The verse embodies an allusion to the appearance of Divine Reformers among the Muslims when they would stand in need of them. One thousand months roughly makes one century. The Holy Prophet^{saw} is reported to have said that God will continue to raise from his followers, at the head of century, a Divine Reformer who would regenerate Islam and give it a new life.

Hadhrat Promised Messiah^{as} says:

The heat of sun is called *Ramaz*. During *Ramadhan* one shows patience form eating, drinking, and bodily pleasures and additionally creates in himself warmth and fervor for Allah. Thus, spiritual and bodily heat taken together becomes *Ramadhan*. You know that which the lexicographers say that because it came in summer; therefore, it is called *Ramadhan*, in my opinion, is not correct as it cannot be particularly for the Arabs. The word *Ramadhan* is also used in the sense of heat with which the stones and the like become hot. *Ramadhan* is a month of prayer. (Fatava-e-Ahmadiyya)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih

I^{ra} says:

"In Allah's revealed book *Ramadhan* is designated as a month and it is the ninth one:

Muharram, 2. Safr, 3. Rabi'ul Awwal, 4. Rabi'ul Sani, 5. Jamadi'ul Awwal, 6. Jamadi'ul Thani, 7. Rajab, 8. Sha'ban, 9. Ramadhan.

It is well known that a human body come to completion in the mother's womb in nine months. The number nine in itself is a complete number and other numbers are made compound with it. Therefore, there is an indication that one's spiritual completion takes place in similar nine months."

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra}:

"Through observing fasts one is saved from destruction because fasts create in a person the habit of forbearance and withstanding hardships. Those who have adopted the habit of forbearance and hardship when they are faced with difficulties they do not lose their inner strength rather with courage they face them and succeed (Tafseer Kabeer, Vol. 2, p. 376)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III^{rh} says:

"The month of *Ramadhan* is established to discriminate the *Nafs-e-Ammara* (the basic state of human nature). That is the fasts of *Ramadhan* and related worships are enjoined and supererogatory prayers are established so that one can save oneself from the inroads of *Nafs-e-Ammarah*. One should put the yoke of *Nafs-e-*

Mutmainnah on oneself (state of moral high ground).” (Khutbat-e-Nasir, Vol. I, p. 97)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{rh} says:

“When the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} says that in *Ramadhan* all the doors of hellfire are closed and all the doors of paradise are opened, it does not imply that just the negative aspect should be heeded rather the positive aspect should also be considered. The doors will open only when you open them. During this month if for each of your five -senses you did not open the door of righteousness then you will be closing the door of hellfire but to no avail. In place of it you will not have opened a door of righteousness. Therefore, what it means is that for an evil deed a good deed is to be performed and for an ugliness beauty is to be created.” (Daily Al-Fazl, Nov. 4, 2003).

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} says:

“Treat nicely not only your brethren, dear ones, and relatives, treat them with sympathy, and if they need help, give them help. Do favors on them as far as you can. Also to such people as neighbors that you even do not know of them, they are not kin to you, they are not even related to you, those you have met only temporarily, even if they need your help, if they can draw some benefit from you do let them be benefitted. In this way a beautiful society will be created.” (Khutbat-e-Masroor, Vol. I, p. 309)

Let us endeavor to observe *Ramadhan* in the true sense and reap blessings of Allah.

BANGLA DESK, USA MEETING

By the Grace of Allah, the Bangla Desk USA held a historic meeting with the Bengali-speaking Ahmadies living in USA during the second day of 64th Jalsa Salana USA on Saturday, June 30 as this was the first official Bangla Desk meeting of USA under the guidance of the National Tabligh department. The meeting started at around 2 pm in the meeting room 1 in the *Jalsa Gah* after the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayer with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Jamil Matin Sahib. Then a bengali *Nazm* with translation was presented by Reaz Rahman Sahib. Bangla Desk USA coordinator, Mirza Ghulam Rabbi Sahib welcomed the audience and presided over the meeting with an update on the divine grace that we have received in the form multiple activities throughout the country and in a form of a letter from Hazoor Aqdas^{aba}. He also introduced the local coordinators: Reaz Rahman (NY Metro), Mahmud Farukee (Brooklyn), Mohammad Zaman (Queens), M. R. Mishu (Texas), Abdul Ahad Khan (West Coast), Shahidul Alam (Florida), Mohiuddin Ovee (Translation), Homaira Khandakar (Lajna) and Sazzad Khandakar (New Jersey). Waseem Sayeed sahib, Spanish Desk USA coordinator spoke on how the Bengalis showed their enthusiasm to support the Bangla Desk plan. He emphasized and encouraged all members to focus on achieving all the 17 points of the plan so that we can achieve the 1000 *Bai'ats* in one year. *Insha Allah*. Hazoor^{aba} sent a letter addressed to former *Tabligh* Secretary Ali Murtaza Sahib regarding the *Tabligh* efforts of Bengalis in USA which was read out and translated by Abdul Ahad Khan Chowdhury Sahib. Hazoor Adqas^{aba} emphasized first to gain knowledge to do *Tabligh*, then arduously pray so that the message can be effectively conveyed to the pious souls and finally to safeguard ourselves from Satan so that we don't get distracted. Ghulam Rabbi reiterated that *Shotter Shondhane* can be utilized for both *Tarbiyyat* and *Tabligh*, especially with the new short summaries diligently developed by Mohiuddin Ovee Sahib available at <http://bdusa.wordpress.com/>

US desk coordinator gave the report on the activities on how Allah's grace has descended from heaven and many members have increased opportunities to do *Tabligh* to Bengalis which was inconceivable in the past. For example, in the West Coast, one non-Ahmadi Bengali reached out to our *Imam* to inaugurate his new home with prayers and as a result 50 plus attendees were introduced to Ahmadiyyat by *Imam* Sahib and Abdul Ahad Sahib. It was a good fortune to have the head of Bangla Department of UK, Mohammad Abdul Hadi Sahib give an inspiring speech on *Tabligh*. He emphasized that all members should strive to friends with at least 10 new contacts to convey the message of Ahmadiyyat. A non-Ahmadi Bengali guest also shared his feeling on meeting with Hazoor^{aba}. The meeting was finished by silent prayer led by Waseem Syed Sahib. A total of 95 Bengali Ahmadis were in audience. Among them, 47 were male and 48 were female. Afterwards in the evening, we were blessed to have some Bengali guests attend the VIP dinner with Hazoor Aqdas^{aba} and most notable among them are: Justice Surandra Kumar Sinha, Professor Rolin Mainuddin and NJ Councilman Nuran Nabi Sahibaan.

DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM

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As the Arab Spring enters its second year, the world remains in awe at the intense demand for reform by the Arab peoples. Almost half a dozen regimes and scores of government administrators have been overthrown, but there has yet to be a country in which stable democracy has taken hold. In fact, to the great dismay of the West, the rapid rise and growth of Islamic parties in the region has led many to believe that several countries will evolve into states governed by Islamic law. This has raised the critical question of whether Islam and its teachings are compatible with democracy.¹ For those that equate democratic values with Western values, the obvious answer is that the two cannot co-exist and are in fact mutually exclusive due to the vast cultural differences between Islamic and Western societies. However, when compared to the basic premises of democracy, the answer is quite astounding; Islamic teachings and historical practices are not only compatible with democratic principles, but mutually reinforcing.

Prior to equating two concepts, it is necessary to identify and define them. Contrary to popular belief, Islam does not “impose a specific type or specific form of government.”² The infamous tenets of *Sharia* law mentioned in the Qur’an and *Hadith* are very specific in their application and are not nearly broad enough to provide the foundational framework upon which a system of governance can be established. Instead, Islam leaves the establishment of govern-

ment to its people so long as they follow the societal system prescribed by the Qur’an and *Hadith*. Thus, Islam indeed *affects* governance, but does not seek to *define* it.²

Democratic governance is at its peak today but originated several thousand years ago in ancient Greek society with the basic principle that citizens should have a voice in their government.³ Since then, the concept of a democratic state has slowly molded into what is now recognized as the modern democracy, with the additional requirements that a democratic system must uphold human rights, equality, fair governance, and justice through rule of law.⁴ Although not obvious due to modern fundamentalist regimes and biased journalism, Islam not only supports these pillars of democracy but *mandates* them.

First, the most important element of the modern democracy is “the guarantee of basic human rights to every individual person vis-à-vis the state and its authorities as well as vis-à-vis any social groups (especially religious institutions) and vis-à-vis other persons.”⁵ The reason for this primary importance is that without this fundamental guarantee, it is impossible to make way for other tenets of democracy since the two are inextricably intertwined.⁶ Alt-

hough not obvious in practice, the Qur’an and *Hadith*, the ultimate reference sources in Islam, are unambiguous in their promotion of basic human rights. In fact, among the modern great religions, Islamic teachings are the most clear and strict in protecting these rights, to the extent that the entire Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be derived from the original Islamic teachings.^{7,8} The most important human right, without which other rights are impossible, is the right to live. Early Islam was very clear in its support of this concept. Life is given immense value; with the exceptions of self-defense and legal punishment, murder is never permissible, and is in fact discouraged with the threat of “never smell[ing] the fragrance of Paradise” and being forever damned to Hell.

Allah says in the Holy Qur’an: And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law]. (17:34)

Abdullah ibn Amr relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said, “Whoever kills a person protected by a treaty will never smell the fragrance of Paradise, and indeed its fragrance can be found a distance of forty years of travel.”^{9,10}

The life of any individual, be he a beggar or a king, has been equated to

that of the entire country, thus emphasizing the immense magnitude of killing an innocent individual.¹¹

The Holy Qur'an states: Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors. (5:33)

The Holy Prophet^{saw} was very clear in this practice as well; he forbade the murder of innocents, including slaves, and swiftly punished murderers with death as according to the Qur'an.¹² Modern justification of murder in the name of *Jihad* is an incorrect interpretation that clearly violates the basic Islamic principles of life. Thus, in terms of the support of life, Islam is directly in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A large number of the basic human rights identified by the United Nations are closely intertwined with a second principle of democracy upheld by Islam – freedom and equality. The Qur'an and *Hadith* strictly prohibit humans from subjecting one another to oppression, the basis of slavery and inequality.

The Holy Prophet^{saw} once said: "O people! Your God is one and your forefather is one. An Arab is not better than a non-Arab and a non-Arab is not better than an Arab, and a red person is not better than a black person and a black person is not better than a red person, except in piety."¹³

This means that discrimination is strictly forbidden on any basis, whether it be religion, race, gender, or any other differentiable factor, since this would challenge the value of God's creation and violate the teachings of equality. Before continuing, it is necessary to point out the differences in *sameness* and *equality*. Obviously, no two humans are the same; there are countless characteristics that differentiate one human from another. However, all humans are equal in terms of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities.¹⁵ The Holy Prophet^{saw} was revolutionary in his appeal against discrimination, being among the first rulers to proclaim that should a black man rule over white men, they should obey him no differently than if he, too, were white.¹³ Similar accounts have been documented pertaining to equal treatment towards the poor, disabled, elderly, and even those of different religions. These same principles were even embodied in Islamic Spain during the Middle Ages, long after the Holy Prophet's^{saw} death. Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived in uncharacteristic peace and harmony in what has been dubbed as Spain's Golden Age.¹⁶ A common refutation to these teachings of equality is supposed evidence that the Holy Prophet^{saw} and his followers supported the institution of slavery. How can Islam promote freedom and equality when slavery is permitted? The answer to this question is two-part. First, the accusation is not wholly accurate since Islam, like the other great religions, neither supports nor abolishes slavery.

The slavery justified in the Qur'an is not slavery in the modern sense, but simply the capture of prisoners during war, who must be treated humanely and released when possible. The Holy Prophet^{saw} himself followed this practice and forbade his followers from doing otherwise.

Abu Musa narrated that "The Holy Prophet^{saw} said, "Give food to the hungry, pay a visit to the sick and release (set free) the one in captivity (by paying his ransom)." Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 65, Number 286

He further narrated that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said, "Set free the captives and accept invitations." (Bukhari Volume 9, Book 89, Number 285

Second, in regard to the slaves owned by the Holy Prophet^{saw} and his followers, it must be clarified once again that slaves were not treated brutally as we imagine today; instead, slaves were more analogous to the modern concept of servants, who are subject to the same rights as other men. In fact, the Holy Prophet^{saw} and the Qur'an aided in the decline of slavery by opening up dozens of paths toward freedom, including the ability of slaves to request release.¹⁷ Those who were not freed were treated with the utmost respect; so kindly did the Holy Prophet^{saw} treat his slaves that one, Zaid, refused to leave the Holy Prophet^{saw} when offered unconditional freedom and the choice to live with his father.¹⁸ The level of respect, freedom, and equality embodied and implemented by early Islam would surely make even modern Western states envious and proves that Islam is compatible with this aspect of the modern democracy as well.

Freedom and equality for all humans gives way to yet another basic democratic practice, fair governance. Abraham Lincoln's definition of a democratic government, one "created of, by, and for the people" can be extended to apply in a more general sense to any government that is fair. This is because in order to be fair, a government must be composed of an individual or individuals over whom it rules, be created in agreement with its citizens, and act in its citizens' best interests. As stated previously, Islam does not advocate a specific form of governance, but in order for a government to embody the societal teachings of Islam, it must necessarily meet these three criteria. For a government to be "of" its people, it must be chosen among the citizenry, a concept which Islam offers by allowing anyone to hold office, as mentioned in the previous *Hadith* pertaining to rulers of different origins. In accordance with the principles of fairness and equality mentioned previously, there is no place in the Qur'an or *Hadith* which restricts any law-abiding citizen from holding office, including women and followers of other religions. Governments must be chosen in a way that allows every citizen an opportunity to serve, and the practice of this concept can be observed in modern Islamic states with the elections of female prime ministers and presidents – an accomplishment the US democratic system has yet to accomplish. Similarly, in order for a government to be "by" the people, all citizens must be able to express their opinions, whether it be in support or criticism of the status quo. It is in this context that the concept of *Shura* (consultation) has been mentioned in the Qur'an. Every Muslim is given a voice and must express it by participating in consultations, equiva-

lent to modern day forums and indicative of a system in which the responsibility to select a government has been enjoined upon its citizens.¹⁹ Selection of a government through consultation can give rise to a broad spectrum of government systems ranging from true democracies to popular sovereigns. Regardless of its position on this spectrum, any government derived from these principles meets the criteria of being created *of* and *by* the people, but in order for it to be *for* the people, it must act in the collective interest of the people. Intuitively, this third criteria should be a direct consequence of the first two, but powerful modern interest groups exemplify the antithesis to this notion. Islam, however, mandates that governments act in the best interest of the collective good by encouraging progressive social programs such as *Zakat*, essentially equivalent to the concepts of taxation and redistribution of wealth. Since the advent of the *dhimmi* during the latter part of the Holy Prophet's^{saw} life, non-Muslim citizens were even subject to the same protection as the Muslim citizenry. Thus, the Islamic mandates of equality, *Shura*, and social welfare ensure that any government based on Islamic principles must meet Lincoln's definition of a democratic government by being "of, by, and for the people."

An additional necessity of any democracy is justice through rule of law. In the modern democracy, those who disobey the laws of the state or act

against it are given an unbiased court appearance with proper representation so that they may be acquitted or convicted in a fair manner. Even those who are convicted are only punished according to their crimes and are protected from cruel and unusual punishment. Each of these principles is replicated in Islamic teachings similar to the tenets of the US Courts system. Innocence is maintained until proof of guilt, fair trials are encouraged through the process of arbitration in order to avoid prolonged dispute, and hearsay is explicitly warned against, suggesting that strong evidence is needed when adjudicating a dispute.²⁰ Those who are convicted are punished according to the principle of *Adl*, in which justice is balanced so that it is neither lacking nor excessive. Instead, justice is delivered fairly, efficiently, timely, and without bias, even if it be against a relative.²¹ *Adl* serves as an equalizer before the law; no one, regardless of status, is exempt, and no one is punished unfairly. The Holy Prophet^{saw} took great care to emphasize the importance of *Adl*, proclaiming that lapses in *Adl* have led to the fall of many nations. When requested for a pardon by a woman of high status connected to a theft, The Holy Prophet^{saw} refused, stating that he would even punish his own daughter if she were guilty of the same crime. Similarly, Umar^{ra}, the second caliph, upheld equal treatment before the law by punishing the son of a powerful governor for illegally beating another individual under the assumption that he could commit such acts without suffering the consequences. Thus, no one is exempted from the law, though the Islamic doctrine is a bit more nuanced with a second principle of justice, *Ihsan*. Once again, equality does not imply sameness, and as a result, the principle of *Ihsan* states that the

delivery of justice should be in accordance with the circumstances of the crime committed.²² Just as a modern judge has leeway when determining the sentence a convicted individual must serve, Islam requires that the circumstances pertaining to the crime be taken into account so that equality and fairness may be preserved. For example, a slave convicted of stealing to feed her starving children is not punished the same as a habitual thief stealing out of malice or greed because the circumstances are extenuating and mitigate the crime. It is true that these practices have not extended to modern times; the Arab Spring provides numerous examples of powerful individuals, such as President Asad of Syria, escaping punishment even after murdering thousands of innocent citizens. There are also stories of women being punished for being the victims of rapes, as in Saudi Arabia.²³ However, these incidents are not the result of Qur'anic teachings or the *Hadith*, which vehemently forbid such inequality and injustice, but a failure of the system which can occur even under a secular or democratic government. So long as the populace has a voice and the ability to exercise that voice, the system can be reformed to prevent further injustices. Thus, with equal applicability of rules and regulations to all citizens, Islam fosters yet another basic foundational democratic principle without which tyrannical leadership would prevail.

The final, and perhaps strongest argument against the compatibility of Islam and democracy is the notion that a democracy must not contain any element of religion. Proponents of this viewpoint argue that separation of church and state must be absolute in order to protect the

faiths of those with different beliefs. Islam advocates the same separation since there is no form of governance it has to offer, nor does it require religious tests for officials. It is likely and expected that a government in an Islamic country will derive the foundation of some laws from the social constructs of Islam, but this does not mean that Islam will be imposed or practiced via the government. To do so would counter the original teachings of Islam, which clearly state that "there is no compulsion in religion."²⁴ The Holy Prophet^{saw} was also careful to avoid religious coercion, even allowing Jewish convicts to bypass Islamic law and be tried according to Jewish tradition.²⁵ Islamic cultural elements, such as the celebration of Islamic holidays, may be present, but this is no different than the celebration of Christian holidays by modern Western democracies. Church and state are indeed separate, but it is unrealistic to believe that this separation can ever be 100% since a natural result of democracy is that it serves the majority of people, regardless of whether they happen to be Christian or Muslim. So long as the government prevents the majority from coercing the minority, the presence of non-coercive religious elements in societal practice does not equate to a mixture of church and state.

Despite not defining a specific form of governance, the basic teachings of Islam, viewed through the scope of the Qur'an and practices of the Holy Proph-

et^{saw}, promote the basic tenets of democracy – human rights, equality, fairness, and justice. Though in theory this means that Islam in no way contradicts or clashes with the coexistence of a democratic government, it is unfortunate but true that some modern interpretations of Islam exclude democracy. However, these interpretations go against the example of the Prophet the Holy Prophet^{saw}, and as such are illegitimate. The doctrine of Islam itself is fully compatible with democracy; it is only the doctrine of certain practitioners which is not. The occurrence of mass protests in the Arab world should only prove this since thousands of devout Muslims are passionately advocating for democratic reform. Islamic doctrine, when analyzed holistically and in accordance with the practices of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, can only support the protestors' demonstrations since at the core of the revolutions are the basic demands for equality, fairness, and justice. Whether a democracy succeeds or not, however, Islamic doctrine is neither to blame nor commend since the ultimate choice of government lies within the hearts and minds of the people.

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SAJDAH

Ayesha Usman, Zion

Do we really think and what do we really think about and do we really think about what we are doing when we call ourselves thinking about *Sajdah*?

It is the glorification without weariation so refrain from resting in its embrace. It is the gravitation on six crucial points culminating in the seventh degreed third eye, to some a sorted, scared output, to others the sought sacred outcome, and still to others a sore, scarred outgrowth. Heralded by the bursting *ruku* which, like lightning and thunder pro-claims and pronounces the burdened clouds, inclines the laden heart to its Beloved. Pulling down, pushing down, falling down, crawling down, bawling down, humbling down. Magnetizing to, magnifying to, magnanimously upward forward towards the Magnificent.

Witness the first command settled in 7:207, endorsement of trading pride for humility, trading silence for proclamation, trading lives for service.

The next emerged in 22:78 where bowing, there worshipping trades unfairness and doubt for reliance and dependence.

Then surfaced 32:16 as it declares a celebration is in order as the signs secure recognition.

Afterwards without a hesitant afterthought, 53:63 makes it clear that it's you, it's me, it's us, it's yourself, it's myself, it's ourselves even if/when the weaker of them are surrounding.

Totaling 96:20 warns against the forbidded, the forbidden of subtle or apparent, and makes him transparent, so determine to yield not.

Optical fluids, nasal fluids, dermal fluids, let those emissions flow.

There's a blessed cup catching them all and preserving them as they perhaps transform into the streams running by nearby lofty mansions.

HADITH

Hadhrat Malik bin Huwairith^{ra} relates: "We were a group of young men of about the same age who came to the Holy Prophet^{saw}, and we stayed with him for twenty days and nights. The Messenger^{saw} of Allah was a most kind and considerate person. When he perceived that we were eager or desirous of returning to our families. He^{saw} inquired from us about those whom we had left behind. We told him about them. Then he^{saw} said: 'Return to your families and stay with them, and teach them and ask them to act upon these, and he^{saw} mentioned matters, some of which I remember and others I do not remember, and establish *Salat* the way you have seen me offer the *Salat*. At the time of the *Salat*, one of you should call the *Adhan* and the oldest of you should lead the Prayer.' "

(Bukhari *kitabul adhan babul adhan lil musafir*)

MAULANA GHULAM RASUL RAJEKI^{ra}

The Young Righteous Miracle-Maker

Murtaza Ahmad, London, UK

Our beloved Prophet, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa^{saw} described his companions like the stars that fill the canopy of the heavens; he mentioned ‘Whichever one you follow shall guide you.’

The Lord had also ordained that the people of the latter days (the companions of the Promised Messiah^{as} and *Imam Mahdi*) were to carry with them an aura of the miraculous and to show people the same wonders in the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} that were shown by the companions of the Holy Prophet^{saw}.

One of those dazzling stars that filled the canopy of heavens of the latter days was Hadhrat Ghulam Rasul Qudsi Rajeki^{ra}. Thus he is considered just one example of the many great and inspirational figures which appeared among the companions of the Promised Messiah^{as} of the latter days.

The illustrious personality of Hadhrat Ghulam Rasul Qudsi Rajeki^{ra} exhibited an awe inspiring example of the acceptance of prayer. Each and every episode in his life sheds light upon his unique relationship with the Divine. However, he continuously emphasised that the acceptance of his prayers were not due to his efforts or deeds; rather, it was a result of the attention and blessings of the Promised Messiah^{as} and his great successors.

A few of his Urdu verses summarise this beautifully:

*What can I say of what my Messiah has given me?
What was I, and how he has enhanced me?*

*There was a night of darkness and ignorance upon me
That Sun of truth gave me light and illumination as well*

*I was the lowest of the low, beneath the dirt
Yet he raised me from mere dust into Pleiades
My Guide is Ahmad – the one sent; the Holy Messiah
Who awakened the world from sleepiness*

*I had the honour of the companionship of a Prophet
The beneficence of the Holy Messiah has increased my station*

The Promised Messiah^{as} states:

‘God has informed me directly through His living Word that if I am troubled by people asking how they should know that I am from Him, I should tell them: It is sufficient proof that His heavenly signs are my witness, my prayers are accepted, knowledge of the unseen is revealed to me beforehand, and such mysteries, as are known to none other than God, are disclosed to me in advance.

[The British Government and Jihad, Roohani Khaza'in, vol. 17, pp. 29-30]

However, the life of Hadhrat *Maulana* Ghulam Rasul Rajeki Sahib^{ra} shows that even through mere disciples like himself, thousands of people beheld the wonders of miracles and the extraordinary acceptance of prayer due to the blessings of the *Imam Mahdi*^{as}.

Hadhrat *Maulana* Ghulam Rasul Sahib Rajeki^{ra}, Missionary of the Ahmadiyya Movement, has written his autobiography. The detailed narrations, containing hundreds of enlightening points, verses of the Holy

Qur'an and accounts of nearly half a century of preaching campaigns have been published in '*Hayat-e-Qudsi*.' Part one contains Maulavi Sahib's family background, childhood and many faith inspiring incidents of the acceptance of Ahmadiyyat. They have been a means of bolstering people's faith and have proven very moving for thousands of people. *Hayat-e-Qudsi* has been written in summary as Hadrat Maulavi Sahib's original manuscripts are voluminous. The real objective of writing the book is to preserve the signs of succour and historical incidents of this Divine movement.

Therefore, for the benefit of the readers, a few incidents have been translated from *Hayat-e-Qudsi* (Part 1)

*"Though miracles may have vanished without a trace;
Come, witness them at the hand of the servants of Muhammad"*

Maulavi Ghulam Rasul, Young Righteous Miracle Maker

The *Ulamas*' edict of disbelief, their abuse and the callousness of my relatives taught me such an understanding of the pure unity expressed in "*La ilaha illallah*" which I would have been unable to acquire even after having performed thousands of spiritual exercises and forms of disciplines.

The God who had for centuries been hidden and existed in the thoughts and conjectures of men, appeared unto this worthless and humble being like a phoenix with His Absolute Manifestations in the era of the Promised Messiah's^{as} Prophethood. Therefore during these early days when the evil *Ulema* were going to each and every village, to spread my 'lack of knowledge' and 'disbelief,' my God bestowed on me by way of revelation the glad tidings:

'Maulavi Ghulam Rasul, Young Righteous Miracle-Maker.'

Thereafter, following this Divine revelation where God the Exalted granted me victory in debates with important and influential *maulavis*; through me and through the blessings of our chief, the Imam of the age, He also manifested miracles of admonitions and glad tidings which an age is witness to.

An Incident at Guddhu

Once I went to the village of Guddhu, which is about a mile and half from our village. Most of the people there were from our family's circle of friends, and this is why I preached Ahmadiyyat to some of the men there.

As I was leaving, I jotted down a few verses from my Punjabi poems concerning the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as} on the veranda of a mosque in the village. As chance would have it, the chief of the village Ch. Allah Bakhsh was performing ablution somewhere in the mosque and spotted me leaving. At that instant, the *Imam* of the mosque, *Maulavi* Kalamullah also saw me.

The two met each other and were in the course of speaking of my craze for Ahmadiyyat when they read some of the verses that I had written on the veranda of the mosque. Believing that the '*Mirzai*'¹ had now made their mosque impure, they hatched a plan according to which seven strong men would chase after me, tie my hands behind my back and drag me back to them. Then, I would be forced to wipe the verses off with my own hands, after which I was to be killed. Accordingly, in order to carry out this conspiracy they sent seven young men to run after me. However in those days, I was a very fast walker and that was how I reached my village before the young men could catch up with me and so they returned, defeated and unsuccessful.

The next day at the crack of dawn, a resident of that village who knew the families of the people there and who happened to be my father's disciple came to him and told him the whole story. Having heard him, my father said to me, 'As these people have such plans concerning you, you ought to take care.'

When I heard this incident and my father's order, I performed ablution and started to offer my prayers. I

beseached my God, saying: 'O my Compassionate Lord, will these people stop me from preaching about your beloved Messiah, and in this way, will I be completely deprived from preaching at all?' I was uttering this prayer with great pain and anxiety when there and then, on the prayer mat, I felt slumber overtake me and I fell asleep. No sooner was I asleep than my God, the One who bestows upon the needy, began conversing with me and with utmost gentleness and mercy started to say: "WHO IS IT THAT PREVENTS YOU FROM PREACHING? I WILL PUT ALLAH BAKHSH THE CHIEF OF THE VILLAGE INTO HIS GRAVE, ON THE ELEVENTH DAY FROM TODAY."

The following morning, as soon as I had breakfast, I went to Guddhu Village and asked for the address of Allah Bakhsh, the Village Chief. The people enquired what the matter was and I stated, 'I have brought a Divine message for him and it is that on the eleventh day from today, Allah Bakhsh will be laid in his grave.' They started to explain that he had gone a few miles out to a village Lala Chak, east of Gujarat to which I replied: "All of you are witness to this that he will be put into the grave on the eleventh day from today and there is nobody who can prevent the Divine Decree."

Upon hearing this message of mine, a silence fell upon the gathering. Now this irrevocable decree had manifested thus: Ch. Allah Baksh fell ill to pleurisy and bloody diarrhoea in Lala Chak. In a matter of a few days, the illness increased so much so that his relatives carried him from Lala Chak to a hospital in Gujarat and on the very eleventh day, he left this mortal world and was even deprived the graveyard of his hometown.

فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ

So take a lesson, O ye who have eyes! (59:3)

As the news of this prophecy had already been foretold to the villages Guddhu, Sadaullahpur and also to people of other villages, its fulfilment at its appointed time caused terror among most of the people.

The Punjabi verses that I had written on the veranda of the mosque are as follows:

ایہ جہان مکان فانی فانی نال محبتاں لانی
سر تے بولدی سٹ پنی کوچ والی فکر موت دامنوں چکانیے نہ
دنیا خواب خیال اینویں غافل ہو کے عمر گنوانیے نہ
نام رب دا دلاندی کیمیا اے یاد رب دی دلوں بھلانیے نہ
بخت جا گے دلاں ستیانڈے مہدی پاک جاں وچ جہاں آئے
سر تے بنہ وستار رسول والی ساڈے سترے بھاگ جگان آئے
بوئے باغ محمدی فیر تازے مالی خاص جاں وچ بستان آئے
دور پرتیا فیر اسلام والا جس وچ آخری شاہ دوران آئے
تاج مہدی سب اولیانڈے حلے پہن رسولانڈی شان آئے
قسم رب دی ایہو امام مہدی فیہڑے قادیان وچ سلطان آئے
منن بد نصیب نہ اونہاں تائیں غالب جنہاں تے نفس شیطان آئے
منن والیاں رب رسول راضی اتے منکراں بہت زیان پائے

Brief translation of the Punjabi verses:

- (1) *This world is a place of mortality. It shouldn't be loved.*
- (2) *The nacre of death beats. This is why the fear of death should not be overlooked by the heart.*
- (3) *Everything in the world is merely an illusion and illustration. Hence, you shouldn't waste your life in ignorance.*
- (4) *Only the remembrance of God is the alchemy of the hearts. That is why one must not be oblivious to remembering the True Benefactor.*
- (5) *Those who were asleep were awakened by the coming of the Mahdi of the age into this world.*
- (6) *Through attaining the status of Prophethood, you have come to awaken our sleeping fates.*

- (7) *The orchard of Muhammad (saw) has been refreshed with the coming of a special gardener.*
 (8) *The era of the revival of Islam has returned once again, for herein has come the spiritual King of the latter days.*
 (9) *The Mahdi of the age is the crown of all the Awliyaa of the Ummah and has come in the mantle of all the messengers.*
 (10) *By God, the Imam Mahdi is he who has come to Qadian as a spiritual king.*
 (11) *Those who are ill-fated and have been overwhelmed by the desires of their souls, Satan fails to accept him.*
 (12) *God and His Messenger are contented with those whom have accepted the Imam Mahdi; however, those who reject him are in utter loss.*

An Incident at Dhudhrha

Similarly, when I set out to preach in the village Dhudhrha, which is located a mile away from our village, towards the south west, the *Mullah* there, Muhammad Ālam, prevented people from listening to my discourses. He would spread the “decree of disbelief” that was made against me everywhere. Ultimately, the *Maulavi* of the aforementioned village, incited a strong young man against me, known as Jeewan Khan, whose family’s influence ruled above all the other landowners, to the extent that he was ready to kill me. He sent a message to me that ‘if you value your life, don’t head towards our village otherwise you will regret it.’ When I heard this message, I stood up in prayer before my Lord, and prayed with earnest humility, then concerning Jeewan Khan and *Mullah* Muhammad, Allah the Exalted told me by way of revelation:

Perished the two hands of Abū Lahab, and so perish he.² (111:2) **بَيَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۝**

After this Divine Inspiration, the very next day I was informed that Jeewan Khan had been gripped by severe colic. Furthermore, Muhammad Ālam had been dismissed from being *Imam* of the Mosque due to immoral behaviour. Then, as a result of the colic attack, Jeewan Khan’s condition reached such an extent that within a few days, the strong and heavy young man had been reduced to a mere skeleton. When his family having tried everything, gave up hope of him living, he said ‘within me are those very knives and hammers that are cutting me up, which I had warned Mian Ghulam Rasul of Rajeki about. If you want me to live, then for God’s sake, placate him and have my sin forgiven, otherwise there is no chance of my survival’.

Eventually, nine or ten of his family members despite Mullah Muhammad Ālam trying to stop them, approached our village chief and requested him to placate me. He replied, ‘Although Mian Sahib is a man from among our brethren, yet owing to the reverence his household has, nobody among us, till this day has dared to even sit on his bedstead. In these matters, I am afraid, lest I show any sort of disrespect. Eventually, they came to me, along with the chief of our village, my respected father, my uncle; Mian Ilmuddin Sahib and Hafiz Nizamuddin Sahib.

They removed their turbans from their heads and placed them at my feet while screaming and crying out loud with piercing screams of, ‘Now we will only go once you place these turbans back on our heads, otherwise they will remain fallen at your feet.’ On seeing their condition, my father and uncle interceded, so that they may be forgiven. At last, I accepted and along with my elders arrived at Dhudhrha with them. As soon as Jeewan Khan saw me coming, he joined both his hands before me, crying out; “I repent, I repent” and he cried and wailed so much that by his submission, his whole household also started to cry and bewail. This time, the strange thing that occurred was that Jeewan Khan who had been deemed incurable and forsaken had started to feel better as soon as we had arrived and in the duration for which we stayed sitting there, he remained at peace, but when we reached our village, only a little while later, the throbs of pain picked up again so his relatives sent a man to ask for me.

On the instructions of my father and uncles, I went to Jeewan Khan’s house. I had just arrived when all the ladies of the house and the men began to plead with utmost humility for me to stay at the house and not to return

to my village, until Jeewan Khan had recovered. When Mullah Muhammad Alam and his counterparts heard that I had come again; he started spreading everywhere that the patient who has been pronounced hopeless by the very best doctors in the whole of the neighbourhood and is now lying in the jaws of death, how can this *Mirzaee* restore him to health? When these comments reached my ears, with passion and courage I subsequently started to pray with great meekness and concentration for Jeewan Khan's health. When these words reached my ears, I started praying with a passion of self-honour before the Lord with absolute meekness and concentration. As a result, hardly a week had passed, that Allah the Exalted gave life to Jeewan Khan Sahib a second time and he became completely recovered through the miraculous blessings of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

As soon as this miraculous power had manifested, apart from this village, most of the people of the surrounding neighbourhood also got astonished. They started to say that ultimately Mirza Sahib (as) is a great person that even his disciples have such effective prayers. After this, Allah the Exalted's All-Powerful and Wrathful Hand seized Mulla Muhammad Alam. After his disgrace and humiliation, he made him suffer from such a gruesome disease that half of his body's prolix part blackened and with this disease he departed from this world.

Surely, hot wind is the worst thing in the world

The worst of the hot wind is the opposition of the righteous

إِنَّ السَّمُومَ لَشَرُّ مَا فِي الْعَالَمِ
شَرُّ السَّمُومِ عَدَاوَةُ الصَّالِحَاءِ

An Incident at Jāmun Bola

The village of Jamun Bola is situated two miles north of our residence. Many landlords of that village had been the well-wishers of our elders. When they came to know of the circumstances surrounding the illness and miraculous recovery of Jeewan Khan [through the prayers of *Maulavi* Ghulam Rasul, in a previous episode], an inhabitant of Dhudhrha named Khan Muhammad, who was one of these landlords, came to see my father and said: 'For some time my younger brother, Jan Muhammad, has been suffering from tuberculosis. As an act of kindness, please instruct Mian Ghulam Rasul Sahib to stay at our house for a few days so as to pray for Jan Muhammad, that Allah the Exalted may grant him health too.' Following his request, and as per my father's instructions, I set off towards them. Upon my arrival, and having refreshed my ablutions, I began to pray for his brother. After having ended with the salaam, I enquired as to how his condition was. The family replied: "The fever has completely disappeared and he has even started to feel hungry." Afterwards, within a few days, such strength was born in his thin and weak body, that he was able to walk around. Having witnessed this sign, these people began to entertain some positive feelings about Ahmadiyyat; however not a single person entered into the allegiance of the Promised Messiah^{as}. As a result, Allah the Exalted informed me:

"The health that has been granted to this patient was a final argument for them; and if they do not accept Ahmadiyyat, the patient will be made to enter the grave on the twenty-eighth of the month of *Sha'baan*, in the middle of the night."

Subsequently, as soon as I awoke I asked for pen and inkpot and wrote down this divine revelation on a piece of paper and entrusted it to some of the non-Ahmadis of the village, cautioning them not to disclose the prophecy [to anyone] before the appointed time of death. Afterwards, I set off for the holy court of the Promised Messiah^{as} and there I spent the blessed month of *Ramadan*. When Allah the Exalted, in His wisdom, had caused the incident of Jan Muhammad's apparent return to health to be talked about everywhere, the disease resurfaced and on exactly the twenty-eighth night of the month of *Sha'baan*, he departed from this mortal earth. Following his demise, when the non-Ahmadis exposed my writings in front of the public, they were left speechless. How unfortunate it is that even after this, those people still did not accept Ahmadiyyat.

تہی دستان قسمت را چہ سود از رہبر کامل
کہ خضر از آب حیوان تشنہ مے آرو سکندر را

*What benefit can the unfortunate draw from a Complete Guide?
Even Khizer³ brought Alexander away from the water of life in a state of thirst*

An Incident at Sa'dullahpur

Sa'dullahpur village is about three miles south of our village. Most of its *Hanafi* inhabitants were on good terms with our elders. For this reason, I used to visit every so often and preach to this village and try to convince them of the truthfulness of the Promised Messiah^{as}. In this village, there was an *Ahl-e-Hadith* scholar, *Maulavi* Ghawth Muhammad Sahib, who was a student of the Ghaznavi family in Amritsar, and was therefore exceedingly hostile and opposed [to Ahmadiyyat]. One day, after the *Salaat-al-Zuhr* at the mosque, I began to preach Ahmadiyyat in their presence and gave them some books and periodicals to study. When they found out from my preaching and from the Promised Messiah's^{as} books that I believed Hadhrat Mirza Sahib to be the Promised Messiah and *Imam Mahdi*, they started using foul language and abusing the Promised Messiah^{as}. I reasoned with them saying that they could swear at me all they wanted, but that they should refrain from insulting the Promised Messiah^{as}. In spite of this, they did not stop their abuse. Retiring to a private place, I fell down in prostration praying before the threshold of God with great sobbing and weeping. During the night, I returned to the mosque without having eaten any food and slept there. When morning drew near, *Maulavi* Ghawth Muhammad Sahib came up to me in the mosque and begged for forgiveness, beseeching me to do the following: "For God's sake, please write a letter for my allegiance to Mirza Sahib, otherwise I fear I will die right now and be cast into hell!" Observing his repentance, and greatly astonished, I enquired the reason for it. The *Maulavi Sahib* proceeded to give me the following explanation: "I have seen in a dream that it was the Day of Judgment and the decree of my being cast into hell had been issued. To act upon the decree, angels of a terrifying appearance came towards me. They carried enormous clubs that reached all the way up to the sky. These angels grabbed hold of me and declared: "You have attacked the honour of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the Imam of the Age, so go now to Hell and face your punishment." I cried out in horror: "I repent! Please let me go!" The angels took no notice, and said: "Now he repents?" They then raised their clubs to strike me. Out of sheer terror I woke up and in this state I have come to you. For God's sake, please have my sins forgiven and write a letter certifying my allegiance to Hadhrat Mirza Sahib." Due to this dream, he became an Ahmadi; and thereafter as a result of our combined preaching efforts, dozens of men and women entered into the Ahmadiyya Community. *Fal Hamdulillah 'Ala Dalik*

1. (*Mirzaey*- a derogative term used to refer to Ahmadi Muslims but is espoused by the Ahmadis with great pride)

2. The Holy Qur'an, 111:2

3. Here the word Khizer connotes the Guidance of God.)

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Mas'ud Ansari^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "The best-versed in the recitation of the Qur'an from among the congregation should lead the Prayer. Should they be all equal in that respect, then the one who is best-versed of them in the *sunnah*. Should they be all equal in that respect, then the one of them who migrated earliest than others. And, should they be all equal in that respect then the oldest of them in age. No one should lead the Prayer in the jurisdiction of the other person, nor occupy the dignifying seat of the other person in his house, without his permission."

(*Muslim kita-\bussalat bab man ahaqqu bil amamati*)

ISLAMIC TEACHINGS ON WAR AND PEACE

Anwer Mahmood Khan, L.A. East

Islam is a religion that is universal in its scope, perfect in its teachings, complete in its ideology, rational in its presentation and appealing to the human intellect. It provides guidance for every human endeavor. The word 'Islam' means 'peace' and 'submission'. Submission to the will of God is the essence of Islam. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rh} writes:

*"The word Islam literally means peace. In this single word, all Islamic teachings and attitudes are most beautifully and concisely reflected. Islam is a religion of peace. Its teachings guarantee peace in every sphere of human interest and aspiration."*¹

Writing about Islamic teachings concerning war and peace may appear to be a simple exercise, but the more one reflects on the topic, especially in the light of the current ways in which Islam is being displayed, transmitted and reinforced by the powerful machinery of the mainstream media, the more daunting the task becomes. At this junction, it would be prudent to list the challenges I face in describing such Islamic teachings. These include:

Today, Islam has become synonymous with suicide bombers, who consider terrorism as 'Islam'; *ji-hadists*, who portray Islam as irrational; and various perpetrators of countless barbaric acts, who fight under a 'Might is right' philosophy.

The so-called Islamic 'Ulema';

i.e., the clergy, misinterpret the word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} in order to paint an abhorrent picture of Muslim faith, just to support their wars and their fighting machines in the name of Islam.

Western scholars, in turn, receive their knowledge about Islam second-hand from extremist depictions of Islam, which they then re-write and re-distribute under the stamp of 'authoritative scholarship' for a 'discriminating' Western readership.

Thus, in light of these challenges, our task becomes highly daunting and significant, and could very well be called as "need of the hour". Here, it is perhaps appropriate to quote a few words written by Dr. Francis Collins in his book, *The Language of God*. He writes:

"So, while the long history of religious oppression and hypocrisy is profoundly sobering, the earnest seeker must look beyond the behavior of flawed humans in order to find the truth. Would you condemn an oak tree because its timbers had been used to build battering rams? Would you blame the air for allowing lies to be transmitted through it? If you had never seen a real sunset over the Pacific, would you allow a tourist brochure as a real sunset? ,,,

*No. A real evaluation of the truth of faith depends upon looking at the clean, pure water, not at the rusty containers."*²

In this essay, it is our intention to present the teachings of Islam about war and peace against the backdrop of a broad spectrum of views shared by philosophers and venerable personalities of other great religions. Additionally, I seek to highlight the great distortions made by the Muslim *Ulema* which are then subsequently imported by Western scholars into their own studies of Islamic history, politics and religion

Significance of the topic

Webster's Dictionary defines war as a state of open and declared, hostile armed conflict between states or nations, or a period of such conflict. The first conflict in human history is said to be that of Cain and Abel, the two sons of Adam, and this has been recorded both in the Bible and the Qur'an. War and peace are the twin phenomena known to humankind since antiquity. Chris Hedges³ writes in his book *What Every Person Should Know About War*, that during the span of recorded history encompassing 3,400 years, humans have only enjoyed a brief period of peace, 268 years, or 8 %. He further stated that there are at least 21 million people engaged today in military combat in the world, with at least thirty wars were in operation in 2003. It is estimated that, so far, between 175 million to one billion people have

been killed. This clearly demonstrates the significance of containing conflicts. A brief survey of the opinions of various thinkers, philosophers and religious elites are presented below:

- ✦ **Cicero (106BC-43 BC)** defined war broadly as "a contention by force";
- ✦ **Aristotle (384 BC- 322 BC)** offered a 'Just war' theory in his writings;
- ✦ **St. Augustine (356-430)** also offered a 'Just war' theory in a modified form
- ✦ **Hugo Grotius (1583-1645)** stated "War is the state of contending parties, considered as such";
- ✦ **Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)** notes that war is also an attitude: "By war is meant a state of affairs, which may exist even while its operations are not continued";

Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) stated war is "the continuation of policy by other means...an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will."

In the religious arena, we find Judaism teaches aggressive warfare and Moses has been directed to enter the Caanan valley with force, as we read:

*"Then when thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands and thou has taken them as captive..."*⁴

In the book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 7 we read:

"When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears away many nations before you--- seven nations mightier and

*more numerous than you. And when the Lord your God give them over to you and defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them, Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy*⁵. (Deut. 7:1-2)

Christianity offers mixed, rather contradictory teachings about war. At one place we read:

*"But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"*⁶ (Matthew 5-39).

At other places we have:

*"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"*⁷ (Matthew 10:34).

*"Then said he unto them. But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one"*⁸ (Luke 22:36).

In the light of these contradictory teachings, we find a group of Christians who are totally against war and are known as 'Pacifists', while another group, led by St. Augustine, entertains the concept of combat and has developed 'Just War' theories.

Islamic teachings are based on wisdom, neither allowing defensive retaliation at all occasions nor upholding forgiveness at every instance. Islam offers a median course based on the requirements of the occasion. Hadrath Mirza Bashiruddin

Mahmood Ahmad^{ra}, in his book, *Introduction to the study of the Holy Qur'an*, writes:

"The teaching of Islam is different from both these teachings. It strikes a mean between the two. Islam does not teach aggression, as did Moses. Nor does it, like present-day (and presumably corrupt) Christianity, preach a contradiction. It does not ask us to turn the other cheek and at the same time to sell our clothes to buy a sword. The teaching of Islam fits into the natural instincts of man, and promotes peace in the only possible way.

*Islam forbids aggression, but it urges us to fight if failure to fight jeopardizes peace and promotes war. If failure to fight means the extirpation of free belief and of the search of truth, it is our duty to fight. This is the teaching on which peace can ultimately be built, and this is the teaching on which the Prophet based his own policies and his practice.*⁹

If the humans were allowed to let carnal desires dictate their fate, then it is certain that chaos and disorder would be the outcome. However, when chaos mongers are checked by those who are peace-loving, peace could be expected. The Holy Qur'an has presented this theme thus: (Magna Carta of Islamic concept of war – ONLY FOR SELF DEFENSE);

"Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged-and Allah indeed has power to help them-Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, Our Lord is Allah!" And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and

churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty. “

This verse requires extensive understandings as failure to understand it completely has resulted in major misunderstandings among the Ulema. Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} explaining this verse in his famous book, *British Govt. and Jihad* writes:

“That is, God heard the cries of help from the victims of cruelty who were being slaughtered and unjustly made homeless. They were given permission to fight for the defense of their rights. God is Omnipotent and aids such victims. However, this order was only intended for a limited period of time and was not everlasting. It was applicable to that time when converts to Islam were being slaughtered like goats and sheep. But sadly after the time of the Holy Prophet and the Khilafat, people committed very grave errors in trying to understand the philosophy of Jihad, the essence of which is explained in the above quoted verse. Hence slaughter of God’s people was wrongly considered to be a mark of religious virtue.”¹¹

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra}, commenting on this verse writes:

The verse purports to say that permission to fight is given to the victims of aggression. God is well able to help the victims—those who have been driven out of their homes because of their beliefs. The permission is wise because, if God were not to repel the cruel with the help of the righteous, there would be no freedom of faith and worship in the

world. God must help those who help to establish freedom of worship. It follows that fighting is permitted when a people have suffered long from wanton aggression—when the aggressor has had no cause for aggression and he seeks to interfere with the religion of his victim. The duty of the victim, if and when he attains to power, is to establish religious freedom and to protect all religions and all religious places. His power is to be used not for his own glorification, but for the care of the poor, the progress of the country and the general promotion of peace. This teaching is as unexceptionable as it is clear and precise. It proclaims the fact that early Muslims took to war because they were constrained to do so. Aggressive wars were forbidden by Islam..¹²

Commenting on this verse, Karen Armstrong writes:

“The Quran began to urge the Muslims of Medina to participate in Jihad. This would involve fighting and bloodshed, but the root JHD implies more than a ‘holy war’. It signifies a physical, moral and spiritual and intellectual effort. There are plenty of Arabic words denoting armed combat, such as *harb* (war), *sira’a* (combat), *ma’arka* (battle) or *qital* (killing), which the Qur’an could easily have used if war had been the Muslim’s principal way of engaging in this effort. Instead it chooses a vaguer, richer word with a wide range of connotations, the Jihad is not one of the five pil-

lars of Islam. It is not the central prop of the religion despite the common Western view... A well-known tradition (Hadith) has Muhammad say on returning from a battle, ‘We return from a lesser Jihad to the greater Jihad’ the more difficult and crucial effort to conquer the forces of evil in oneself and in one’s society in all the details of daily life.”¹³

She further writes:

“The Qur’an was beginning to evolve a theology of the Just war: it might sometimes be necessary to fight to preserve decent values. Unless religious people had sometimes be ready to ward off attack, all their places of worship (for example) would have been destroyed.”¹⁴

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} in his book, *Introduction to the Study of Holy Qur’an* has presented ten verses from the Holy Qur’an with an eloquent commentary on its teachings regarding war. In the next few pages, I cite this masterpiece, and include commentaries from Western scholars wherever possible. Verses 2-10 are presented below.

(2)

In (2:191-194) we have:

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not transgressors. And kill them wherever you meet them and drive them out from where they have driven you out; for persecution is worse than killing. And fight them not in, and near, the Sacred Mosque until they fight you, then fight them: such is the requital for the disbelievers. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is professed for Allah. But if they desist, then remember that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors.

Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} writes:

"Fighting is to be for the sake of God, not for our own sake or out of anger or aggrandizement, and even fighting is to be free from excesses, for excesses are displeasing to God. Fighting is between parties of combatants. Assaults on individuals are forbidden. Aggression against a religion is to be met by active resistance, for such aggression is worse than bloodshed. Muslims are not to fight near the Sacred Mosque, unless an attack is first made by the enemy. Fighting near the Sacred Mosque interferes with the public right of pilgrimage. But if the enemy attacks, Muslims are free to reply, this being the just reward of aggression. But if the enemy desists, Muslims must desist also, and forgive and forget the past. Fighting is to continue so long as religious persecution lasts and religious freedom is not established. Religion is for God. The use of force or pressure in religion is wrong. If the Kafirs desist from it and make religion free, Muslims are to desist from fighting the Kafirs. Arms are to be taken up against those who commit excesses. When excesses cease, fighting must cease also.

Categorically, we may say, the verses teach the following rules:

- i War is to be resorted to only for the sake of God and not for the sake of any selfish motives, not for aggrandizement or for the

advancement of any other interests.

- ii We can go to war only against one who attacks us first.
- iii We can fight only those who fight against us. We cannot fight against those who take no part in warfare.
- iv Even after the enemy has initiated the attack, it is our duty to keep warfare within limits. To extend the war, either territorially or in respect of weapons used, is wrong.
- v We are to fight only a regular army charged by the enemy to fight on his side. We are not to fight others on the enemy side.
- vi In warfare immunity is to be afforded to all religious rites and observances. If the enemy spares the places where religious ceremonies are held, then Muslims also must desist from fighting in such places.
- vii If the enemy uses a place of worship as a base for attack, then Muslims may return the attack. No blame will attach to them if they do so. No fighting is allowed even in the neighborhood of religious places and to destroy them or to do any kind of harm to them is absolutely forbidden. A religious place used as a base of operations may invite a counter-attack. The responsibility for any harm done to the place will

then rest with the enemy, not with Muslims.

- viii If the enemy realizes the danger and the mistake of using a religious place as a base, and changes the battlefield, then Muslims must conform to the change. The fact that the enemy started the attack from a religious place is not to be used as an excuse for attacking that place. Out of reverence Muslims must change their battle-front as soon as the enemy does so.
- ix Fighting is to continue only so long as interference with religion and religious freedom lasts. When religion becomes free and interference with it is no longer permitted and the enemy declares and begins to act accordingly, then there is to be no war, even if it is the enemy who starts it."¹⁵

Comments from Western Scholars

A wonderful example from history where a leader abstained from war when the enemy had ceased hostility and shows intentions on brokering a peace through treaties, is the occurrence of the famous Treaty of *Hudabiyya*. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} wanted to perform *Umra*, as six years had elapsed since he left Mecca. The Meccans denied his entry. This gave rise to a negotiation process, and finally, a treaty which did not allow the Holy Prophet's^{saw} visitation party to enter Mecca that year, but allowed their visit the following year. Many other conditions were laid down in this treaty that appeared totally in favor of Meccans and

against the desires of Muslims. However, one key aspect of the treaty appealed to the Holy Prophet: a clause which called for the cessation of hostilities for 10 years. Because of this, the Holy Prophet^{saw} signed that treaty, an event which is described in the Holy Qur'an as a great victory for Muslims. We read:

*"Surely, We have granted thee a clear victory, so that Allah may open the way to cover up all thy shortcomings, past and future and that He may complete His favor unto thee and may guide thee along the right path of success.... Allah has in truth completely fulfilled for His Messenger the vision that He has vouchsafed him, namely, that you will surely enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah so wills, in security, with your heads shaven or close cropped and having no fear."*¹⁶ (48:2-4 and 28)

Commenting on this manifest victory, the famous historian Ibne Ishaq writes:

*"No previous victory in Islam was greater than this. There was nothing but battle when men met: but when there was armistice and war was abolished and men met in safety and consulted together none talked about Islam intelligently without entering it. In those two years {628-630} double as many or more than double as many entered Islam as ever before."*¹⁷

Karen Armstrong comments on this great truce thus:

"From this point on, now that he had saved the Umma from the threat of extinction, the Jihad would become an effort of peace that demanded all his patience and ingenuity. Badr and Hudabiyya are, therefore two sides of a single coin and both were essential

*to Qur'anic vision. Sometimes it is necessary to fight in order to preserve decent values....But there was also a time for peace, even if this meant an immediate loss of face, because this could also be best in the long term. It is not true that Islam preaches a total intransigence and inspires a mindless fanaticism. Instead the Qur'an evolves a complementary theology of war and peace, which most Christians would not find difficult to accept,"*¹⁸

Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} continues:

(3)

In 8:39-41 we have:

Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, that which is past will be forgiven them; and if they return thereto, then verily the example of the former people has already gone before them. And fight them until there is no persecution and religion is wholly for Allah. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Watchful of what they do. And if they turn their backs, then know that Allah is your Protector. What an excellent Protector and what an excellent Helper.

"That is to say, wars have been forced upon Muslims. But if the enemy desists, it is the duty of Muslims to desist also, and forgive the past. But if the enemy does not desist and attacks Muslims again and again, then he should remember the fate of the enemies of earlier Prophets. Muslims are to fight, while religious persecution lasts, and so

long as religion is not for God and interference in religious matters is not abandoned. When the aggressor desists, Muslims are to desist also. They are not to continue the war because the enemy believes in a false religion. The value of beliefs and actions is well known to God and He will reward them as He pleases. Muslims have no right to meddle with another people's religion even if that religion seems to them to be false. If after an offer of peace the enemy continues to make war, then Muslims may be sure of victory even though their numbers are small. For God will help them and who can help better than God?.....

(4)

In 8:62-63 we have:

And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah. Surely, it is He Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. And if they intend to deceive thee, then surely Allah is sufficient for thee. He it is Who has strengthened thee with His help and with the believers.

That is to say, if in the course of a battle the disbelievers at any time incline towards peace, Muslims are to accept the offer at once and to make peace. Muslims are to do so even at the risk of being deceived. They are to put their trust in God....An offer of peace is to be accepted. It is not to be rejected on the plea that it may only be a ruse with which the enemy seeks to gain time for a fresh attack.

(5)

In 4:95 we have:

O ye who believe! When you go forth in the cause of Allah, make proper investigation and say not to

anyone who greets you with the greeting of peace, Thou art not a believer. 'You seek the goods of this life, but with Allah are good things in plenty. Such were you before this, but Allah conferred His favor on you; so do make proper investigation. Surely, Allah is well aware of what you do.

That is to say, when Muslims go out for war, they are to make sure that the unreasonableness of war has been explained to the enemy and that he still wants war. Even so, if a proposal of peace is received from an individual or a group, Muslims are not to turn it down on the plea that it is not honest. If Muslims turn down proposals of peace, they will not be fighting for God, but for self-aggrandizement and worldly gain. Just as religion comes from God, worldly gain and glory also come from Him. Killing is not to be the aim. One whom we wish to kill today may be guided tomorrow.

(6)

On the inviolability of treaties the Qur'an says clearly:

Excepting those of the idolaters with whom you have entered into a treaty and who have not subsequently failed you in anything nor aided anyone against you. So fulfill to these the treaty you have made with them till their term. Surely, Allah loves those who are righteous (9:4).

Pagans, who enter into a pact with Muslims, keep the pact and do not help the enemy against Muslims, are to have reciprocal treatment from Muslims. Piety requires that Muslims should fulfill their part of a pact in the letter as well as the spirit.

(7)

Of an enemy at war with Mus-

lims who wishes to study the Message of Islam, the Qur'an orders:

And if anyone of the idolaters ask protection of thee, grant him protection, so that he may hear the word of Allah: then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who have no knowledge (9:6).

That is to say, if any of those at war with Muslims seek refuge with Muslims in order to study Islam and ponder over its Message, they are to have refuge with Muslims for such time as may be reasonably necessary for such a purpose.

(8)

Of prisoners of war, the Qur'an teaches:

It does not behoove a Prophet that he should have captives until he engages in a regular fighting in the land. You desire the goods of the world, while Allah desires for you the Hereafter. And Allah is Mighty, Wise (8:68).

That is to say, it does not become a Prophet to make prisoners of his enemy save as a result of regular war involving much bloodshed. The system of making prisoners of enemy tribes without war and bloodshed practiced until-and even after-the advent of Islam, is here made unlawful. Prisoners can be taken only from combatants and after a battle.

(9)

Rules for the release of

prisoners are also laid down. Thus we have:

Then afterwards either release them as a favor or by taking ransom-until the war lays down its burdens (47:5).

The best thing, according to Islam, is to let off prisoners without asking for ransom. As this is not always possible, release by ransom is also provided for.

(10)

There is provision for prisoners of war who are unable themselves to pay, and who have none who can or will pay, for their release. Often, relations are able to pay, but do not, because they prefer to let their relations remain prisoners-possibly with the intention of misappropriating their property in their absence. This provision is contained in the Qur'an:

And such as desire a deed of manumission from among those whom your right hands possess, write it for them, if you know any good in them; and give them out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon You (24:34).

That is, those who do not deserve to be released without ransom but who have no one to pay ransom for them-if they still ask for their freedom-can obtain it by signing an undertaking that, if allowed to work and earn, they will pay their ransom. They are to be allowed to do so, however, only if their competence to work and earn is reasonably certain. ...

The passages from the Quran, which we have quoted above, contain the teaching of Islam on the subject of war and peace. They tell us in what circumstances, according to Islam, is it right to go to war and what limits

have to be observed by Muslims when they make war."

These principles were followed strictly and effectively by the Founder of Islam and his rightly guided *Khulafa* and created what is known as the glorious era of Islam.

THE PROPHET'S^{saw} PRECEPTS ABOUT WAR

Muslim teaching, however, does not consist only of precepts laid down in the Qur'an. It also includes the precepts and example of the Prophet. What he did or what he taught in concrete situations is also an essential part of the Islamic teaching. We append here some sayings of the Holy Prophet^{saw} on the subject of war and peace.

- i Muslims are forbidden altogether to mutilate the dead (Muslim).
- ii Muslims are forbidden to resort to cheating (Muslim).
- iii Children are not to be killed, nor women (Muslim).
- iv Priests and religious functionaries and religious leaders are not to be interfered with (Tahavi).
- v The old and decrepit and women and children are not to be killed. The possibility of peace should always be kept in view (Abu Dawud).
- vi When Muslims enter enemy territory, they should not strike terror into the general population. They should permit no ill-treatment of common folk (Muslim).
- vii A Muslim army should not camp in a place where it causes inconvenience to the general public. When it marches it should take

care not to block the road nor cause discomfort to other wayfarers.

- viii No disfigurement of face is to be permitted (Bukhari and Muslim).
- ix The least possible losses should be inflicted upon the enemy (Abu Dawud).
- x When prisoners of war are put under guard, those closely related should be placed together (Abu Dawud).
- xi Prisoners should live in comfort. Muslims should care more for the comfort of their prisoners than for their own (Tirmidhi).
- xii Emissaries and delegates from other countries should be held in great respect. Any mistakes or discourtesies they commit should be ignored (Abu Dawud, *Kitab al-Jihad*).
- xiii If a Muslim commits the sin of ill-treating a prisoner of war, atonement is to be made by releasing the prisoner without ransom.
- xiv When a Muslim takes charge of a prisoner of war, the latter is to be fed and clothed in the same way as the Muslim himself (Bukhari).

The Holy Prophet was so insistent on these rules for a fighting army that he declared that whoever did not observe these rules, would fight not for God but for his own mean self (Abu Dawud).

(Hadhrat Abu Bakr's^{ra} supplemental teaching is also listed below;;;Author)

- xv Public buildings and fruit-bearing trees (and food crops) are not to be damaged (Mu'att'a).

From the sayings of the Prophet^{saw} and the commands of the First *Khalifa* of Islam it is evident that Islam has instituted steps which have the effect of preventing or stopping a war or reducing its evil.¹⁹

Turning to our own time, we must say that no other teaching seems able to solve the problem of war and peace. Only the teaching of Islam is practicable; one which has been both preached and practiced by its exponents, and the practice of which can create and maintain peace in the world.

Distorted picture of Islam by the *Ulema*' of Our Times:

Despite these beautiful teachings, some of our contemporary Muslim *Ulema* are misinterpreting Qur'anic verses to side with Western critics of Islam. Notable among them are Mawlana Maudoodi,, Hasan Al-Bannah and Sayed Qutub. These so-called scholars distorted the teachings of Islam and created a new image of Militant Islam. This was essentially in response to counter the immense progress of the West. For example:

In his book *al-Jihad fil Islam*, Maudoodi writes:

"When every method of persuasion had failed, the prophet took to the sword. The sword removed evil mischief, the impurities of evil and the filth of the soul. The sword did something more – it removed their blindness so that they could see the

light of the truth and also cured them of their arrogance which prevents people from accepting the truth, stiff necks and proud heads bowed with humility.... This conversion took place because the sword of Islam tore away the veils which had covered men's hearts."²⁰

This statement made by a Muslim scholar endorses the accusation made by the Western critiques. For example: R. Dozy said:

*"Muhammad's generals preached Islam with a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other"*²¹

Karen Armstrong, in her book *Islam - A Short History*, comments on the distortion that Maudoodi has advanced in his zealous retaliation to the west. She writes:

*"Maudoodi called for a universal Jihad. Just as the Prophet found Jahilliyya (the ignorance and barbarism of the pre-Islamic period), Muslims must use all means to their power to resist the modern Jahilliyya of the West. Maudoodi argued that Jihad was the central tenet of Islam. This was an innovation. Nobody had ever claimed before that Jihad was equivalent to the five pillars of Islam, but Maudoodi felt that the innovation was justified by the present emergency. The stress and fear of cultural and religious annihilation had led to the development of a more extreme and potentially violent distortion of faith."*²²

Several scholars, however, behold the Founder of Islam^{saw} in a totally different light and criticize the negative criticism as malicious and grossly erroneous. A few examples follow:

Pandit Dev Shirma Shastri said:

*"Biased critics of Islam and especially those who want to provoke Hindu-Muslim riots in the country say that Hazrat Muhammad after acquiring power in Medinah could not maintain his façade of mercy and kindness. There he used force and violence and became a murderous prophet to achieve his life-long aim of power, status and wealth..... the critics are blind. They cannot see that the only 'sword' Muhammad wielded was the sword of mercy compassion, friendship and forgiveness – the sword that conquers enemies and purifies their hearts. His sword was shaper than the sword of steel."*²³

Dr. W.D. Leitz denied the spread of Islam with sword. He writes:

*"All these arguments, advanced to prove that the purpose of Jihad was to spread Islam by force, are contradicted by the Quran. The Qur'an says that the purpose of Jihad is to protect mosques, churches, synagogues and cloisters."*²⁴

Thomas Arnold commenting on preaching efforts writes:

*"Islam has gained its greatest and most lasting missionary triumphs in times and places in which its political power has been weakest."*²⁵

The foregoing excerpts shed light on the absurdity of the criticism that Islam was spread with sword.

Conclusion

The ten verses and the fif-

teen sayings quoted in the text are not only the teachings of the Qur'an concerning war, but also reflect the entire life of the Founder of Islam as a living depiction of these teachings. The phrases *Jihad Fi Sabil lillah* and Islam explain the whole truth about wars in Islam. All theories that are thus far postulated in the world lack the wisdom that fighting is for Allah alone and that when peace is achieved all hostilities must end. All portrayals of territorial, religious, racial, or economical superiority that are the hallmarks of wars are thus eliminated with one stroke. A demonstration of this was observed in the battle of Badr and the truce of Hudaibiyya. Where in the world and under whose reign would we find that victory in war is defined both by dominion *and* retreat? Never has a retreat been construed as a manifest victory except by Islam. Moreover, the Fall of Mecca to the Founder of Islam, when juxtaposed with the victory of the Crusaders in 1099, shows on the one hand a general amnesty without bloodshed by Muhammad^{saw} and the brutal torching of Jerusalem and the burning of 70,000 men, women and children alive by the Crusaders. This example alone attests to the successful teachings of Islam and his holy founder. Truly, the Founder of Islam is deservedly known as a "Mercy for all the worlds".

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**HELP
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CORRECTION ABOUT DR. IQBAL'S MARRIAGE.

Muhammad Ajmal Shahid

The article of Mr. Rehan Qayoom, entitled "Sir Muhammad Iqbal and Ahmadiyya" published in the last issue of The Ahmadiyya Gazette USA. Contains one unintentional but glaring mistake and must be corrected. The writer while enumerating the links of Dr. Iqbal with Ahmadiyyat writes, "During the period of the Caliphate of Hadhrat *Al-Hajj Hafiz Hakeem Maulana* Nooruddin, Iqbal was married to his grand-daughter. The Caliph himself led the ceremony of *Nikah* in Qadian on 26 August 1910" (Khutbat-e-Noor published by *Nizarat Nashro Isha'at*, Qadian, 2003 P.477)

The writer seems to be unaware of the history and the later developments regarding this publication. No doubt as the writer has mentioned, Dr. Iqbal was in correspondences and communion with Hadhrat *Maulana* Nooruddin on some Islamic issues, but he was never married to his grand daughter. The mistake has happened due to the similarity of the names. Dr. Iqbal who was married to the grand daughter of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra}, was the younger brother of Dr. Faizul Ghani, the companion of the Promised Messiah^{as}, and he was known by Dr. Iqbal Ali Ghani. The news of this *Nikah* was published in *Al-Hakam* of 28 August 1910. But by mistake the writer wrote the wrong name. Instead of Dr. Iqbal Ali he wrote Dr. Muhammad Iqbal and it created great confusion. So much so that when people started asking Dr. Iqbal about this marriage, he denied this news in *Paisa Akhbar* of 15 Sept. 1910. Similarly, *Al-Hakam* also corrected the mistake in its later issue.

I wish to add that Justice Javed Iqbal, son of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, in his book *ZINDA ROUD* has also mentioned this news of *Al-Hakam* and alleged that Ahmadiis intentionally got this news published to allure Dr. Iqbal to their fold. This is a very funny story, which can never be expected from a person of such caliber. Every person can easily understand that just by publishing a fabricated news how one could be attracted to the *Jama'at*. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Iqbal himself when he denied the news in the press, did not mention it as a trap for him but intelligent as he was he just clarified it by saying "He has nothing to do with this matter. Dr. M. Iqbal whose name is mentioned by the editor *Al-Hakam* must be some other person" (*Paisa Akhbar* Sept. 15, 1910) One fails to understand that with this very clear denial by his father why Justice Javed Iqbal has gone for an illogical conclusion? Such mistakes of names are quite common in the press.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Medical Association (AMMA) USA

ANNUAL RETREAT REPORT

Ahsan M. Khan, General Secretary AMMA USA

By the Grace of Allah, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Medical Association (AMMA) USA held its fourth annual retreat from May 25-27 in Chicago, Illinois. Physicians, with their families, traveled from across the country to attend the event which took place at the Holiday Inn O'Hare, about 15 miles from downtown Chicago.

The gathering began Friday evening with dinner and an official welcome by Dr. Lutf ur Rehman (Tennessee), President, AMMA. Families then had the opportunity to introduce themselves in a round table format. A conference room was set up in the hotel, with separate adjacent rooms for men and women, with audio-video and a projector. Collective prayers were held at the hotel throughout the weekend.

The Saturday morning session featured lectures on various medical topics. Dr. Irfan Alladin of Long Island, NY spoke on pain management and shared some treatment pearls with the audience. This was followed by two presentations on cardiology topics. Dr. Ahmad Munir (Michigan) spoke on percutaneous aortic valve replacement, and Dr. Masood Qazi (Chicago, IL) spoke on risk factor reduction for coronary artery disease and advised the physicians on the importance of counseling on proper diet and exercise to reduce the risk of a heart attack based on current evidence in the literature. Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah, Naib *Ameer*,

presided the opening session and offered some advice on the importance of staying humble while serving the Jama'at as physicians.

During the morning session, the family members of the participating physicians embarked on a chartered bus tour of downtown Chicago. They visited the Sears Tower and went up to the sky deck as well as the Millennium Park and the Natural History Museum and returned back to the hotel by mid-day.

The second session featured presentations on humanitarian work done by AMMA physicians worldwide. Munum Naeem (Chicago), Naib *Ameer* USA and Chairman of Humanity First USA, gave some introductory remarks on the vision of Humanity First USA and its ongoing partnership with AMMA. Dr. Mahmood Qureshi (Connecticut), Director of Operations, HFUSA, reviewed the organizational structure of Humanity First, and Dr. Naeem Lughmani (Maryland), Medical Director, HFUSA, highlighted the various medical projects conducted by AMMA physicians through HF in the past year. Dr. Ahsan Khan (Los Angeles), Director, Gift of Sight, HFUSA, shared his experiences running an eye camp in Guatemala last year. Dr. Mubashar Mumtaz (Pennsyl-

vania), a cardiothoracic surgeon liaison for Tahir Heart Institute, shared his memorable trip to Tahir Heart Institute earlier this year, during which he performed several heart surgeries with his brother, Dr. Muhammad Ali Mumtaz (Virginia). He highlighted the state-of-the-art care and facilities at THI and also shared some inspirational personal experiences of the trip. Dr. Lutfur Rehman then gave a presentation on the ongoing AMMA project to provide free health clinics across America. The session concluded with silent prayers.

During lunch, Haris Ahmad (Pragmatium Consulting, Chicago), enlightened the audience with a one-hour presentation on leadership. He engaged the audience with questions and various discussions on leadership as it is applied to medical practice, *Jama'at* activities, and daily life.

During the afternoon, the entire retreat membership traveled on a chartered bus to downtown Chicago and took a one-hour architectural river boat tour of the historic Chicago cityscape. The tour guide reviewed the history of Chicago as captured in the diverse architecture of Chicago. Families then spent some time on Navy Pier, and then the bus returned to the hotel for dinner.

After *Salat*, Dr. Kaleem Malik (Chicago) presented some innovative pearls on emergency management of patients and gave an interactive wet-lab demonstration of inter osseus

blood draw. Following dinner, a lively Mu'shaira (Urdu poetry reading session) lead by renowned poet Ahmad Mubarak (New York) was held in the hotel conference room, in which many physicians participated.

The Sunday morning session began with recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Hafiz Mubarak Kukoyi (Chicago) and a poem recitation by Rehan Mahmood Khan (Atfal, Los Angeles). Dr. Afzal ur Rehman (New York) then gave an enlightening presentation on the accomplishments of Tahir Heart Institute. He highlighted the amazing care delivered by the physicians of this hospital, and gave a plea to the AMMA audience to sacrifice their time and offer their services to THI and reap the blessings of this sacred institution. Dr. Tahir Ijaz (San Diego) gave a presentation on medical proof of the survival of Jesus Christ (as) from the crucifixion. He highlighted the medical literature in presenting his cogent arguments and took several questions from the audience on this fascinating subject. Dr. Saqib Ali (Cleveland, Ohio) then gave a pictorial presentation of his recent trip to Ghana and Liberia where he provided anesthesia services for the HF team, lead by Dr. Fizan Abdullah (Maryland), as they performed laparoscopic hernia repair surgeries and taught many local physicians. The session continued with two topics by AMMA female members. Dr. Shahida Ahmad (Chicago), a neurologist, presented workup and treatment of acute stroke, and Dr. Saba Ali (North Carolina), a dermatologist, reviewed treatment of acne. The morning session concluded with remarks and prayer by Dr. Muhammad Ali Mumtaz, immediate past-president, AMMA USA.

The closing session was a general

AMMA body meeting. Dr. Lughmani presented the annual financial report and Dr. Lutf ur Rehman reviewed AMMA activities for the year. He also presented the Marshall Islands project and made a plea for AMMA physicians to donate their time for this wonderful opportunity. The general membership then offered suggestions for improvement in the functioning of the AMMA as well as the format and future venues/dates for AMMA retreats. The retreat concluded with silent prayers.

In all, the fourth annual retreat was a tremendous success by Allah's grace. 42 physicians and their families attended the event (estimated 125 total in attendance), representing various Jama'at chapters, including Chicago, Detroit, Kentucky, Tennessee, New Jersey, New York, Long Island, Los Angeles, San Diego, Cleveland, Maryland, and North Carolina. Many medical students and pre-med students also participated.

Prayers are requested for the organizers of the event, including Dr. Lutf ur Rehman (Tennessee) and Dr. Ismail Younus (Tennessee), Vice President, AMMA USA, and their families who volunteered their services throughout the retreat.

SUPPORT HUMANITY FIRST

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Umamah bin Bahli^{ra} relates that (on one occasion), the Messenger^{saw} of Allah asked, "Who will make a pledge to me? Thauban, a freed slave of the Messenger^{sa} of Allah said, 'O Messenger^{saw} of Allah! Take a pledge from us.' He^{saw} said, 'Then make a pledge to me that you will not ask for anything from anyone.' Thauban said, 'O Messenger^{saw} of Allah! What will be the reward for this?' He^{saw} said, 'The Heaven.' Hearing this, Thauban made the pledge. "

Hadhrat Abu Umamah^{ra} states that he saw Thauban in Mecca, in a large crowd, while he was riding, his whip would fell down and at times it would fall down on the shoulder of a person, who would pick it up and try to give it to him but he (Thauban) would not take it until after dismounting first and then he would take it.

(Attartib wa Arrahib, p 100/2)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "A poor person is not the one who goes round the people and asks them for one or two mouthfuls (of food), and one or two dates. Rather, a poor person is one who does not have enough even for his bare necessities, and no one knows about his poverty so that they could give him something in charity and yet he does not beg from other people."

(Bukhari kitabuzzakat surah Al-Baqarah la yasalunnansa alha-fan))

MY DEAR FATHER: SYED SHARIF AHMAD SHAH

(September 5, 1928 – January 31, 2012)

Syeda Aziza Khan

My dear father, Syed Sharif Ahmad Shah, had a dynamic personality. His essence is and will always stay with all those he touched. He was never afraid of saying whatever was on his mind. And when he would do so, it would be in a tactful way. This is one of the reasons whenever anyone had issues to be resolved they would come to him. I remember a couple coming to our home with marital issues, on the verge of a separation. They talked at length to my father. Although, I was never privy to the conversations, I do know that to this day they are still married happily with grown children. What was it about my father that allowed people around him to be comfortable? He was not just book-smart or a religious intellectual, but he managed to bring Islam into a general conversation and made every topic comprehensible, based on Islamic principles on which he absolutely believed in and lived by. The fact was this, that he was a good listener and never passed judgment on anyone asking for help. This made it easier for the person to come back again and again. He would be straightforward in saying "this is what you are doing wrong", and would complement the person on their various wonderful qualities.

One day recently while my father was still healthy just before his lengthy illness, a young man was in a crisis-situation, the young man thought that he had lost everything, and was in so much spiritual pain.

He came to my father's home and was in need of much help. Upon hearing the young man's dilemma, my father grabbed the young man's hand and walked with him outside, never letting go of the young man's hand. They walked like this for several hours back and forth. All the while my father recited verses of the Holy Qur'an, and other favorite prayers of the Holy Prophet^{saw} as well as favorite prayers of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{ra}. My father had this young man repeat after him, telling him he is a wonderful young man, and that *Insha Allah*, all will work out in the end. By the end of their walk the young man felt as if a dark veil was lifted off of him and saw himself with a fresh new outlook on his life and situation. The extent to which my father would care for people was truly inspirational. Today, this young man is healthy, happy, and prosperous. *Alhumdulillah*. Sometimes, it is just a listening ear, someone who cares, and (without a doubt) prayers, that gets one through life's journey.

Every time I visited my parent's home, my father would stand up and greet me with a warm hug and a kiss on my cheeks. No matter how ill he was, he would always do this. His smile was always so loving, pulling even a stranger into a cordial conversation. His

conversations would always end with an invitation into Ahmadiyyat the True Islam. He was the master of *Tabligh*. Even when he was in a hospital bed, my *Mamu* Khadim brought a young hospital employee into the room. The young employee, in the company of my father (at this point very weak with the aftermath of a massive heart attack, as well as kidney failure), became intrigued about Ahmadiyyat, and had a very lengthy conversation about Islam and became convinced about the truth of Ahmadiyyat, and recently this young man, emailed my *Mamu*, for more information on Ahmadiyyat. My father lived and breathed his faith which *never* faltered under any circumstances at any point of his life, come what may. His subtle charm always won many a friend, young and old. Before his hospitalization, he had been doing *Tabligh* to a Hindu friend, whom he had known for a long time. The gentleman would take books from my father's rich library of books and read about Ahmadiyyat and then come back later to carry on exciting conversations with my father and then take another book which he thoroughly devoured. The friendship was a warm, familiar and generous one on both sides. In general my father had a way of drawing people out of their cocoons, and encouraged them to take flight, always happy to see the success of others.

With this wholehearted attitude, he filled out the paper work and sponsored my six *Mamus'* settlement

in the States from Pakistan, although it was done with some protest from my mother. She saw herself and her family going back to Pakistan for good one day, and so wanted my *Mamus* to stay put in Pakistan, where she envisioned everyone to be together. My father disagreed, that these young men should be given an opportunity to flourish rather than keep them back in a country which was not kind to Ahmadi Muslims. So one-by-one my *Mamus* came and made a life for themselves and, by the Grace of Allah, are all very successful in their lives. To this day my *Mamu's* believe that their attachment to Ahmadiyyat is due to my father. In their village of Mandeer, they were the only Ahmadi family, surrounded by Non-Ahmadis, with no *Jama'at* within reasonable traveling distance. My father's enthusiasm and zeal for Ahmadiyyat carried over to them after a stronger relationship developed with them after he married my mother. Their love for my father and mother, *Khilafat* and their faith is tremendous to this day.

My father was born in Pandori, a small village near the Jhelum River in the province of Punjab. It is a place of subtle elevation and rolling green hills. My father's childhood home was on the highest peak of Pandori. It is said that the water running in the streams of Pandori was the freshest, and the most energizing. It kept people of the area thin, strong and healthy. People would eat so much and never feel full. His father, Syed Rasool Shah, was a school teacher who taught at a school embedded at the foothills of Fort Roh-tas, an interesting and important historical site of the region.

In 1947 India and Pakistan

underwent partition, the largest mass-migration of people in human history. It was almost certainly the bloodiest as well with much unfortunate and wanton bloodshed. During this time, my father had befriended a young Sikh boy. He seemed to have at some point been left behind during the partition. He found himself near my father's home. Hearing someone crying from a distance, my father followed the sound to the storage room outside of his home and discovered a scared boy. He was hiding between a heap of straw and the family buffalo. The boy was full of fear, but my father, at such a young age, had with him the wisdom of a sage and put him to ease at once. My father laid out a plan to help this boy make it to the border of India, without being tortured and possibly killed by those unfortunate Muslims who hated Sikhs and Hindus. In order to save the young boy's life, which was in certain peril, my father respectfully asked him to remove his turban and proceeded to braid his hair. He then told the boy to dress in one of his sister's *shalwar-kameez*. To the unsuspecting eye, this young boy looked like any other Punjabi Muslim girl. By bike my father wheeled himself and the Sikh boy to one of the borders of India Punjab. Away they rolled and after a long journey, they made it to the border where the boy got off. He thanked my father and went on foot the rest of the way to his salvation.

My father spent a few years in India, in the blessed city of Qadian. He was sent there by

his father to pursue the *Maulvi Fazil* degree. Just before completing his religious studies in Qadian, he was admitted into Rasul Engineering College in Pakistan. This educational change came at the behest of his father who, impressed by and recognizing his son's mathematical and technical strengths, believed that this was a better course of action at the time. The school is still standing, on rose-red bricks. The architecture is charmingly Moghul-esque, and the campus is full of wispy palm trees. During his time at Rasul College, the *Jama'at* asked him to help in the city planning of Rabwah, and he spent a lot of time doing so. Eventually he made a mark on the engineering world as a major member of the Mangla Dam project in Pakistan. This is one of the two major dams of Pakistan.

Later, In the early 80's, the Fourth Khalifa^{ra} asked him to attend the inauguration of the Basharat Masjid in Pedro Abad, Spain. This was the first mosque built in Spain since the Inquisition and Reconquista.

After receiving his engineering degree, my father married my Mom, the love of his life. They ended up settling in Karachi, where my father had found work. He had become the project manager for the Nazmibad colony which was being developed. At this point, three out of his five children were born. We had the first *Kothi* of the colony, a large home made there. A few years later, my father had received admission to continue his Engineering education, at University of Maryland at College Park. Leaving his dear family behind, he embarked on the *RMS Queen Elizabeth* to the distant shores of the USA.

With some transcontinental stops along the way, he finally made it. His ship sailed into the storied New York Harbor. The statue of Liberty stood tall on the horizon. My father travelled by bus to Maryland's College Park. This was around 1955. In a short period of time he earned a degree in Civil Engineering. Later on he pursued a Masters in Civil Engineering with a Hydrology speciality at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Right after graduation, he landed an engineering job in New York. Soon my Mom and sisters and brother arrived to the US. There were no Ahmadi Muslims or other Muslims that we were aware of in New York. During this time period my father had sponsored and enrolled his older brother, eleven years his senior, Syed Abdul Aziz, in an engineering school in the USA. My uncle later received his graduate engineering degree from Vanderbilt. In no time at all, he sponsored his own wife and children from Pakistan and now there were two Ahmadi families in the area. At this point we were all in New Jersey. *Alhumdulillah*, we would get together and do *Namaz* in congregation, read from the Holy Qur'an, and have *dars*, given either by my father or Uncle.

In the early sixties, when my parents were still fairly new to the that area, there was a disaster in the night. They were driving a stretch of the dark New Jersey highway when my father saw something unusual in the distance. He soon recognized that it was an overturned car with smoke coming out of it. My father pulled over, telling my mother to remain in the car. He walked towards the wreck. As he got closer to the ruined vehicle, he noticed a woman in the driver's seat. Her body, upside-down,

dangled awkwardly towards the car's upturned roof. After opening the door, my father grabbed the woman from under her arms and dragged her out of the car to a safety. No sooner had he done this, the car burst into flames and was completely consumed. The lady survived. *Alhumdulillah*.

It was not too long after this that my father had received a job offer in Chicago, Illinois. The whole family moved there. We had never seen so much snow in our lives. In shoveling the snow we would make such huge heaps that made us feel as though we were as small as the Smurfs. My father found another Ahmadi family in Chicago. We invited them to our house and a casual friendship developed. There were no other families in the area for miles and miles around. My father missed my uncle very much and accepted a job back in the East Coast. We soon moved to Massachusetts where we found a thriving *Jama'at*.

Brother Abid Hanif and his gracious wife Saliha were the presidents of the *Jama'at*. They welcomed us with so much love, and my parents respected them and adored them very much. By now, my sisters and brothers were finishing up high school and going on to college, though the youngest, my little brother, was still in elementary school. Every once a month we would go to Harvard University in Boston where a room was allocated for us to utilize for the monthly meetings. My father respected and was respected by all. His

religious knowledge from his years in Qadian was very enlightening.

Later on in my father's life, he and his brother Syed Abdul Aziz, decided that the agricultural property which they owned in their village of Pandori, District Jhelum, was just sitting there. Instead of trying to sell the land, they both decided to hand it over to their poorer non-Ahmadi relatives. They did just that, legalizing the sale. A few years later my father went back to Pakistan and had a tube-well installed to help them out. When I visited Pakistan around twelve years ago, I went to Pandori for the first time in my life. It was exciting to visit all the old sites of my parents' homeland. There in Pandori I saw people laboring on the land and an abundance of crops thriving in the soil. The farmers brought carrots, radishes, and tangerines to me with great excitement, washing them all with the tube well water, so happy to show "Shah Sahib's" daughter what the soil brought forth. The smiles on those peoples' faces spoke a million words.

My father gave a priceless gift of worldly sense and spiritual knowledge to his children and grandchildren. His faith and spirituality was a strong aspect of the American culture that he was a part of. To him, logic could not deny the marriage of the two. He never left a question unanswered for us kids, the products of two worlds. Logic was never missing from his lips. At the end of the day it was his wisdom which made Islam so practical and easy for his children. With love and enthusiasm we would wake up for *Fajr Namaz* which my father would lead in the *Jama'at* in the early morning even, on school days. We would come home and do

Maghrib and *Isha* in *Jama'at* as well.

Again, our parents were progressive without being transgressive, and for us Islam and our American-Pakistani culture were one. He sent his children to school in a co-ed environment trusting that their faith and love for their parents and religion would guide them. At the same time he would let his children follow their natural academic and social strengths without trying to impose on them too much. *Masha Allah*, our success today and our strong family is a testament to my father and mother. This is how we fell in love with Islam and never felt awkward or out of place in school and college. Needless to say, my Mother, who walked hand in hand with my father, deserves a tremendous amount of credit. We all had to write a few lines in Urdu as part of our childhood routine, though some of us had a difficult time keeping up. Every day my mother would teach us to read the Holy Qur'an. Neither were there any *Nasirat* or *Atfal* classes nor was there any semblance of an active *Lajna* at this point. If it was not for both our parents in our lives, we would have become lost today. In a land where there were only a handful of *Jama'at* members spread out throughout the four-million square miles of the United States, my parents kept us strong and attached to Ahmadiyyat. Here I remember the Qur'anic prayer that my father incited us to recite: "*Rabbanaa laa tuzigh quloobinaa ba'ad aiz hadaaytanaa wahablanaa milladun karahma. Innaka antal Wahaab*".

Just before I graduated from high school, *Khalifa Thalib* came to visit the United States. He met with my father. Hazoor told Dad that he wanted him to move to Northern Cal-

ifornia and establish a *Jama'at* there. This was obviously a huge move and undertaking for my father, but it was his great pleasure to heed the words of the *Khalifa*. When he got there he fell in love with the climate, land and people.

After returning to Rawah, Pakistan, *Khalifa Thalib* endorsed a letter to my father confirming the move. My father quickly applied for a job, and was in no time received as a Senior Project Manager in Bechtel Enterprises, the world famous engineering company. This was all due to our *Khalifa's* prayers.

My father had instilled such an unbending love and service to *Khilafat* in the hearts of all of his children and grandchildren that, *Insha Allah*, Allah will keep these sentiments strong in the hearts of our future generations. Some were drawn out West because of the Gold Rush. It was my father's "Ahmadiyyat Rush", though which caused him to comply immediately with the *Khalifa's* wish. Once in California, he started contacting *Markaz*, collecting information, getting lists of names, finding and locating individuals—one person leading to another person—and so forth. He would even drive a few hundred miles to locate other Ahmadiis. Before 2 years were up, he located 70 Ahmadiis in total. At first he located some of our Fijian brothers and sisters, and then he found out that some of them were Lahori Ahmadiis. Those Lahori Ahmadiis who wanted to stay, stayed, and

those who did not, left. These new additions were wonderful. They had the love of Ahmadiyyat and *Khilafat* imprinted in their hearts. Later, two more Pakistani Ahmadi families were found. Another Pakistani Ahmadi family moved into the area. *Masha Allah*, a true *Jama'at* was established. My mother became the first *Lajna Sadr* in Northern California. I was the unofficial *Nasirat* teacher. I would take a few Fijian children and one Pakistani girl to my room and teach them the *Salat* as well as answer questions that the children had about Islam. My oldest sister would write a *Lajna* report and send it in to *Markaz*. We would have *Jumu'ah Namaz* in our home, and congregational *Salat* on a regular basis. Initially, due to the distances, few people would come. However, on the days of the monthly meetings our home was completely packed. On these days, my mother would cook complete meals and serve them with a great happiness on her face, never drawing from the newly established *Jama'at* funds. The other women and men enthusiastically helped to clean up afterwards. Some years down the road and after his children graduated from college, my father asked *Maulana* Atallah Kaleem Sahib to come and take over the Northern California *Jama'at*, because it had grown very large by then. My father and mother moved again. Once to Buffalo, NY, then to Willingboro, NJ and finally to Herndon, VA, closer to his children and grandchildren.

All being said, my father loved sport, long walks, good food (without a doubt!) and intelligent, Godly company. He was far from perfect, but he adored his wife, children and grandchildren, and his great granddaughter. I know he will adore

all the other children to come. According to him, his children could do no wrong. He had a phenomenal way of turning a negative into a positive, always hopeful, that things could and would change for the better. Both his worldly and spiritual wisdom benefited and continue to benefit a lot of people. He helped mend broken hearts and guide those who were lost. His quest for knowledge never waned. He was the epitome of a man who always smiled through any hardship. He clearly showed this through the end of his illness. He never despaired of the will of Allah and would always give a hug, smile, and kind words. His deeds and actions spoke volumes. Though I have tried, I cannot do justice to my father's amazing life in this short piece. He lies in all of our and others' hearts, and will be there forever. A few weeks after my father's death, my husband woke up early in the morning. His eyes were soft and solemn. He told me that he had just seen a dream. "I saw Kashmir. The trees and valleys seemed more lively and beautiful than usual. The people there were rejoicing. 'The news is out! The news is out.' they were shouting. 'Shah Sahib is here! Shah Sahib is in Kashmir'". Kashmir is a land of beauty—'of milk and honey'. My husband looked at me and said, "*Masha Allah*. Your father is in heaven".

May Allah grant him the highest station in Heaven. *Ameen* and *Insha Allah*.

PAY ZAKAT

THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN

Sayyarah Hikmat

The Holy Ramadan is an awesome month!
When you see the heavenly glories shine.
Blisses shower like rain from the heaven.
The Satan is put behind bars with his evil designs.
The doors of Paradise are opened wide.
The month of trial for our patience and fortitude.
A month of an all-encompassing air of love and harmony.
When God is ready to confer Grace and Glory!
We get purged of our sins by shedding tears in Prayers.
Free from worldly cares, we conquer our doubts and fears!
Our soul gets covered by His Mantle of Peace
Our heart gets embalmed by the Holy Balm!
The chords of heart are touched by the Holy music
All fears, insecurities vanish
A power of peace penetrates our inner being.
We get transformed to a heavenly world.
Where, there is no talk of worldly gains and gold.
No mention of our regretful yesterday and foreboding tomorrow.

Hadhrat Qabisah bin Mukhariq^{ra} relates that I gave surety for a man that he would pay back the loan taken by him. Then he came to the Messenger^{saw} of Allah and asked help in the matter. He^{sa} said hold on until the charity money comes to us. Then he would order out of it some for him. He then said, "O Qabisah! It is not legal to solicit money except for three people: The one who has taken responsibility to support an afflicted person. He is permitted to solicit money up to the fulfillment of his responsibility and the person who is afflicted with some misfortune which has destroyed his goods. It is lawful for him also to solicit money till he can support a frugal living or he said until he can afford a normal living; the person who is starving due to lack of food and three respected people of the town verify that so and so is starving, he is permitted to solicit money till he can support a frugal living or he said until he can afford a normal living. If anyone other than these three solicits money, he eats that which is unlawful and displeases Allah."

(Muslim kitabuzzakat min tahal lahumalah)

A BRIEF REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY, USA, 2012

Prepared by: Syed Sajid Ahmad, Fargo ND

The 29th *Majlis Shura* of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, was held at the Baitur-Rahman Mosque complex in Silver Spring, MD, Friday April 27-29, 2012. All the *Shura* sessions were held in the *Lajna Hall* in the mosque complex. *Ansar Hall* was used as the dining hall. Meticulously prepared breakfast, lunch and dinner were served during the *Shura*. Tea and snacks were available during short breaks. Shuttles were arranged to bring the delegates from the airport and to take them back after the *Shura*. Prayers were held in the Men's Prayer Hall. *Shura* provided a great opportunity for the delegates to meet each other and discuss matters of mutual interest. Days were mostly sunny with a cool breeze blowing around the spring fragrances.

The first session started Friday afternoon at 4 PM with Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, *Ameer*, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, presiding. *Imam* Zafar Ahmad Sarwar recited verses from the Holy Qur'an related to consultation among believers followed by their translation. *Ameer* USA opened the *Shura* with a short address and collective prayers. He apprised the delegates of the concerns of the Khalifatul Masih^{aba} expressed in one of his recent letters related to matrimonial issues and

sought new ideas from the delegates and a new impetus to show satisfactory progress. He prayed that may Allah enable the Community to live up to the expectations of the Khalifatul-Masih^{aba}.

The minutes of the last *Majlis Shura* were approved without changes. The implementation reports of the decisions made in the last *Majlis Shura* were presented.

The matrimonial department reported an account of visits, presentations by *Lajna*, difficulties with database, presentation at presidents' refresher course, data on the number of marriages and their success rates, and seminars held by *Lajna* and *Khuddam*. Dedicated *Rishta Nata* programs were held at the Annual *Jalsa Salana* USA (approx. 250 attendees) and at the Annual West Coast *Jalsa* in Dec. 2011 (approx. 300 attendees). The data from the survey/feedback of the *Rishta Nata* program at the West Coast *Jalsa* was collected and analyzed. This was the first time that the department formally facilitated introduction of the families. The feedback was quite positive.

Based on the feedback, this program will be duplicated at the Annual *Jalsa Salana*, USA, *Insha Allah*.

The General Secretary went over the etiquette of *Shura* and explained the difference between *Shura* and other meetings.

The *Tarbiyyat* department reported appointment of nine regional training secretaries, efforts to activate local training secretaries and reformation (*Islahi*) committees, workshops on marital harmony, list of recommended websites for self-help, a helpline helpline, am-cusa@gmail.com, has been established to confidentially respond to members in need of counseling vis-à-vis marital problems and questions and premarital counseling.

The *Tabligh* department reported the details of cooperation with media team, successful interfaith symposiums, tremendous amount of media coverage during the Muslim for Life campaign, formation of core propagation team, use of social media, publication of 50 articles in the media, and activities of the ethnic desks.

Next, brief annual reports of activities were presented by national secretaries for 2011-2012.

The General Secretary's department held five national executive

meetings and prepared annual report. Planned and organized *Shura* 2011. The 2012 calendar was prepared and published. Made arrangements for holding of supplementary elections for vacant positions. As a representative of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, participated at International *Tabligh* and *Tarbiyyat* Seminar at Baitul-Futuh and the International Refresher Course for *Ameers* and Missionaries In Charges and attended other meetings. Eighth Refresher Course was successfully held on December 2-4 attended by local *Jama'at* presidents and local *Amila* members in addition to National *Amila* members. Established protocol for members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA who want to meet with Khalifatul Masih^{aba} in London implemented that protocol as needed through local chapters. Visited Austin, Baltimore, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Harrisburg/York, Houston Cypress, Houston North, Houston South, VA South, VA North & Central VA, Willingboro, and D.C. chapters.

The Media department held regional training on media communication and messaging in following chapters: Boston, Dallas, Houston, Miami, Oshkosh, Detroit, Silicon Valley, Chicago, Rochester, LA, Headquarters Region, and New York. Media and Communication department contracted with Cision corporation for access to all print, radio, TV and web media in north America. This service provides an up-to-date list of media contacts in USA. Defined a national team to develop and distribute press releases. Provided a template for local chapters to announce local events to the media. Provided local trained chapters with a list of media contacts for their geographic areas. Articles were printed

in the print media and web media. There was participation in radio and TV interviews. Videos were also posted on YouTube and "ahmadiyya.us." All these can be viewed at News Room at www.ahmadiyya.us.

The *Tabligh* department informed that seventy million were touched by Muslims for Life campaign.

Training department reported holding training camps and the appointment of nine regional training secretaries. Weekly e-mails were sent to National *Amila*, presidents, and *Tarbiyat* Secretaries for further transmission to all members containing *Tarbiyat* Take-Aways from the Friday Sermons of the Khalifatul -Masih^{aba}. Three additional training sessions for the *Islahi* Committee Liaisons in Dispute Resolution were held in Los Angeles (4/3/11), Portland (6/25/11) and Silver Spring (9/25/11). Nine *Tarbiyat* Workshops (Muslims for Peace) were held at Buffalo, Chicago, Houston, LA-East, LA-West, Milwaukee, St Paul, Silver Spring, VA-South with over 950 attendees. Five workshops were held at Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, Phoenix and Silver Spring with over 700 attendees. Five more such workshops have been scheduled at Chicago, Harrisburg, Houston, Silicon Valley and Willingboro in the next 2 months. The 2011 Summer *Tarbiyat* Camps were held in 8 locations (Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Silver Spring, Silicon Valley and York). Fourteen North America *Jami'a* students participated in these classes as teachers and

mentors. The 2011 Winter *Tarbiyat* Camps was held in Miami from 12/26/11 to 12/30/11.

The Education department is sending information related to education opportunities to members.

The Audio/Video department informed members of additions to online content and the availability of search facility for *Bukhari*. More than 100 hours of audio books of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, have been made available. Digital media library of videos and Q&A sessions contains 4303 programs of 2345 hours. There have been 1,861,659 views. Full Friday Sermons, *Liqā Ma'al Arab*, and Q&A programs have been uploaded on YouTube. Poems section has been expanded. A number of mobile Apps (Holy Qur'an, 10 conditions of *Bai'at*, MTA) have been added at alislam.org/apps. Radio program is made available at ahmadiyya.fm.

The Matrimonial department informed delegates that the ratio of the listing of boys in the database has increased from 2.7 to 1.5.

The *Umur Amma* department provided security training at regional level and provided help to refugees to settle down.

The *Ta'limul-Quran* department mentioned the success of their online classes. Around 40 ongoing classes are provided in Urdu and English spread into different parts of day throughout the week to suit multiple schedules with 245 active students.

The *Waqf Nau* department reported that the translation of syllabus has been made available.

The Agriculture department

helped in establishing vegetable gardens in selected places like Baitur-Rahman Mosque, Philadelphia Mosque and at Baituz-Zafar, NY. This was the test drive and was a successful experience.

The History and exhibitions department produced short videos on the Holy Qur'an. The Department continued its research on the History of Ahmadiyyat in America and completed and submitted its third edition.

The *Wasaya* department had achieved the mark of 46 % of earning members as *Musis*.

The Property department reported that the Dayton and Virginia projects had been completed.

The Public Affairs reported meetings with members of the congress and mayors, 105 meetings on the hill, annual seminar attended by 66 chapters, placement of Ahmadis seeking asylum. Meetings with members of U.S. Congress (House) (or staff): 226. Meetings with members of U.S. Congress (Senate) (or staff): 68. Meetings with U.S. State Department officials in D.C: 94. Meetings with other government agencies in D.C: 15. Meetings with U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom: 35. Meetings with United Nations officials: 17. Meetings with U.S. embassy officials: 31. Meetings with foreign embassy officials: 46. Meetings with officials in China, Thailand, Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh: 55. Hearings/briefings in D.C: 11. Meetings with mayors, governors, other state representatives: 240. Meetings with intellectuals, professors: 115. Meetings with NGOs/think tanks: 42. Total number of meetings in all categories: 995.

"Day on the Hill" (February 24)

event: 73 delegates, including 6 *Lajna* members, from 41 chapters participated in 105 total meetings with U.S. Congressional offices (House/Senate) at Capitol Hill in D.C. A special 150-page binder/dossier (with appendices) was prepared for each U.S. Congressional office.

The 6th Annual National Public Affairs Seminar: 107 total delegates from 66 Chapters (or 93% of total Chapters) participated in this year's Seminar setting a new attendance record for the annual event.

There were 12 monthly teleconference meetings with locally elected Public Affairs secretaries, 12 monthly teleconference meetings with National PA team members (15 team members in total) and 2 online webinars for all local PA secretaries.

On 8/10/11, White House *Iftar* dinner was attended by Maulana Naseem Mahdi. He met with President Obama. In April, a letter from the Khalifatul Masih^{aba} was delivered to President Obama. Met U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, at U.S. State Department during *Iftar* Reception on 9/6/11.

Helped author 2011 Annual Report on Pakistan for Office of International Religious Freedom resulting in the mention of the Ahmadiyya Community on 100+ occasions.

Special Capitol Hill blood drives for "Muslims for Life" were scheduled on 9/7/11 (Rayburn) and 9/9/11 (Cannon) in partnership with American

Red Cross. There were over 100 donors, including six members of U.S. Congress and four dozen members of U.S. Congressional staff.

On 9/9/11 and 9/11/11, Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA), Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN), Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) and Congressman Tom Petri (R-WI) donated blood at Capitol Hill in "Muslims for Life" drive. Congresswoman Donna Edwards (D-MD) donated blood at "Muslims for Life" drive at Baitur Rahman Mosque.

On 12/15/11, Maulana Naseem Mahdi delivered special presentation at Pennsylvania state assembly. On 9/14/11, the mayor of Houston provided keynote address at "Muslims For Life" launch event at Houston Mosque. In September 2011, Mayor of Allen (TX) and Mayor of Plano (TX) visited Dallas Ahmadiyya mosque for "Muslims for Life" campaign. On 8/11/11 and 10/13/11, mayors of Columbus (OH) and Toledo (OH) met with local chapter officials. On 7/11/11, Maulana Daud Hanif delivered special presentation at New York State Assembly.

On 6/6/11, all 96 Ahmadi Muslims in detention were released on bail and placed in special housing arranged by Thai Committee for Refugees (TCR); 94 of 96 Ahmadi Muslims have been tentatively approved for resettlement to the United States by the United States Embassy.

Then, the General Secretary first presented the proposals not included for *Shura* discussion with reasons followed by the proposals for *Shura* deliberations. Four subcommittees were formed for the discussion of the proposals selected for discussion,



BOLETÍN AHMADÍA

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Una publicación cuatrimestral, espiritual y educativa
Boletín Oficial de la Comunidad Ahmadiya del Islam, USA

Del Sagrado Corán



¡Oh creyentes! Se os prescribe el ayuno, como fue prescrito a los que os precedieron, para que seáis justos. El ayuno prescrito debe durar un número fijo de días. Pero aquél de entre vosotros que esté enfermo o de viaje ayunará el mismo número de días con posterioridad; y para los que sólo pueden ayunar con gran dificultad hay una expiación: alimentar a un pobre. Y quien realiza una buena obra con obediencia voluntaria, mejor para él. Y el ayuno es bueno para vosotros, si lo supierais.

[C. 2: Vs: 184-185]

Hadiz (Relatos del Santo Profeta (sa))

Abu Hurairah (r) relata que el Santo Profeta (s) dijo:
"Dios Todopoderoso afirma que todas las acciones del hombre le sirven para sí mismo excepto el ayuno. El ayuno se guarda únicamente por Mi causa y Yo soy la recompensa del mismo. El ayuno es un escudo - contra el mal. Por tanto, cuando alguno de vosotros ayune, no debe participar en charlas vanas ni elevar su voz. Si alguien os insulta o inicia una pelea, debéis decir simplemente: "me encuentro ayunando".

(Bujari)

Escritos del Mesías Prometido

La Unidad de Dios es una luz que ilumina el corazón solamente después de la negación de todas las deidades, bien pertenezcan al mundo interno o al externo, impregnando cada partícula del ser humano. ¿Puede acaso adquirirse sin la ayuda de Dios y de Su Mensajero? Es deber del hombre suprimir su ego y abandonar el diabólico orgullo. No debe jactarse de haber sido educado en la cuna



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
(1835-1908)

del conocimiento, sino que ha de considerarse un simple ignorante, y dedicarse a las oraciones. Entonces descenderá sobre él la luz de la Unidad y le será infundida una nueva vida.

(Rohani Jazain, Vol. 22, pág. 148)

LA COMUNIDAD AHMADÍA DEL ISLAM

El Movimiento Ahmadía del Islam fue fundado en 1889 por Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) quien afirmó ser el Reformador esperado de los Últimos días, el Esperado por todas las comunidades religiosas del mundo (el Mahdi y el Mesías). El Movimiento que inició es un compendio del mensaje conciliador del Islam: paz, hermandad universal y sumisión a la Voluntad de Dios, en su pureza original. Hazrat Ahmad declaró que el Islam era la "La religión de la gente del camino recto" (98:6)

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Sermón del viernes

Sermón del Viernes, pronunciado por Hazrat Jalifatul Masih V, Mirza Masroor Ahmad en el Centro Internacional, Mississauga, Canadá, con ocasión del Llalsa Salana Canadá

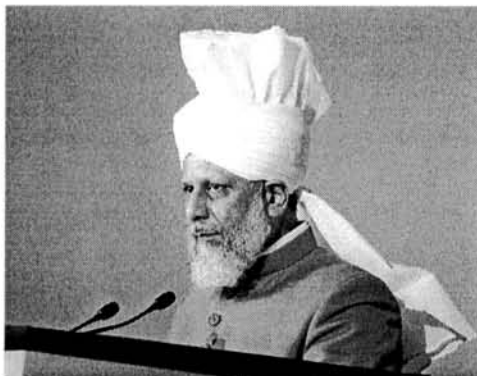
Hazur dijo los Llalsas son una fuente de bendiciones para los áhmadi musulmanes, pues se congregan para recordar a Dios y estar en compañía de los que recuerdan a Dios. El Santo Profeta también dijo que los participantes en tales congregaciones son herederos de la Gracia divina y merecen el paraíso.

El Mesías Prometido (as) solía implorar con gran devoción para los participantes en el Llalsa. Hazur dijo que los fieles deben implorar astsghar y tauba, recordar a Dios y recitar el darud, es decir pedir el perdón y la misericordia divina para salvaguardar y aumentar nuestra fe.

El Mesías Prometido dijo que hasta que nuestras postraciones no estén llenas de devoción, nuestras súplicas no darán fruto. Para ello, Hazur dijo que los áhmadi deben renovar su juramento con energía y vigor renovados para adquirir el Taqwa, tal como indica el Santo Corán. Taqwa significa hacer lo posible por mantenerse alejado del pecado y la inmoralidad. Dios dice que la adoración sincera nos protege de todo mal. Dios Todopoderoso dice que "no he creado al hombre y a los genios sino para que me adoren".

Hazur dijo que los objetivos de la vida creados por el hombre son fútiles en extremo, ya que ocultan el propósito de la creación. En realidad, el objetivo de la vida, como dice en el Corán, es el reconocimiento y la devoción y culto a Dios. El hombre no tiene control sobre su nacimiento y muerte, sino solamente Dios.

Hazur dijo que en la actualidad los países occidentales han inventado innumerables modos de alcanzar placeres mundanos que no conducen más que al libertinaje y la inmoralidad, y que se exhiben en todo el mundo. Este libertinaje se etiqueta como diversión



y placer. Esta gente no presta atención a los mandamientos de Dios y siguen sus instintos carnales que los convierten en peor que los animales. El Mesías Prometido (as) dice que la morada final de estas personas es el infierno.

Hazur dijo que el hombre se ha involucrado en actividades vanas y libertinas. Los videos pornográficos están disponibles libremente de tal manera que el hombre se convierte en un animal al verlos. Estas actividades llevan a la destrucción de la unidad familiar dando origen a divorcios. Hazur advirtió a todos los miembros de Jamaat a ser temerosos de Dios. El Mesías Prometido (as) dice que los que deseen permanecer en su Jamaat deberán abandonar estos deseos fútiles y personales o, en caso contrario, deberán mantenerse alejados de la Jamaat.

Refiriéndose a la juventud, dijo que a veces no saben distinguir entre el bien y el mal, por lo que deben abstenerse de desarrollar amistad con personas que se dedican al libertinaje y actos inmorales. El Mesías Prometido (as) dice: "Dios dice que muchos hombres fueron creados para convertirse en el combustible para el infierno, sin embargo, este infierno fue creado por las manos de estas mismas personas".

El Mesías Prometido (as) dice que la prevención del mal es la mejor manera de protegerse de ese mal. El más elevado en rango no es quien ha logrado

lujos mundanos, sino el más piadoso. También dice que nunca hay que mirar con desdén a los menos privilegiados. Agregó que la salvación no depende de la propia nación, ni de la riqueza, pues Dios Todopoderoso mira vuestras acciones.

El Mesías Prometido (as) ha enumerado tres formas de lograr esta salvación. La primera consiste en realizar acciones buenas y piadosas, la segunda es adoptar la justicia y la tercera es embellecer las propias acciones sometiéndose por completo a la voluntad de Dios y obediendo al Santo Profeta (saw).

Si queremos disfrutar de las escenas de esta victoria, entonces todos los áhmadi deberán intentar mejorar sus condición espiritual. El Mesías Prometido (as) dice que no hay que olvidar que los justos son informados de su premio dentro de sus vidas. Dijo que en los períodos iniciales, los Mensajeros de Dios sufrieron dificultades, una tras otra, pero los resultados de estas dificultades y las pruebas no fueron más que el éxito y la victoria final. También predijo el progreso de la Jamaat con estas palabras: "He recibido buenas noticias sobre el éxito de la Jamaat, para que se alivie mi dolor y mi preocupación y estas buenas nuevas fortalezcan mi fe. Ya puedo oler la fragancia de la victoria final en el favor de Jamaat".

Hazur dijo que este progreso y la victoria ya han sido destinados para la Jamaat. Por tanto, debemos elevar nuestros estándares de justicia, para que podamos ser testigos de estos éxitos. Todos los áhmadi musulmanes deben beneficiarse durante los días del Llalsa y del próximo mes de Ramadán y tratar en lo posible de mejorar. Seamos acreedores de las oraciones realizadas por el Mesías Prometido (as) a favor de los participantes de Llalsa Salana. Que Dios Todopoderoso os haga a todos acreedores de las bendiciones del Llalsa.

Khalifa del Islam ofrece un discurso histórico en el Capitol

El Congreso de los Estados Unidos introduce una resolución dando la bienvenida a Hazrat Mirza Masrur Ahmad a los Estados Unidos y elogiando su compromiso con la promoción de la paz.



El 27 de junio de 2012, Hazrat Mirza Masrur Ahmad fue recibido en el Capitolio, en Washington DC, donde pronunció un discurso titulado "El camino hacia la paz: relaciones justas entre las naciones" a una audiencia superior a 30 miembros del Congreso de los Estados Unidos, incluyendo a la Honorable Nancy Pelosi, la líder demócrata de la Cámara de Representantes.

También estuvieron presentes miembros del Cuerpo Diplomático, personal de la Casa Blanca y del Departamento de Estado, profesores, líderes de ONG, líderes religiosos, representantes de los medios de comunicación, representantes de los Estados y otros diferentes sectores de la sociedad.

Su Santidad fue escoltado hasta la Cámara de Representantes, donde se introdujo una resolución en honor de su visita a los Estados Unidos. El párrafo introductorio de la resolución declara:



"Damos la bienvenida a Washington, DC, a Su Santidad, Hazrat Mirza Masrur Ahmad, el jefe espiritual y administrativo de la Comunidad Ahmadía del Islam en todo el

mundo, y reconocemos su compromiso por la paz mundial, la justicia, la no violencia, los derechos humanos, la libertad religiosa y la democracia".

Tras la recitación del Santo Corán y un discurso de bienvenida habló el Senador Robert Casey (PA), quien dio la bienvenida a Su Santidad a los Estados Unidos. Dijo, entre otras cosas: "Su Santidad, quiero darle las gracias por su gran liderazgo y su compromiso con la paz, la tolerancia y la justicia". El primer congresista musulmán, Keith Ellison (MN), dijo que Estados Unidos se sentía "honrado por la presencia de Su

Santidad" y dijo que bajo la dirección de su Jalifa, la Comunidad Ahmadía musulmana estaba demostrando ser una verdadera "bendición para la gente de los Estados Unidos".

El congresista Brad Sherman (CA) dijo que se disponía a introducir la Resolución del Congreso dando la bienvenida a Su Santidad a los Estados Unidos en la Cámara de Representantes inmediatamente después del evento. También dijo que Su Santidad era "un modelo de tolerancia para todo el mundo".

Katrina Lantos Swett, Presidenta de la Comisión de Estados Unidos sobre Libertad Religiosa Internacional, dijo que sentía que toda la sala estaba colmada de una "bendición especial y, sin duda, es un reflejo que la bendición de Su Santidad trae al Capitolio". Prosiguió hablando sobre la continua persecución de los áhmadis musulmanes en varios países, condenándola.

El congresista Frank Wolf (VA) agradeció la presencia de Hazrat Mirza Masrur Ahmad en los Estados Unidos y dijo que la Comunidad Ahmadía siempre estaba dispuesta a apoyar todos los esfuerzos sobre los derechos humanos. El Congresista Mike Honda (CA) habló de su satisfacción al conocer a Su Santidad en privado la noche anterior en la mezquita de Baitur Rahman. Dijo que esperaba que los áhmadis vivieran siempre con seguridad en los Estados Unidos para que pudieran continuar propagando su mensaje de paz. Seguidamente, la congresista Zoe Lofgren (CA) entregó a Su Santidad de una copia de la Resolución Especial del Congreso.

La líder demócrata, la congresista Nancy Pelosi, dijo que estaba orgullosa de que se diera una bienvenida tan bipartidista a Hazrat Mirza Masrur Ahmad. Dijo que el liderazgo de Hazrat Mirza Masrur Ahmad se caracterizaba por la sabiduría y la compasión".

Además, dijo que a pesar de hacer frente a graves persecuciones, "Su Santidad se ha negado a recurrir al resentimiento o la venganza".



El Presidente Nacional de Comunidad Ahmadia en los Estados Unidos, el Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, dijo que, bajo la dirección de su Jalifa, la Comunidad Ahmadía nunca ha respondido a la persecución con crueldad, sino con la oración.

Jalifa del Islam ofrece un discurso en el Capitol

En su discurso de apertura, Su Santidad habló a los asistentes acerca de las enseñanzas del Sagrado Corán en el tema de las relaciones internacionales. Dijo que el principio clave para el mantenimiento de la paz es la verdadera justicia. Su Santidad dijo: "La verdad es que la paz y la justicia son inseparables. Sin embargo, no hay duda de que en el mundo en general están aumentando la inquietud y la ansiedad, originando el desorden. Esto demuestra claramente que, en algún momento, no se están cumpliendo los requerimientos de la justicia". Dijo que el Islam enseña que todas las personas nacen iguales y deben gozar de igualdad de derechos sin discriminación ni prejuicios. Este es el principio clave que sienta las bases de la armonía entre los diferentes grupos y naciones, y para el establecimiento de la paz". Su Santidad dijo que las naciones ri-

cas deben hacer grandes esfuerzos para ayudar a los países en desarrollo, sin embargo, no deben hacerlo con el propósito de servir a sus propios intereses creados o nacionales, sino con el deseo de servir a la humanidad y con la ambición de poner fin a la inquietud y la ansiedad de las personas necesitadas.

Hazrat Mirza Masrur Ahmad concluyó con un mensaje invitando a la paz. Su Santidad dijo: "Los Estados Unidos, como la mayor potencia del mundo, debe desempeñar su papel actuando con verdadera justicia y con las buenas intenciones que he descrito. Si lo hiciera así, entonces el mundo recordará siempre con gran admiración sus grandes esfuerzos. Es mi oración que esta esperanza se convierta en realidad."

Celebración de la 64ª Sesión del Llalsa Salana de USA



En los días 29 y 30 de Junio y 1 de Julio se celebró la 64ª Sesión de Llalsa Salana de Estados Unidos en Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, presidida por del Jefe Supremo espiritual de la Comunidad Ahmadia, Hazrat Mirza Masrur Ahmad. En este augusto evento, que tuvo un gran éxito y estuvo colmado de bendiciones, asistieron un total de 11.436 personas, con representaciones de 33 países. Entre otras representaciones, queremos destacar la participación de la delegación de Guatemala, compuesta de siete miembros, y presidida por el Amir de Guatemala, Abdul Sattar Khan y el Secretario General, David Gonzalez.

Mis impresiones sobre el Llalsa Salana USA

El miércoles, 20 de Junio de 2012, el Jalifa de Islam, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), llegó a la mezquita Baitur-Rahman de Maryland. Aunque yo vivo a casi tres horas de la mezquita, inmediatamente sentí la luz espiritual de su presencia que se manifestó como paz dentro de mí. A pesar de estar lejos, en mi casa, eran tantas las emociones que sentí ese miércoles que no podía controlar las lágrimas. Por MTA pude ver el momento de su llegada a la mezquita donde muchos seguidores se reunieron a verlo. Los niños y niñas recitaban los poemas del Mesías Prometido y Mahdi (as) y nunca en mi vida he visto tanta felicidad y esperanza.

El domingo siguiente tuve la oportunidad (fue una bendición en realidad) de reunirme con el Jalifa y estar en su presencia. Es difícil detallar el momento en que un

humilde servidor se acerca a un hombre completamente unido a Dios. En el poco tiempo que estuve con él no dejé de mirar sus manos - blancas, sencillas, hermosas, benditas.

Ese día, en ese momento observando sus manos, entendí el significado de la palabra *nur*. No es simplemente "luz" en árabe, también significa el reflejo de la iluminación de Dios en una persona. Los profetas son ejemplos de *nur* - personas tan cercanas a Dios que reflejan una parte de Su Grandeza y atributos. Fue este mismo *nur* el que vi y sentí en esos momentos que estuve con nuestro querido Jalifa. Cualquier duda que permanecía dentro de mí, conscientemente o inconscientemente, desapareció ese día (Alhamdulillah!). Ese es el poder del *nur*: es una bendición de Dios para los creyentes, para fortalecer la fe en Sus seguidores.

Sin duda, mi fe aumentó y se intensificó después de esa reunión, y durante Llalsa Salana EEUU con la presencia del Jalifa. Llalsa dura tres días con el motivo de desarrollar conocimiento espiritual, fortalecer fe en Dios y Sus mensajeros, y compartir con compañeros en Islam. El Mesías Prometido, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), dijo que Llalsa no se puede comparar a otras convenciones o reuniones. Este año fue mi tercera Llalsa y en mi experiencia no hay nada igual a Llalsa en este mundo. Las intenciones de todos reunidos consiste de lo mismo - acercarse a Dios. Y por eso uno, como participante, siente el inmenso amor entre los presentes y la devoción a Dios. Llalsa y la visita del Jalifa han reafirmado mi compromiso al Mesías Prometido, un mensajero de Dios y seguidor del Profeta del Islam, Muhammad (saw).

Terez Varkonyi

Tabligh, Tarbiyat, Rishta Nata and General. Proposed Budget for 2012-2013 was presented and a subcommittee was formed to discuss the proposal.

After dinner, *Maghrib* and *Isha* Prayers, subcommittee meetings were held to deliberate on the proposals and to formulate their recommendations for presentation to the main *Shura* body.

On Saturday, April 28, 2012 morning a non-*Shura* meeting was held concerning *Rishta Nata* issues and coordination of *Jama'at* and its Auxiliaries, and on the relationship of auxiliaries with the *Jama'at* administration. The meeting started with the recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Hafiz Samiullah.

Na'ib Ameer Munum Naeem spoke on auxiliaries. He explained the relationship of the auxiliaries with the *Jama'at* that the *Jama'at* activities were above auxiliaries. A good yearly activities calendar prepared at the beginning of the year should allow auxiliaries to plan their activities harmoniously with the *Jama'at* activities. One solution to streamline activities would be sharing offices among the *Jama'at* and an auxiliary, precedence is given to the *Jama'at* work. We should be honest with ourselves and should be taking on appropriate load only. Certain *Jama'at* functions are not to be attended by *Lajna*. We should follow best practices and start meetings on time.

Sadr Ansar said that the *Jama'at* should use the designation of member and not use terms *Ansar* and *Khud-dam* when assigning duties. This should solve many problems.

Amir Ahmadiyya Muslim Com-

munity USA opened discussion of *Rishta Nata* issues and solutions declaring that marriage is for life, and not for divorce, to tough it out to the end.

Imam Naseem Mahdi said that there is a general misunderstanding in the West that arranged marriages are bad while the marriage success rate is much worse in the Western route. We observe that the Western-style marriages are breaking after living together for years or after having children. Islamic system is not inferior or broken. Problems in Islamic marriages arise when Islamic principles are violated. To facilitate matrimonial matches and to make them successful, we need to avoid un-Islamic taboos. Many marriages can take place if, as an example, the taboo of not marrying cousins is rid of. There have been numerous marriages among cousins in the family of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, without problems. Another issue is that people do not see the religious side rather they look at the material side. Our caste is Ahmadiyyat; we have to get out of these shackles. Most of the people do not pray for their children while they do pray for degree or job but not for righteousness.

The Secretary Matrimonial Arrangements said that there is a reluctance of members to use the system of the *Rishta Nata*. If they do then there will be a bigger pool of eligible members available. *Rishta Nata* department was established by the Promised Messiah, peace be on

him, and should be a source of blessings. US education system delays the completion of education depriving young people of the best years of their married life. *Taqwa* is essential both for boys and girls. Our role model is the Holy Prophet^{saw}, how he treated his wives. Some children do not want the same to happen to them as they see in their families. We need to change ourselves to show our children good examples. Many call that their daughter is 24 while their sons are 29 or so yet they do not want to get help with respect to the boys. This is a permissive society and there is lot of pressure on their children. *Qaul-e-Sadid*, straight talk, is the foundation of a successful marriage. The department observes strict confidentiality of the data as instructed by the Promised Messiah, peace be on him. We should treat all children as our own. Compromise is necessary. Show the give and take before marriage. Do not have the girls feel like they are objects. There will be a gathering at *Jal-sa* and introductions will be made respectfully. We should not despair and be hopeful of Allah's mercy. With the prayers of the Khalifatul-Masih^{aba}, we will *Insha Allah* make a difference.

Amir USA: The first marriage of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, was to a lady 15 years older. No initiation of proposal from girl's side is against Islam. We need to change our perspective on both boys' and girls' side. Dowry is important and can be used for the education of the bride. Human relations are quite complex. Some parents need hand holding while many do not. We cannot take parents out of the picture completely but we need to determine the extent. Face-to-face meetings work better than pictures, etc. Officer's reference should

be limited to mosque attendance and dues or any other obvious observation but should not be based on suspicion and no undue investigation should be necessary. Issues in the US are different than in other countries. Real issue is that we are a developing society and that our values are different.

Various comments were made by the delegates: Stories should be written to create impression of the pristine teachings of Islam on children. Open the family introductions session to all rather than just the prospective families. We lose Afro-Americans when they cannot marry among the non-Afro-Americans. We should truly live Ahmadiyyat, read our books and study them and many problem will be solved. Term *facilitated marriage* should be used in place of arranged marriage. At younger age, couples are more able to adjust. Do not make financial difficulties a barrier to marriage rather struggling together may help strengthen the relationship. Eligible members are visible, therefore, there should really be no need for registration. We should be talking to marriageable people to solve the problems through the auxiliaries.

The second session of *Majlis Shura* started in the afternoon with recitation from the Holy Quran by *Imam* Syed Shamshad Ahmad Nasir.

Imam Naseem Mahdi presented the *Tabligh* subcommittee recommendations. Peace through Messiah campaign will target small towns starting with Zion. Plan incorporates methods and lessons learned from previous campaigns. A website, MuslimsForPeace.org has been setup. Report was approved with comments.

Nasir Malik presented the *Tarbiyat* subcommittee recommenda-

tions to keep our youth from immodesty and immorality. He said that we are becoming insensitive to the values the Promised Messiah^{as}, stood for. Sensitize and educate parents of the dangers of media. Help the youth by engaging them in other alternate healthy activity. Parents need to engage more in Prayer at home and visit mosque more often, apprise youth of the dangers of the use of media, inspire the youth to pursue education and vie with each other. Develop clear guidelines and publicize. Place suitable posters in our mosques. Offer counseling to adults.

Amir USA commented that we have to define what you can do and cannot do. We cannot outlaw computer. We can have the computer visible. If you want a good turnout at a meeting, you need to call them a month before, a week before, the evening before. This is how things work.

Lajna representatives commented that it is important to have one-on-one interaction with older Ahmadi. We need good role models in our mosques. We should encourage peer bonding; positive peer pressure is very effective. Being hooked on internet is an addictive process. The instructions of the Khalifatul-Masih^{aba} are very clear. We should arrange quarterly interactive workshops and prepare videos on un-Islamic practices.

After a short break, general subcommittee recommendations

were presented. All parents should listen to the Friday Sermon. Parents should take students to *Jumu'ah*.

Imam Daud Hanif commented that every child is born on nature and enumerated various stages of training a child goes through.

Amir USA commented that Allah's blessings are a real thing and we are seeking them. One of them is to go to the Friday Prayers. You perform them at home with few people or in the mosque with many. Friday prayers are important.

Lajna delegates commented that the presidents cannot assure modesty if their wives do not observe it. We should not add additional items to our already busy activity schedules. Engage children in recreational events and conduct interesting activities. While men are going to *Jumu'ah*, ladies should too. If they can take a car to work then they can also go to *Jumu'ah*.

Ameer Sahib USA commented that the Friday Prayers are not mandatory for women. Here in the US we have security and facility and women should go to the Friday Prayers if they can but what is given to women as an allowance we cannot take that away from them.

Secretary Audio/Video explained that the *Jama'at* policy is against anonymous emails. On facebook, no individual accounts and no personal propagation pages are allowed. facebook is allowed for business. facebook/twitter are not allowed for members.

An announcement was made at the end of the session that Ramadan will start on July 21. In the evening, after

dinner and Prayers, a non-Shura session was held to discuss the topic of *Mulaqat* and its etiquette.

Third session of *Shura* was held on Sunday, April 29, 2012 with recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Imam I. H. Kauser. Sahibzadah Maghfoor Ahmad presented the recommendations of the *Rishta Nata* subcommittee. He pointed out that the lack of family contacts due to a spread out Community is the main issue. Family programs should be held at regional level. Holding *Ijtimas* on the same day will also help and be cost efficient. The activities of the *Rishta Natah* department should be published regularly in the Gazette. Training needs to start at a very early age.

Delegates offered many opinions. We need to think beyond what we already have said that we will do. A picnic in a *Jama'at* provided a great chance for the families to meet each other and come to know the boys and girls in families. Another *Jama'at* held a function at a national park. We need to often talk about who our ancestors were so the boy and the girl are proud of their inheritance and realize that they are a part of special kind of people. We should also share the experience in failed marriages outside and compare *Jama'at* marriage data with general marriage data. Children should be taught to pray for pious spouses from early age. Parents should show a good example. If they come with good values, they can make a good example but if they come with bad values and bad behavior then youth will learn these bad behaviors from parents.

Ameer USA explained that there is flexibility in signing the *Bai'at* form by a non-Ahmadi girl before marrying an Ahmadi boy depending

upon how strong the boy is in Ahmadiyyat. A non-Ahmadi boy must sign form a year in advance of *Nikah* to have a chance to mingle with *Jama'at* to know what he is walking into, and the Ahmadi girl needs to be strong in Ahmadiyyat.

Secretary Finance presented the budget for 2011-2012. One of his comments was that while preparing the budget, presidents need to consider the needs of female members. Letters are sent to presidents on Oct 31 requesting next year's budget by January 15 providing them ample time to estimate the needs of their members.

Amir USA commented with regard to support for the education of members that education in the US is expensive. The Community supports according to its capability and as an encouragement and blessing.

In his concluding address, Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, *Ameer* of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, thanked attendees for their participation, interest in various issues and discussion. He said that 200 or so delegates gathered seeking Allah's blessing and guidance. He wished them a safe travel back home. He thanked workers for facilitating this function. May Allah reward them all. Missionaries have been patient. I am grateful for their work and participation. *Rishta Natah* has been a concern. May this department be able to conduct effective work. We are grateful to the Khalifatul-Masih^{aba} for pointing out our shortcomings. The element of

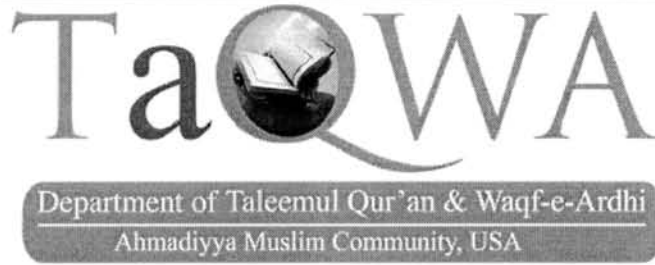
reprimand contains an element of our welfare in it. May Allah help us all in our work in the Community. We should make sure that the *Waqf Nau* are properly prepared for their presentations.

The Promised Messiah^{ss}, has elicited the great importance of the relationship of the womb in Islam to understand the love of Allah. We cannot understand the love of God and living in the society unless we have human experience. Togetherness in relationships is very important. You are relevant even after child is independent. They will come back for feedback, Am I doing right? They want approval though not as frequently. Ultimately companionship survives, even to the next world. It is important how we connect with each other and with the world at large. Help the poor even when they are not believers. Help someone who is in need and suffering whether a nonmember. Support Humanity First. The purpose of marriage is to understand God. No one can see God but he shows up when people are together depending on how they behave. When they are together, He is there otherwise Satan comes in. Pray that He help and guide us in these matters and many others. *Shura* adjourned with collective prayers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Editor



Taleem-ul-Quran and Waqf-e-Aardhi

Three years ago, our beloved Hazoor Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (at) merged the Taleem-ul-Quran and Waqf-e-Aardhi (TaQWA) department into one. The TaQWA IT department has since been working on several new and important projects.

TaQWA Projects

The IT TaQWA department decided to reach its goal of providing a platform to Jama'at members where they could learn about the Holy Qur'an, participate in the Waqf-e-nau Scheme and much more by developing a series of web portals. These web portals are easily accessible, user friendly, and will enable Jama'at members to gain blessings by serving the Jama'at, and learning more and more about the Holy Qur'an. Below, our readers will find updates on the Word of the Day, Waqf-e-Aardhi, Hifz application and the TaQWA portal as well. One purpose of giving updates on various TaQWA projects is to make our readers aware of these applications so that once they are ready to be launched for the public, Jama'at members can take advantage of them.

We will also highlight the technologies being used by these projects and look forward to other Ahmadi brothers and sisters who are experts in the field and wish to volunteer their time for these projects joining our team.

TaQWA Web Portal

by Ahmad Suhail

Phase 2 for the TaQWA portal is officially underway, and the team is meeting regularly in order to fulfill the responsibilities and requirements of phase 2.

The team is focusing on various tasks as follows:

1. Creating a plan based on the vision going forward on how the portal will evolve including its technology landscape.
2. Creating a project plan with timelines related to milestone accomplishments.
3. Testing results of migration and suggestions for current portal appearance and short-term feature enhancements.
4. Fixing current open development items.

As the TaQWA portal team embarks on its long and arduous, but challenging and fulfilling journey to a complex natured phase 2, it seeks to build a team of skilled and committed resources in order to fulfill its goal of building a very robust and user-friendly portal. To that end, it welcomes resources who are especially committed to the project's success. The Al-TaQWA team is in need of volunteers who are interested and have experience with any IT related projects. Specifically, skills in web development, UI design, enterprise portals, and

TaQWA Hifz-e-Quran (HQ)

by Anees Ahmad

The Hifze Quran application provides easy to use online tools for Jama'at members for memorizing the Holy Quran in an interactive manner at their own pace. This application facilitates interaction between students and teachers via virtual classes. The students enroll in classes of their own choice, and then download text and audio files to learn correct pronunciation of verses of Quranic chapters, and then upload audio file of the memorized verses for teacher's evaluation. A number of sample classes are now available on the website. The teacher is able to monitor student's progress and then update status online. The teacher can download student's recorded audio file, and after listening to it can email his/her comments to the student. Separate user guides for students and teachers have also been prepared.

This application has been undergoing rigorous end to end (E2E) testing by the HQ team since March. A defect tracker file is being used to record the defects, and monitor the progress of fixing and testing of these defects. This defect tracker is reviewed during each weekly team meeting to ensure the defects are being addressed in correct order. All high priority functional and security defects now been fixed and verified. The E2E testing is now almost complete, and the application is ready for pilot testing. We are working with the national TaQWA team to identify a limited number of students and teachers for pilot testing this application. Our plan is to complete this pilot testing in the next few weeks, and then deploy it for use by a wider set of students, Insha'Allah.



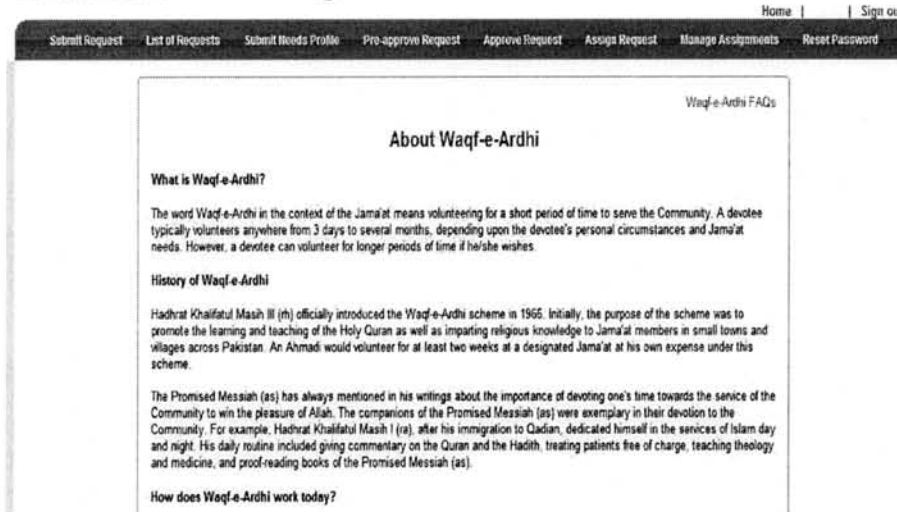
Our small HQ team is always in need of additional IT experts, who can help us with the code development and enhancing the user interface of HQ application. All Jama'at members are requested to pray for our success. May Allah enable us to develop a user friendly online application to facilitate the memorization of the Holy Quran (a centuries old tradition) using the 21st century tools, Aameen.

TaQWA Waqf-e-Ardhi

by Anees Ahmad

The online Waqf-e-Ardhi (WA) application enables the devotees to enroll for serving the community in various religious, technical and life skills areas. Alhamdo Lillah, all functional modules of Waqf-e-Ardhi (WA), including the devotee registration, sign-up, needs profile submission and assignment management; have been implemented and tested successfully. This application is based on state of the art IT technologies like Zend (PHP MVC framework), JQuery (AJAX framework), MySQL database server, and Eclipse (PHP Plugin).

TaQWA Waqf-e-Ardhi (con't.)



A training session on the use of this application was conducted for 7 regional secretaries during the month of April. These regional secretaries in turn will train the WA secretaries of all Jama'ats in their regions. These training sessions are being recorded, and the User Manual has also been updated to facilitate this training process. This application will be gradually deployed to all regions and Jama'ats in a phased manner over the next several months. Deployment of this secure online application will greatly facilitate devotee enrollment

and matching process, resulting in much greater number of devotees willing to serve the community, Insha' Al-lah.

We are always in need of experienced database, software and website developers, who can help us enhance the functionality and look of this web-based application. All Jama'at members are requested to pray for our success. May Allah bless our efforts, and enable all US Jama'ats members to take full advantage of this application for serving our community all over the country, Aameen.

TaQWA Word of the Day

by Syed Yasir Bin Talha

Alhamdulillah, word of the day project phase 1 is live on TaQWA development server and going through numerous testing cycles. Team is focusing on improving user experience before general availability in the month of June. Alfurqan Content team is working to finalize words to be distributed with the word of the day application.

Word of the day team is working in three parallel focus are:

1. Continue Enhancing existing web functionality
2. Mobile Functionality
3. Semantic Web Proof of concept



Brother Ahmad Suhail, Hidayat ullah Ahsan and Wadood Chaudhry are focusing on enabling word of the day on Apple and Android mobile platforms. Brother Naeem Ahmad along with Brother Badar Ahmad are building a Word of the Day Semantic Web platform proof of concept. Brother Taimur, Hidayat ullah Ahsan, Ahsan Aziz and Sister Huma are continuing their focus on improving the existing functionality.

The team is targeting to release Word of the Day for general use by June 15th, 2012. We are looking for experienced graphics and web application developers.

Qur'an Today

by Syed Lutful Mannan

Respected Syed Lutful Mannan sahib from New Jersey will be writing a regular column for the Ahmadiyya Gazette readership about the Holy Qur'an on behalf of TaQWA. He holds degrees in Engineering and English Literature. Pursuing personal interests, he has studied literature from various languages while working in the telecommunications industry for 38 years in Africa. He is devoted to the in-depth study of the Holy Qur'an through various commentaries as well as to the writings of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He currently teaches advanced level Holy Qur'an translation and commentary online at alfurqan.us. These classes have taken the form of study circles due to great interest shown by *Jama'at* members. *Alhamdulillah*. Two weeks ago, I came across a book review of "Doubt, Atheism, and the Nineteenth Century Russian Intelligentsia," by Victoria Frede. The author is an assistant professor of history at the University of California, Berkeley. To me, the title of the book itself suggests a thought process reaching to a point of despair. The debate on the existence of God and immortality of soul (with the negative resultant) did not grow in the Russian fields alone; it is now being harvested almost everywhere in the world but more in abundance in the Western world. The author has discussed how and why atheism took on such importance among several generations of Russian intellectuals who finally set aside theology and religion for the sake of individualism. The book illustrates that "as individuals sought to shape their own destinies and searched for truths that would give meaning to their lives, they came to question the legitimacy of the Tsar and Russia's highest authority, God". "Doubt" is presented as the most influential force responsible for this shift in perspective. So let us see, what the Qur'an says in this context.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا
رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ
إِنْ نُنْظَرُ إِلَّا ظَنًّا وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمُتَّقِينَ ۝

"And when it was said, 'The promise of Allah is certainly true, and as to the Hour, there is no doubt about its coming,' you said, 'We know not what the Hour is; we think it to be nothing but a conjecture, and we are not convinced.'" [Holy Qur'an Ch45:v33]

And the reason one is not convinced, is simply because of 'Zann'. This Arabic word can mean opinion, thought, supposition, conjecture, preponderant belief, or strong presumption with the admission that the contrary may be the case. But since the Intelligentsia, from its medieval percept, has been termed the intellectual elite and the custodian of history and culture, the arrogance and pride of this group does not allow it to honestly entertain alternative arguments. Here, I quote an excerpt from a speech delivered by the Promised Messiah^{as} on 24 September 1905. It not only analyzes but simplifies the condition of "belief and doubt":

"If the existence of humans had been without *Allah Ta'la*, then no doubt, that would have posed a huge problem. But now it is He alone who is protecting each and every particle. Then why should one fear or grieve? His manifestations are astounding and His dominion unparalleled. After accepting the Almighty God a believer never grieves. [Allah] does as He wills, and blessings and goodness can be found only in what He has willed. It is only faith that distinguishes a believer from a non-believer. The life of a person with an atheist aptitude, or of one who does not believe in Allah the Exalted, is wonderful and free of fear and danger until trials and tribulations strike. But the onset of the slightest of adversities overwhelms his mental capacity and he cannot endure them. He did not rely in Allah the Almighty to begin with, and the failure of material means causes him to despair. Under such circumstances, when minor things go against the temperament of such people, at times they commit suicide. In Europe, where atheists are in great numbers, the rate of suicides is incomparably high relative to any of the other countries. Why is it so? It is simply because they lack the strength to bear adversities and calamities. Their hearts get weak. On the contrary, a believer is strong-hearted, because his trust is in God. If he were to face calamities, they would not turn him into a coward; instead, when faced with adversity he makes even greater advances. His faith grows stronger than ever before. And as a matter of fact, it is in these days that one truly enjoys and relishes faith. And faith, in fact, is especially meant for these days. In times of health and prosperity when there is neither financial grief nor physical, and instead, all the comforts and peace are at hand, it is possible that the state of a nonbeliever appears similar to that of a believer. But times of calamity, illness and other challenges serve as a test, and it is established as to who has a strong bond with Allah the Almighty and has faith in His powers and manifestations, and who starts to accuse Him and directs anger toward Him.