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Knowledge and Education in Islam

سُبْحَانَكَ يَا عَلِيمٌ

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O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge.

(The Holy Qur'an, 20:115)

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A Publication of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, USA

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

The Muslim Sunrise

A Journal of the Islamic Renaissance in America

The Muslim Sunrise is a journal of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc., U.S.A. The magazine is open for discussions on Islam and topics relating to other religions. It highlights the role of Islam in a changing environment. It provides a platform for public opinion on current issues and their solutions. Opinions expressed in the magazine may not necessarily be those of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

The Muslim Sunrise was founded in 1921 by Dr Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, the first Ahmadi Muslim missionary in the US.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded in 1889 by *Hadrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1835-1908), peace be on him. It is presently headed by *Hadrat* Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the fourth successor to the Holy Founder, may Allah be his support.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the US is headed by *Sahibzadah* Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad, known as MM Ahmad worldwide with respect to his prominent services in the financial arena in the government of Pakistan and at the World Bank.

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Guiding Principles of the Holy Qur'an

Importance of "the Pen"

Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Generous.

Who taught by the pen,

Taught man what he knew not. (96:4-6)

Commentary

Verse 4: The verse purports to say that the more the Qur'an is read and proclaimed to the world, the more the holiness of God and the dignity of man will be recognized and appreciated. The verse may also imply a prophecy that through the reading, preaching and proclaiming of the Qur'an a place of great honor will accrue to the Holy Prophet and his followers.

Verse 5: This verse also embodies a prophecy that "pen" would play a great part in committing the Qur'an to writing and in preserving and protecting it from being lost or interfered with. It further refers to the great contribution that "the pen" was to make towards the propagation and dissemination of spiritual sciences and Divine secrets revealed by the Qur'an and of the physical sciences to which the study of the Qur'an imparted a great stimulus. It is really very significant that frequent mention should have been made of "pen" in a Book which was revealed among a people who had no respect for, and made rare use of it, and which was revealed to a person who himself did not know how to read and write.

Verse 6: Not even one hundredth part of what the Qur'an has taught about Divine Unity, Revelation, Angels, Life After Death, Ethics, and other kindred subjects is to be found in any other revealed Scripture.

Prayer for Increase in Knowledge

... say, 'O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.' (20:115)

Commentary

The words *O my Lord, increase me in knowledge* show the great importance that the Qur'an attaches to the acquirement of knowledge. Even the Holy Prophet, to whom was vouchsafed knowledge about the

generations that have passed away and about those that are yet to be born, is taught to pray that his knowledge may be increased. He is further reported to have said, "Seek knowledge though it may be found in a country as far away as China" (Saghir, Vol. 1). Elsewhere in the Qur'an knowledge has been styled as "God's great grace" (2:270, 4:114).

The verse also implies that all knowledge is of two kinds : (a) that which is vouchsafed to man through revelation and which has found its perfect manifestation in the Qur'an which is the last and most perfect Divine teaching; (b) that which man acquires by his own effort and labor. It is this second kind of knowledge for the acquisition of which man is enjoined in the present verse to make ceaseless effort.

The verse also implies that the Qur'an will come to be increasingly read and followed.

Education

It is not possible for the believers to go forth all together. Why, then, does not a party from every section of them go forth that they may become well-versed in religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may guard *against evil?* (9:122)

Commentary

As weaknesses in faith and works resulted from lack of knowledge and training, the present verse speaks of the way in which such weaknesses could be removed. The Arabs of the desert were quite ignorant of the teachings of Islam (9:97). The verse suggests a practical method of instructing them in the tenets and principles of the Faith. A certain number from every tribe or section were required to come to Medina for instruction in the teachings of Islam, and then, go back to their respective people and teach them what they had themselves learned. It was indeed the easiest, the most effective and practical method of learning the principles and teachings of the New Faith and imparting them to others.

Adapted from *The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary*, Volumes 1-5.

Guiding Light From the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him On Knowledge

1. Mu'awiah relates that the Holy Prophet said: Upon him for whom Allah desires good, He bestows understanding of the Faith (Bokhari and Muslim).

2. Ibn Mas'ud relates that the Holy Prophet said: Only two persons are worthy of being envied; a person upon whom Allah bestows riches and gives him the power to spend in a righteous cause; and a person upon whom Allah bestows wisdom by which he judges and which he teaches (Bokhari and Muslim).

3. Abu Musa relates that the Holy Prophet observed: The case of the guidance and knowledge with which I have been sent is that of rain which falls on land part of which is good and fertile and dry grass thereon turns green and a quantity of new and fresh grass is produced; and part of it is dry and it stores up the water and God makes it beneficial for people, they drink from it and use it for cultivation; and part of it is a barren plain which neither retains the water nor produces fresh grass. This is the case of those who understand the faith revealed by Allah and benefit from that with which Allah has sent me and learn it and teach it; and of those who do not stir their heads to gain knowledge of the faith and do not accept the guidance with which I have been sent (Bokhari and Muslim).

4. Sahl ibn Sa'ad relates that before the battle of Khaibar the Holy Prophet announced: Tomorrow I shall give the standard to a man at whose hands Allah will bestow victory upon us, he loves Allah and His Messenger, and Allah and His Messenger love him. The people spent the night guessing and discussing who would receive the standard. Next morning they went to the Holy Prophet, everyone hoping to receive it. The Holy Prophet inquired: Where is Ali ibn Abu Talib? He was told Ali had sore eyes. He said. Send for him. When he came, the Holy Prophet put his saliva in his eyes and prayed for him. He recovered as if he had never had any trouble at all. Then the Holy Prophet gave him the standard. Ali asked: Messenger of Allah, shall I fight them till they

become like us? He answered: Continue till you arrive opposite to them. Then invite them to Islam and explain to them what are their obligations to Allah. Should a single person be guided by Allah through you that would be better for you than a whole lot of red camels (Bokhari and Muslim).

5. Abdullah ibn Amr ibn 'As relates that the Holy Prophet said: Convey to people my directions though only in the shape of one verse; and you may borrow events from Bani Ismail without harm. But he who deliberately attributes to me something which is not true should prepare his seat in the Fire (Bokhari).

6. Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said: For him who follows a path for seeking knowledge, Allah will ease the way to Paradise (Muslim).

7. Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said: He who calls another to guidance will have a reward equal to the reward of him who follows him; this will not diminish the reward of either of them (Muslim).

8. Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said: When a person dies his actions come to an end except in respect of three matters that he leaves behind: a continuing charity, knowledge from which benefit could be derived and righteous issue who pray for him (Muslim).

9. Abu Hurairah relates that he heard the Holy Prophet say: The world is accursed and so is all that is in it save only the remembrance of Allah and that which pleases Allah, and the learned and the scholars (Tirmidhi).

10. Anas relates that the Holy Prophet said: He who issues forth in search of knowledge is busy in the cause of Allah till he returns from his quest (Tirmidhi).

11. Abu Sa'id Khudri relates that the Holy Prophet said: A believer never has his fill of knowledge till he ends up in Paradise (Tirmidhi).

12. Abu Umamah relates that the Holy Prophet said: A learned one is as much above a worshipper as I am above the least of you; and he added: Allah, His angels and all those in the heavens and the earth even the ants in their heaps and the fish in the water call down blessings on those who instruct people in beneficent knowledge (Tirmidhi).

13. Abu Dawood relates that he heard the Holy Prophet say: For him who adopts a path for seeking knowledge, Allah eases the way to Paradise and angels spread their wings for a seeker of knowledge, being pleased with his occupation, and all that are in the heavens and the earth, including the fish in the water, ask for forgiveness for a learned one. A learned one is superior to a worshipper as the moon is superior to all the planets. The divines are heirs of the Prophets and the Prophets do not leave an inheritance of dirhems and dinars but only of knowledge. He who acquires knowledge acquires a vast portion (Abu Daud and Tirmidhi).

14. Ibn Mardiyah relates that he heard the Holy Prophet say: May Allah prosper the affairs of a person who hears something from me and conveys it to others in his country, for sometimes one who hears from another may be nearer to the original hearer himself (Tirmidhi).

15. Abu Dawood relates that the Holy Prophet said: He who is asked about knowledge and conceals it will be bridled on the Day of Judgment with the bridle of iron (Abu Daud and Tirmidhi).

16. Abu Dawood relates that the Holy Prophet said: He who acquires knowledge through which the pleasure of Allah, the Lord of honor and glory, might be sought only so that he might attain through it something that he desires of the world will not perceive even the fragrance of Paradise on the Day of Judgment (Abu Daud).

17. Abu Dawood relates that he heard the Holy Prophet say: Allah will not roll up knowledge by withdrawing it from people nor will put it out of reach through the death of divines with the result that when there are no divines people will adopt ignorant ones as their leaders and will ask them guidance and they will render their opinion without knowledge. They will astray themselves and will lead others astray (Muslim and Muslim).

*Adapted from Gardens of the Righteous,
Muhammad Saifullah Khan, 1975.*

Guiding Light From the Promised Messiah, peace be on him

Sources of Divine Knowledge

... The Holy Quran has drawn attention to three types of knowledge, knowledge by way of certainty of inference, knowledge by way of certainty of sight, and knowledge by way of certainty of experience. ... Knowledge by certainty of inference is that a thing should be known not directly but through something through which it can be inferred, as by observing smoke we infer the existence of fire. We do not see the fire, but see the smoke and because of it we believe in the existence of the fire. Then if we see the fire, this, according to the Holy Quran, would be certainty by sight. If we were to enter into the fire, our knowledge would have the quality of certainty by experience...

It should be known that the source of the first type of knowledge, that is to say knowledge by the certainty of inference, is reason and information. God Almighty sets out in the Holy Quran that the dwellers of hell will affirm:

And they will say, 'If we had but listened or possessed sense, we should not have been among the inmates of the blazing Fire.' (67:11)

That if they had exercised their reason and had approached the consideration of religion and doctrine sensibly, or had listened to and read with attention the speeches and writings of the wise and the scholars, they would not have been condemned to hell. This is in accord with another verse where it is said:

Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity. (2:287)

That is to say, God Almighty does not require human beings to accept anything that is beyond their intellectual capacity, and only sets forth such doctrines as are comprehensible by men, so that His directives should not impose upon man that which he is notable to bear. These verses also indicate that one can obtain the certainty of knowledge by inference through one's ears also. For instance, we have not visited London and have only heard of it from those who have visited it, but then can we imagine that all of them might have told a

lie? Or, we did not live in the time of Emperor Alamgir, nor did we see him, but can we have any doubt that Alamgir was one of the Moghul emperors? How did we arrive at that certainty? The answer is, through the continuity of hearing about him. Thus, there is no doubt that hearing also carries one's knowledge to the stage of certainty by inference. The books of the Prophets are also a source of knowledge through hearing, provided there should be no contradiction in the account that is heard. But if a book claims to be revealed and there are fifty or sixty versions of it, some of which contradict others, then even if a party might have held that only two, or three, or four of them were accurate and that the rest were spurious or fabricated, this would be no kind of proof which could be made the basis of any sure knowledge. All those books would be rejected as unreliable on account of their contradiction and could not be held to be a source of knowledge; for knowledge is only that which bestows a sure understanding, and a collection of contradictions can bestow no certain understanding.

The Holy Quran is not confined merely to knowledge gained through continuity of hearing, it contains well reasoned arguments which carry conviction. Not one of the doctrines and principles and commandments that it sets forth is sought to be imposed merely by authority; as it has explained, they are all inscribed in man's nature. It is called a Reminder as is said:

And this is a blessed Reminder that We have sent down...
(21:51)

Meaning that the Blessed Quran does not set forth anything that is new but is a reminder of that which already exists in man's nature and in the book of nature. At another place it is said:

There should be no compulsion in religion. (2:257)

Meaning that Islam does not try to inculcate anything by compulsion, but sets forth reasons in support of everything. The Quran possesses a spiritual quality that enlightens the hearts, as it says:

... and a cure for whatever *disease* there is in the hearts...
(10:58)

It is a healing for that which afflicts the minds (10:58). Thus it is

not merely a book that has been transmitted through generations, but comprises reasoned arguments of a high degree and is charged with shining light.

Thus, intellectual arguments which have a sound basis undoubtedly lead a person to the certainty of knowledge by inference. This is indicated in the following verses:

In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding;

Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and *lying* on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: "Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; *nay*, Holy art Thou; ,save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire. (3:191-192)

When wise and sensible persons reflect on the structure of the earth and the heavenly bodies and ponder over the alternation of the day and the night, they discover therein reasons in support of the existence of God. Thereupon they seek divine help for greater enlightenment and they remember God standing, and sitting, and lying on their sides, whereby their intellects are sharpened and their pondering over the structure of the earth and heavenly bodies impels them to affirm that this firm and orderly system could not have been created in vain but is a manifestation of divine attributes. Thus, confessing the Godhead of the Creator of the universe, they supplicate: Lord Thou art Holy above being denied and being attributed imperfect qualities. Safeguard us, therefore, against the fire of hell; meaning that a denial of God is very hell itself and that all comfort and delight proceed from Him and from His recognition. He who is deprived of the recognition of God abides in hell in this very life.

The Nature of Human Conscience

Human conscience is also a source of knowledge which has been named human nature in the Book of God, as is said;

... *and follow* the nature of Allah after which He fashioned all mankind. (30:31)

Follow the nature designed by Allah, the nature according to which

He has fashioned mankind. What is the impress of that nature? It is to believe in God as One, without associate, Creator of all, above birth and death. We have described conscience as a source of knowledge by certainty of inference though, apparently, in this case the mind does not travel from one type of knowledge to another as it does on the observation of smoke to the inference of fire, and yet here also there is a very fine type of transference, which is that God has invested everything with a particular quality which cannot be described in words, but towards which one's mind is directed immediately upon observing that thing or contemplating it. That quality is inherent in everything as smoke is inherent in fire. For instance, when we contemplate the Being of God Almighty and consider what it should be; whether God should be born like us and should suffer and die like us, instantly thereat our heart is tormented and our conscience trembles and indignantly rejects, any such idea and cries out that the God, upon Whose powers all our hopes are centered, must be free from all defects and must be Holy and Perfect and Powerful. The moment we think of God we perceive a perfect relationship between God and Unity, even exceeding that which subsists between fire and smoke. Therefore, the knowledge that we gain through conscience is knowledge at the stage of certainty through inference. But there is another stage about it which is called knowledge through certainty of sight. That is a degree of knowledge when there is no intermediary between us and that of which we have gained knowledge. For instance, when we perceive a good or bad smell through our sense of smell, or perceive the sweetness or saltiness of something through our sense of taste, or perceive the warmth or coldness of anything through our sense of feeling, all such knowledge is, as it were, certainty through sight.

With regard to the hereafter our knowledge arrives at the degree of certainty by sight when we receive direct revelation and hear the voice of God through our ears, and behold the true and clear visions of God, with our eyes. Without a doubt we are in need of direct revelation for the purpose of achieving such perfect understanding for which our hearts hunger and thirst in our beings. If God Almighty has not provided the means of such comprehension for us in advance then why has He created this hunger and thirst in our hearts? Can we be content that in this life, which is our only measure for the hereafter, we should

believe in the true and perfect and mighty and living God only on the basis of tales and stories, or should depend upon understanding or reason alone, which understanding is still defective and incomplete? Do not the hearts of true lovers of God desire that they should enjoy the delight of converse with the Beloved, and should those who have given up everything in the world for the sake of God and have devoted their hearts and lives to Him, be content with repining in a dim light without beholding the countenance of that Sun of Truth? Is it not true that an affirmation by the Living God: I am present; bestows such a degree of understanding compared with which the self conceived books of all the philosophers amount to nothing at all? What can those so-called philosophers teach us who are themselves blind? In short, if God Almighty designs to bestow perfect understanding upon His seekers then He has certainly kept open the way of converse with them. In this context God, the Glorious, has taught us the supplication in the Holy Quran:

Guide us in the right path—

The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed *Thy* blessings... (1:6-7)

Guide us along the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favors. Here by divine favors is meant heavenly knowledge by way of revelation and visions that are bestowed directly upon man. At another place it is said:

As for those who say 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, *saying*: 'Fear ye not, nor grieve; and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised. (41:31)

Upon those who, having believed in God, continue steadfast, descend God's angels reassuring them: Fear not, nor grieve, and rejoice in the paradise that you have been promised. Here it is clearly stated that the righteous servants of God receive revelation from God at times of fear and grief and angels descend upon them to reassure them. At another place it is said:

For them are glad tidings in the present life and *also* in the hereafter... (10:65)

that the friends of God receive glad tidings in this life through

revelation and converse with God and will also have the same experience in the hereafter.

Meaning of Revelation

It should be kept well in mind that revelation does not mean that an idea should arise in the mind of a person who sets himself to ponder over a thing as, for instance, a poet having thought out half a verse seeks the other half in his mind and his mind suggests the other half. This is not revelation but is the result of reflection, in accordance with the law of nature. When a person reflects upon something good or bad, a corresponding idea arises in his mind. For instance, one person who is pious and truthful composes verses in support of truth, and another one, who is wicked and vicious, supports falsehood in his verses and abuses the righteous. Both these would, no doubt, write a certain number of verses, and it is quite possible that the verses of the one who is the enemy of the righteous and supports falsehood might be better than the verses of the other one, on account of his greater practice in writing poetry. So, if the arising of an idea in the mind should be accounted as revelation, a vile poet who is the enemy of truth and of the righteous and writes in opposition to the truth and has recourse to imposture, would be called a recipient of divine revelation. Many novels are written in excellent style and set forth altogether false but continuous well arranged tales. Then would these stories be designated as revelation? If revelation were to mean merely an idea arising in one's mind, a thief would also be called a recipient of revelation, for an expert thief often thinks out surprising ways of theft and robbery, and many clever, plans of robbery and murder pass through his mind. Would all these unclean projects be called revelation? Indeed not. Such is the thinking only of those who are not aware of the true God Who comforts the hearts of His servants with His converse and bestows the understanding of spiritual knowledge upon those who are not familiar with it.

What then is revelation? It is the living and powerful converse of the Holy and Mighty God with a chosen servant of His, or with one whom He designs to make His elect. When this converse starts in an adequate and satisfactory manner, being altogether free from the darkness of false concepts, and is not composed merely of a few

inadequate and meaningless words, and is full of delight and wisdom and grandeur, then it surely is the word of God with which He designs to comfort His servant and to manifest Himself to him. Sometimes revelation is vouchsafed to a person by way of trial and is not equipped with full blessings. In such a case the recipient is put on his trial at this elementary stage so that having tasted somewhat of revelation he should order his life along the lines of those who are true recipients of revelation, in default of which he would encounter frustration. If he does not adopt the ways of the truly righteous he is deprived of the fullness of this bounty and is left only with vain boasting.

Millions of the virtuous have been recipients of revelation, but they were not of equal standing in the estimation of God. Indeed, even the holy Prophets of God, who are recipients of divine revelation at the highest level, are not equal in rank, as God Almighty has said:

These Messengers have We exalted, some of them above others... (2:254)

Of these Messengers some have We exalted above others. This shows that revelation is pure divine grace and is not evidence of exaltation. Exaltation is according to the degree of truth, sincerity, and faithfulness of the recipient, which is known only to God. If revelation possesses all its blessed conditions it is also one of the fruits of such qualities. There is no doubt that if revelation takes the form that the recipient submits a question and God responds to it, and there is a sequence between question and answer, and the revelation is characterized by divine majesty and light, and comprehends knowledge of the unseen and true understanding, it is truly the word of God. It is necessary that divine revelation should be like a dialogue between two friends. When the servant submits a question he should receive a delicious and eloquent response from God Almighty in which his own self and thinking and reflection should have no part. If such a dialogue is bestowed as a bounty upon a person, it is the word of God and its recipient is held dear by God. That revelation should be bestowed as a bounty, and a living and holy series of revelations should be bestowed upon a servant by God clearly and in a pure form, is not the portion of anyone except of those who attain a high level of faith and sincerity and righteous action, and of that which we cannot here disclose. True and holy revelation displays many wonders of the Godhead.

Very often a brilliant light is generated and along with it a majestic and shining revelation is vouchsafed. What could be a greater bounty than this that a recipient of revelation should hold converse with the Being Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. God can be seen in this world only through converse with Him.

This does not include the condition of a person from whose tongue an idle word, or sentence or verse proceeds unaccompanied by any dialogue. Such a person is under trial by God, for God sometimes tries a slothful and neglectful servant of His in this manner that a sentence or a statement issues from his heart or tongue and he becomes a blind person not knowing whence the statement has proceeded, whether from God or from Satan. Such a one should implore istighfar in respect of such an experience. But if a righteous and virtuous servant of God should experience unobstructed dialogue with the Divine and should hear bright, and delicious, and meaningful, and wise, and majestic divine utterances in a state of complete wakefulness in the shape of question and answer at least ten times, that is to say he put a question and God replied to it and then in complete wakefulness he made another submission and God made answer to it, and he made another humble supplication and God replied to that. This should have happened ten times. If in the course of such dialogue God should accept his prayers and should instruct him in excellent insights and should inform him of coming events and should honour him repeatedly with His clear dialogue, such a one should be deeply grateful to God Almighty and should be more devoted to Him than anyone else, because God, of His pure grace, has chosen him from among His servants and has made him the heir of those faithful ones who have passed on before him. This bounty is most rare and is the highest good luck. For him on whom it is bestowed everything else is utterly without value.

A characteristic of Islam

Islam has always produced persons of this rank. It is Islam alone in which God approaches a servant and holds converse with him and speaks inside him. He builds His throne in the heart of such a one and pulls him from inside towards heaven. He bestows upon him all the bounties that were bestowed on those before him. It is a pity that the

blind world does not realize how far a person can reach in nearness to God. They do not step forward themselves, and if another one does so, he is either declared a disbeliever or he is deified and is Put in the Place of God. Both these are great wrongs which proceed from one extreme or the other. A wise one should not lack high resolve and should not persist in the denial of such an exalted rank being conferred on anyone, and should neither denigrate such a one nor deify him. When a person attains such high rank God Almighty manifests such relationship with him as if He covers him up with the mantle of His Godhead and such a one becomes a mirror for beholding God. That is why the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: He who has seen me has seen God. This is the last stage in the spiritual progress of man in which he is bestowed full satisfaction.

The Speaker is Honored with Divine Converse

I would be guilty of doing great wrong to my fellow beings if I were not to declare at this stage that divine bounty has bestowed upon me the status which I have just defined and has honored me with the kind of converse the features of which I have just set out in detail, so that I should bestow sight upon the blind and should guide the seekers of the One Who has been so far lost, and should give to those who accept the truth the good news of that holy fountain of which many speak but which few find. I wish to assure the listeners that the God, meeting with Whom is the salvation and eternal welfare of man, cannot be found without following the, Holy Quran. Would that the people were to see that which I have seen, and were to hear that which I have heard, and should lay aside mere tales and should run to the truth. The cleansing water which removes all doubt, that mirror through which that Supreme Being can be seen, is converse with the Divine that I have just mentioned. Let him whose soul seeks the truth arise and search. I tell you truly that if souls are charged with true seeking and hearts develop true thirst, people would search for that way and would seek that path. How can that way be discovered, and how can the intervening veil be removed? I assure all seekers that it is Islam alone which conveys the good news of that path. All other people have since long sealed up divine revelation. Be sure, however, that this seal is not imposed by God, but is an excuse that is put forward by man on account of his privation. Be sure that as it is not possible that we should be able to see without eyes, or should be able to hear without ears, or

should be able to speak without a tongue, in the same way it is not possible that without the help of the Quran we should be able to behold the countenance of the True Beloved. I was young and am now old but I have not encountered anyone who has quaffed the cup of this visible understanding except out of this holy fountain.

The Source of Perfect Knowledge is Divine Revelation

Dear ones, no one can fight God's designs. Be sure that the source of perfect knowledge is divine revelation which is bestowed on the holy prophets of God. Therefore God, Who is the ocean of grace, did not design that divine revelation should be sealed up for the future and the world should thus be destroyed. The doors of His revelation and converse are always open. If you seek them along their proper ways you will find them easily. The water of life has come down from heaven and has stopped at its proper place. What must you do, so that you might drink of it? You should, by some means or the other, arrive at that fountain and should put your mouth to it so that you might be filled with the water of life. The entire good fortune of a person consists in this that he should run in the direction in which he perceives that light, and should adopt the way in which he discovers a sign of the Friend Who has been lost. You have observed that light always descends from heaven and falls upon the earth. In the same way the true light of guidance also descends from heaven. Man's own devices and his own, conjectures cannot bestow true understanding upon him. Can you behold God without His manifestation? Can you see in the dark without the help of heavenly light; If you can you may perhaps see in this case also. But our eyes, though in perfect condition, depend on heavenly light; and our ears, though they can hear perfectly, depend upon the air which circulates under divine direction. That god is not true who is silent and leaves everything to our conjectures. The Perfect and Living God is He Who manifests Himself on His own. At this time also He has designed to disclose His own Being. The windows of heaven are about to open, the day is about to dawn. Blessed are those who should rise up and seek the True God, the One Who is not overtaken by any calamity, the brilliance of Whose Glory is never dimmed. It is said in the Holy Quran:

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (24:36)

meaning that all the light of the heavens and the earth proceeds from God and lights up everything. He is the Sun that bestows light upon the sun, and He is the life of all the animates in the earth. He is the True Living God. Blessed are those who accept Him.

The third source of knowledge is certainty through experience, that is to say, all the hardships and calamities and sufferings that are experienced by the Prophets and the righteous at the hands of their opponents, or that are imposed upon them by Divine decree. Through these hardships and sufferings all the commandments of the law and its directions that were comprehended by the human mind intellectually, appear in practical shape and become experience, and by being developed by practical exercise arrive at their climax, and the person concerned himself becomes a perfect code of Divine guidance. All the moral qualities like forbearance, retribution, endurance, mercy etc. which hitherto pervaded the mind and heart theoretically, become part of the personality through practical experience and make their impress upon the total personality of the sufferer, as God the Glorious has said:

And We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives, and fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient,

Who, when a misfortune overtakes them, say 'Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return.'

It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided. (2:156-158)

You shall surely be tried in your possessions and in your persons and you shall surely hear many hurtful things from those who were given the Book before you and from those who set up equals *to God*. But if you show fortitude and act righteously, that indeed is a *matter* of strong determination. (3:187)

We shall surely try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and of the fruits of your labour, that is to say, you will suffer all this at the hands of your enemies or by virtue of Divine decree. Then give glad tidings to the steadfast, who, when a misfortune overtakes them, do not lose heart but say: Surely to Allah we belong

and to Him shall we return. It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is these who are rightly and perfectly guided. These verses indicate that there is no virtue in the knowledge that is confined to the mind and heart. True knowledge is that which emerges from the mind and regulates and trains all the limbs, and manifests in practice all the store of memory. Thus knowledge is strengthened and fostered through its impress being imposed on all the limbs by practical experience. No type of knowledge, however elementary, arrives at its climax without practice. For instance, we have always known that baking bread is perfectly easy and involves no great art. All that is needed is that after kneading the flour and preparing the dough, we should divide it into balls of proper size and pressing each ball between our hands should spread it out and place it on a properly heated pan, and moves it about till it is heated into bread. But this is only our academic boast. When without experience we start the process of baking, our first difficulty is to prepare the dough in its proper condition so that it neither becomes too hard nor remains too soft. Even if we succeed in preparing the dough after much effort and weariness, the bread that we bake will be part burnt and part unbaked with lumps all over of irregular shape, despite our observation of the process of baking over a period of half a century. Thus relying upon our bare knowledge which we have never practiced, we would suffer a loss of a quantity of flour. If such is the case of our academic knowledge in elementary matters, then how can we rely solely on our knowledge without any practical experience in matters of great import? Thus God Almighty teaches us in these verses that the sufferings which He imposes upon us are a means of perfecting our knowledge through experience.

He has then warned us: You will surely be tried in respect of your possessions and your persons, that is to say, people will plunder your wealth and will kill you; and you will surely suffer many hurtful things at the hands of Jews and Christians and of those who set up partners with Allah; but if you show fortitude and restrain yourselves, that indeed would be evidence of high resolve (3.187). The purport of all these verses is that only that knowledge is beneficial which has been tested by experience, and the knowledge that is merely academic and has not been the subject of experience is without beneficence.

As wealth is multiplied by commerce, in the same way knowledge arrives at its spiritual climax through practical experience. Thus practical experience is the principal means of perfecting knowledge and bestows a light upon knowledge. The ultimate certainty of knowledge is achieved through experience of every part of it. That is what happened in Islam. God Almighty provided the Muslims with the opportunity to illustrate whatever they were taught in the Quran in their practice and thus to become filled with its light.

(Adopted from *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, translation by Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, Islam International Publications, 1996, pp 122-137. The translation of the Qur'anic verses has been included from *The Holy Qur'an*, Maulawi Sher Ali, Islam International Publications, 1997)

Upcoming Annual Conventions

Annual Convention of the American Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

is scheduled to take place June 25-27, 1999 in Washington, D.C., metro area. Scholars will speak on Islamic subjects.



Annual Convention of the Canadian Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

will take place during July at the Baitul-Islam Mosque, Toronto. Scholars will speak on Islamic subjects.



Annual Convention of the UK Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

is scheduled for July 30-August 1, 1999 in Islamabad, Tilford, Surrey. His Holiness Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Community will address each day. An international initiation ceremony will be held. Scholars and dignitaries will also address the participants.



Annual Convention of the West Coast Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the US

will take place during November 26-28, 1999 at the Baitul-Hameed Mosque, Chino, CA. Scholars will speak on Islamic subjects.

Some Distinctive Features of Islam

Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

A Speech Delivered at the University of Canberra, Australia

(Continued from the previous issue)

Differences and Contradictions Among Faiths — Their Reality

A question that arises is; if all religions were in fact founded by Messengers from God, then why is there any difference in their teachings? Can the same God send down different teachings? This question is answered by Islam alone, and this, too, is a distinctive feature of this religion. Islam holds that there are two basic causes of differences between various religions. First, that varying conditions had needed varying dictates and rules, and the All-Knowing and All-Wise God had provided guidance for different ages, regions and peoples in accordance with their respective needs. Secondly, the contents of various faiths faded and wilted under the vicissitudes of time, hence they were not preserved in their original form. In some cases, the followers themselves introduced innovations and variations to suit changing needs, and the originally revealed Books continued to be interpolated for this purpose. Obviously, such adulteration of divine message ultimately mandated fresh guidance from the Original Source. As God has said in the Quran: *They pervert the words from their proper places and have forgotten a good part of that with which they were exhorted [10].*

If we examine the history of differences between various faiths in the light of the principles enunciated by the Quran, we find that the differences tend to diminish as we reach nearer the source itself. For instance, if we limit the comparison of Christianity and Islam only to the life of Jesus and the four gospels in the Bible, then there will appear only very minor differences between the basic teachings of the Bible and the Quran. But, as we travel further down the road of time, the chasm of these differences becomes wider and wider, till it becomes totally unbridgeable – and all because of human endeavor to revise that which was originally revealed. The history of other faiths also reveals the same basic reality, and we find strong corroboration of the Quranic

view, that the direction of human changes and revisions of the divine Message, has always been from the worship of one God to that of several, and from reality to fiction, from humanity to deification of human beings.

The Quran tells us that the surest way to distinguish a true religion, despite its subsequent mutilation, is to examine its origin. If the origin reveals the teaching of the unity of God, worship of none save the One God, and a true and genuine sympathy for all humanity, then such a religion, despite subsequent changes, must be accepted as true. The founders of religions that satisfy this criteria, were indeed righteous and pious beings, and true Messengers deputed by God, between whom we should make no distinction and in whose truth we must believe fully. They have certain fundamental features common to all regardless of differences in time and place. Thus expounds the Holy Quran:

And they were not commanded but to serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, and being upright, and to observe Prayer, and pay the Zakat. And that is the religion of the people of the right path [11].

AN ETERNAL RELIGION

Another distinctive feature of Islam is that it not only proclaims its universal character but also lays claim to being eternal, and it then proceeds to fulfill the preconditions of such a claim. For instance, a Message can be eternal only if it is complete and perfect in every aspect, and also guaranteed with regard to the verity of its contents. In other words, its revealed Books should bear divine guarantee against human revision and tampering. In so far as the teachings of the Quran are concerned, The Almighty Himself claims in the Quran:

I have this day perfected your faith for you in every way and, having completed My bounty upon you, have chosen for you Islam as religion [12].

SAFEGUARDING OF THE QURAN

As I have already said for a teaching to be eternal, it is not sufficient merely that it should be complete and perfect, but that there should also exist a guarantee for its perpetual preservation in its original form. The Quran amply satisfies this fundamental requirement,

and the One Who sent down the Quran has proclaimed it in the clearest terms that:

We have sent down this Book and verily We shall safeguard it [13].

In other words, God Himself will safeguard it and will never allow it to be tampered with. One method of the preservation of the text has been, that in accordance with Divine Will, there have always been hundreds of thousands of people in every age who have committed the text of the Quran to memory, and this practice continues to this day. And the principle measure of safeguarding the real import and essence of the Message has been the divine practice of appointing guides, reformers and revivers in the latter ages. They would be commissioned as spiritual leaders by the Almighty Himself and under divine guidance, would settle differences and controversies among the followers of Islam, thus safeguarding the true spirit of the Holy Quran.

Of course, there is the question as to whether the Quranic claim of its preservation is also supported by reliable corroborative evidence. A clue to the answer to this question ties in the fact that there are a very large number of non-Muslim researchers who, despite themselves, have totally failed to show that the text of the Quran has been tampered with, in the slightest manner after the passing away of the Holy Prophet of Islam. In fact, there are many non-Muslim researchers who have felt compelled, after their extensive searches in this field, to affirm openly that the Quran has indeed been preserved and safeguarded in its original form. For instance, Sir William Muir in his work, *The Life of Muhammad*, says: 'We may, upon the strongest presumption, affirm that every verse is the genuine and unaltered composition of Muhammad himself [14]. Also, There is otherwise every security, internal and external, that we possess the text which Muhammad himself gave forth and used [15]. Says Noldeke: *Slight clerical errors there may have been, but the Quran of Uthman contains none but genuine elements, though some times in very strange order. The efforts of European scholars to prove the existence of later interpolations in the Quran have failed [16].*

References:

10. 5:14

11. 98:6

12. 5:4

13. 15:10

14. P. XVIII

15. P. XXVII

16. *Enc. Brit. 9th Edition under the word Quran*

Upcoming Rallies

Annual Rally of the Youth Wing of the US Ahmadiyya Community

(Majlis Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya) is scheduled for August 6-8, 1999. Educational and physical competitions, sports, speeches.

Annual Rally of the Women Wing of the Mid-West US Ahmadiyya Community

(Lajna Ima-illah) is scheduled for July 16-18, 1999. Educational and physical competitions, sports, speeches.

Annual Rally of the Women Wing of the East-Coast US Ahmadiyya Community

(Lajna Ima-illah) is scheduled for August 13-15, 1999. Educational and physical competitions, sports, speeches.

Annual Rally of the Women Wing of the West-Coast US Ahmadiyya Community

(Lajna Ima-illah) is scheduled for August 27-29, 1999 at the Baitul-Hameed Mosque, Chino, CA (near LA). Educational and physical competitions, sports, speeches.

Annual Rally of the Elder-Men of West Coast US Ahmadiyya Community

(Majlis Ansarullah) is scheduled for August 27-29, 1999 at the Baitul-Hameed Mosque, Chino, CA (near LA). Educational and physical competitions, sports, speeches.

Annual Rally of the Elder-Men of the US Ahmadiyya Community

(Majlis Ansarullah) is scheduled for September 10-12, 1999 at the Baitur-Rahman Mosque, Silver Spring, MD. 301-879-0110

Intellectual Values

Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan

Knowledge and Research

Keep up the supplication: Lord, bestow on me an increase of knowledge (The Holy Quran, 20.115).

The Holy Prophet (peace be on him) said:

1. The quest of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.
2. Seeking knowledge ranks higher than worship.
3. To acquire a little learning is better than much worship.
4. Acquire knowledge, and for the sake of knowledge acquire dignity and peace of mind; and be humble and respectful towards your teacher.
5. Honor him from whom you acquire knowledge.
6. Instruct the people and do not be hard on them, for an instructor is better than a martinet.
7. The most insatiable person is the seeker after knowledge, and the most satiated is he who does not seek it.
8. Two hungry ones are never satisfied, he who seeks knowledge and he who seeks the world.
9. The best charity on the part of a Muslim is to acquire knowledge and to impart it to others.
10. There is no higher charitable endeavor than the propagation of knowledge.
11. A seeker after knowledge who dies while occupied with his pursuit is a martyr.
12. A seeker after knowledge among the ignorant is like a living person among the dead.
13. He who acquires knowledge in his early years is like one who engraves on stone, and he who acquires late in life is like one who writes on water.

14. Preserve knowledge through writing.
15. Seek assistance from your right hand by writing down that which you are likely to forget.
16. Restore to the Muslims their lost property, namely, learning.
17. Greed deprives the minds of the learned of wisdom.
18. He who is endowed with intelligence will prosper.
19. To find knowledge you have to seek it.
20. Knowledge which is concealed is lost.
21. A shy person and an arrogant one fail in their pursuit of knowledge.
22. When a learned man is asked, *Who is most learned?* he should refer all knowledge to Allah.
23. A scholar among the virtuous is like the moon among the stars.
24. Brevity is good.

Edited from "Wisdom of the Holy Prophet"

Contributing to the Muslim Sunrise

Literary Contributions

We prefer to receive articles, comments, etc.,
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Seeking Knowledge is the Duty of Every Muslim Man and Muslim Woman

Hadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad, MA (may Allah be pleased with him)

Narrated by Hadrat Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), "It is the duty of every Muslim man and woman to seek knowledge." (*Ibne Majah*)

Explanatory Note

Since Islam is based on certain knowledge revealed by God, in the shape of the final law and advances its views with the supporting force of argument, it therefore very rightly lays extreme emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge. This is one of the many *ahadith* by means of which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has enjoined on Muslims, both men and women, to acquire knowledge. He was so particular about it, according to another *hadith*, that he is reported to have commanded, "Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China for this purpose." It should be borne in mind that, owing to the conditions obtaining then, China was not only the most distant country from Arabia, but also the way to it was full of great hazards and traveling to it was beset with extreme dangers and great hardships besides entailment of extraordinary expenses. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has, by singling China out, by way of example, in fact underlined the value of knowledge, to impress on the faithful, the necessity of acquiring learning even in face of extreme hardships and prohibitive distances. The early Muslims, accordingly; as historical evidence shows, used to travel hundreds of miles and undergo heavy expenses to hear a *hadith* of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) from his companions. When a man, after having traversed hundreds of miles, came from Medina to Damascus, to hear from Hadrat Abu Darda (Allah be pleased with him) a tradition of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), Abu Darda related to him that particular *hadith* and also told him that he had heard the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) say that whoso undertook a journey for the purpose of acquiring

knowledge, Allah would open up for him the way to it and at the same time open his way to paradise. In another hadith, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has observed that a learned man in comparison with a worshipping man who lacks knowledge, is like unto the full moon in comparison with a star. Again, in another *hadith*, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) says that a learned man far outweighs a thousand worshippers against the Satan. Another *hadith of* the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) states: The learned who are also pious constitute the greatest good of my people. In yet another *hadith* the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has observed that the learned *Ulema* (scholars) are the heirs of the Prophets. The Holy Quran affirms that true learning must be accompanied by righteousness, piety and proper deeds, otherwise it is nothing better than a load on the back of a donkey.

In short, Islam has laid extreme emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge and true learning has been accorded a status next to faith's. In addition, knowledge has been aptly declared limitless. Hence the instruction that the more one acquires it, the more one should seek to increase it. Even the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), the Pride of creation and the Chief of the Universe and Head of the Messengers, has been taught the following prayer by Allah the Excellent, in the Holy Quran. "Say: Lord grant me increase in knowledge."

As already made clear in the *hadith* under review, the Holy Prophet (peace and , blessings of Allah be on him) has not restricted the pursuit of knowledge only to men: He has similarly commanded women to seek knowledge. It is a matter of deep regret that, notwithstanding these peremptory injunctions, the standard of educational advancement of Muslim men and women is far from being superior to that of other people, it is in fact, comparatively very poor and low... This exhibition of illiteracy does little credit to a people who owe allegiance to the most learned of world Reformers (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). It is high time Muslims realized their obligation and set about not only leading but excelling the rest of mankind in the field of both secular and religious learning.

Edited for the Muslim Sunrise from "Forty Gems of Beauty,"
Second Edition, 1971, pp 188-192

Educational and Cultural Contributions of the Muslims

Dr Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah

In spite of the recent international T.V. Broadcasts about Middle East and Muslim countries, there is still a lot to know about the civilization of Islam. Generally speaking, a due credit is not given to the Muslims for their remarkable educational and cultural achievements. This article is, therefore, an endeavor to supply the missing pages in many of the History and Foundation of Education books.

The Muslims, in the early days of Islam, have variously been referred to as Saracens and Moors. The word "Saracen" literally means "eastern," whereas the dark colored natives of Africa were called the Moors.

It is said that everything has its time and every nation has its rise. The Muslims have seen their "glorious days" too. The period of Muslim glory was from the 7th to 12th century A.D. The Muslims, as a nation, rose to power after the fall of the Roman Empire which traditionally occurred in A.D. 476. Starting from Arabia and along the shores of the Red Sea, the Muslims swept rapidly through Asia Minor, Persia, West Africa, Sicily and adjacent islands crossing into France and capturing nearly all of Portugal and Spain. At its peak, the Muslim Empire was larger in extent than that which Shakespeare called "mighty Rome." The thousand year period following the Fall of the Roman Empire was called Media Tempestatas, that is, Middle Ages. At that time, Europe was passing through what is called "Dark Ages." During the Middle Ages, Muslim thought was dominant over the then known world. The Muslims, during the Middle Ages contributed generously to the welfare of the then known world. A phraseology was then coined in Latin: "Ex Orientie Lux," that is, "Light From the East." The Muslims then took up the task of disseminating knowledge. Education, as such, spread rapidly throughout the Muslim world. But by this time, the Muslim power declined. Europe had borrowed, adapted and adopted the cultural and educational progress of the Muslims. This caused Renaissance or Rebirth of Learning in Europe. (Barkatullah, Education During Middle Ages, pp. 1-2).

Al Andalus is the Arabic name for the Iberian Peninsula. Spain under the Muslims became the educational and cultural center of the world. Cubberly says: "Muslim learning in Spain helped in the intellectual awakening of the rest of the world" (History of Education, p. 185). The students of history and philosophy of Education will find the culture and scholarships of the Muslims of great interest. Because, "... it were these Muslims who played an important role in bringing back into Europe the lost spirit of learning" (Wilds and Lottich, The Foundations of Education, p. 147).

Muslim cities were for many nations to be proud of. The streets were solidly paved and kept in good condition. The streets were safe and illuminated at night. About Cordoba it is said that a person could walk ten miles straight in the light of the public lamps. This can be appreciated knowing the background that London did not have a single street lamp until seven hundred years later. And, in Paris, no one could cross the threshold on a rainy day without stepping into mud up to the ankles and somewhere knees. (Lewis, Spain, p. 28).

The Muslims built beautiful and comfortable homes. They had retiring rooms, balconies, patios and beautiful lawns. They enjoyed homes where cool air was drawn from flower gardens in summer and warm as well as perfumed air would permeate their rooms in winter through earthen pipes from vaults below. Inside the room, the tapestry lined the walls and expensive Persian rugs covered the floor. The Muslims not only had baths at home, but there were numerous public baths as well. These baths were made from pure marble. Some baths had three spigots from which flowed hot water, cold water and perfumed water. The Muslims even had flushed toilets in private bed rooms. At that time in the rest of Europe people were living in draughty and gloomy houses. The rulers Of England, Germany, and France lived in houses scarcely better than stables, chimneyless and windowless, with a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape.

The Muslims invented paper. The first paper manufacturing plant, under the Muslims was opened in 794 in Baghdad. The invention helped in making of books. Baghdad then had over 100 booksellers. There were equally a larger number of book shops throughout Spain and other places. The book shops were also centers of copying, calligraphy, literary gathering. Many students made a living by copying manuscripts and selling the copies to booksellers. Will Durant states:

“We gratefully omit their names and salute their achievement” (The Age of Faith, p. 231).

The Muslims developed a skillful system of agriculture. They developed scientific agriculture which was regulated by a code of law. They introduced irrigation by flood-gates, wheels and pumps. The Muslims devoted attention to the cultivation of plants, vegetables, gardens, and orchard fruits. They introduced orange, lemon, peach, apricot, mulberry, almond and olive. Among the vegetables, the Muslims introduced the spinach, artichoke and asparagus. They introduced rice, sugar, sugarcane and cotton among useful plants. Muslims once supplied salt to the rest of the world. Muslims were experts in the breeding of horses and cattle. The “Andalusian horse” was the prize animal of the world. The Muslims paid attention to the culture of silkworm, manufacturer of silk and cotton garments, the manufacture of paper from cotton, and making of “Morocco leather.” “These are,” Cubberly remarks, “among our debts to the Muslim.” (History of Education, p. 180).

To the Arabic, Europe is indebted for many of common names: syrup, Julep, elixir, admiral, alcohol, spinach, cotton, chemise, chemistry, etc. The Muslims had developed the science of chemistry to its highest points. They commenced the application of chemistry to the theory and practice of medicine. In Muslim world, there were hospitals of great repute. The Muslim physicians did not hesitate to perform the most difficult surgical operations. Also, female physicians were available to perform delicate surgery on female patients. (Lewis, Spain, p. 34)

It is not surprising that in a civilization such as of Muslims there should be a well organized system of education. Home was a basic unit where basic instruction was given. Elementary schools were free for boys and girls. These schools were attached to Mosques and basic religious education was also imparted by religious scholars. Secondary and higher education was open to all, rich as well as poor. The Muslim system of education was so universally diffused that it was said that it was difficult to find a person who could not read and write. (Wilds and Lottich, The Foundations of Education, p. 150)

The Muslims introduced into Europe the Arabic numerals, the nine

digits and the cipher. The word “cipher” in Arabic means a blank or void. The Muslims introduced the “globe.” To teach geography with the help of globe was a common practice in a classroom. This was the time when flatness of the earth was being asserted in Europe. A degree of earth’s surface was measured on the shores of the Red Sea. The Muslims determined the obliquity of the ecliptic. Algebra and Trigonometry were perfected, discoveries in chemistry and advances in physics were made. In medicine and surgery their work was not duplicated until early 19th century.

The Muslims made very important astronomical discoveries and gave the stars many of their names. The Giralda or Tower of Seville was the first Astronomical Tower built in Europe. Astronomical tables were also calculated. The Muslims determined the length of the year and were the first to use the Pendulum oscillation as a measurement of time. They introduced gunpowder, and made tables of specific gravities. They introduced measurement by weight, the smallest being a grain of barley, four of which made one sweet pea called in Arabic a carat. We still use it when we speak of gold being so many carats fine.

The Muslims were philosophers and scientists. They developed fine literature. The “Arabian Nights” is still a world classic. Muslim scholars compiled dictionaries, lexicons, encyclopedias, and pharmacopoeias of merit. The Muslims thus made further advances in science, mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, physiology, medicine and surgery. As a combination of art and applied sciences, Muslim workmanship reached its climax in architecture. Muslim architecture was elaborately beautiful, with wood and stone carvings and tile intricately patterned in different colors. The Mosques, palaces, Alhambra are examples of superb craftsmanship.

There was another Muslim influence not of immediate but of future importance - the music, light literature and love songs of Spain. There appeared a band of storytellers, a race of troubadours and minnesingers. They sang in vernacular, traveled around the country and seeking admission in castles to entertain:

Lordlyng listeneth to my tale,

Which is merryer than the nightengale

won admission to any castle gate... “out of these genial but not

orthodox beginnings," observes Cubberly, "the polite literature of modern Europe arose." (History of Education, p. 186)

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The Importance of Education in the Light of Religion

Dr. Yusef A. Lateef

In looking at the Historical Foundation of Education in the United States, we find that during 1620-1630, the pilgrims set foot upon the coast of what is now Massachusetts. Those Pilgrims were firmly committed to an outlook on life that we call Puritanism, which is also known as Separatists, because of a complete separation from the church of England. The Puritans were a deeply religious people who considered salvation a primary purpose of life; therefore salvation was then a primary purpose of schooling. Their subject matter for study was almost exclusively religious, that being: the Catechism, Holy Bible, the Psalter and the Testament. This continued for more than a century. Around the middle of the 18th century the pedagogical theories and practices of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi made us sensitive to the significance of a democratic culture and paved the way for national education. Pestalozzi was aware and sensitive to inequalities based on wealth and social class. The degradation of the poor affected him deeply and inspired his life long humanitarianism.

Friedrich Froebel (1782-1842), a follower of Pestalozzi, is known as the founder of the Kindergarten movement. Froebel taught organized play. For Froebel, play was important because it is the first means of development of the human mind, its first effort to make acquaintance with the outside world, to collect original experiences from things and facts and to exercise the powers of body and mind. He believed that this kind of instruction should lead and guide man to clearness concerning himself, and in himself, to peace with nature, and to unity with God. One can assume that by peace with nature, he means, not only, peace with ecology, but peace with all entities external to one's self, which includes not only earth, animal life and vegetation but all of humanity.

In looking at the Historical Foundation of Islam we find that the Holy Quran, the holy book of the Islamic world, is the basis and foundation of Islamic Education. The Islamic World believes that the Quran was revealed by God, over fourteen hundred years ago, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

Due to the religious basis of the Islamic society, the mosque was from the earliest day of the era, the hub of the community, and in addition to its religious and even social role, it soon acquired an educational function, in fact, it became the earliest school in Islam.

As the religion of Islam expanded, mosques became the place where instruction in the basic rules and precepts of the faith were provided. Within three centuries, Baghdad possessed 3,000 mosques, and in the fourteenth century an estimated 14,000 mosques were to be found in Alexandria.

As you can see in my brief historical overview of education in the light of Religion, the Puritans, Pestalozzi, and Froebel were all interested in a system of education that would lead mankind to clearness concerning himself, to peace with nature, and to unity with God.

Similarly, Islamic Education was and still is concerned with the highest spiritual, moral and intellectual development that may be obtained by mankind.

In order for a man to be truly humane his thoughts and actions are characterized by tenderness, compassion and sympathy for all humanity and animals. In other words one's soul must develop a deep love for God and all of God's creation. And what is the soul? The soul is the essence of man or an individual which consist of three parts; First, the spirit, which relates to the religious intellectual and other concerns of the spirit. Second, the mind-the agency or part within the human being that reasons, understands, wills, perceives and experiences emotions. Third, the heart, which is the center of the total personality, especially with reference to intuition, feeling or emotion, love, affection, sympathy or enthusiasm to be fundamentally kind or generous. The remarkable thing about the heart, sometimes called the intuition is that it gives us a direct access to truth.

Recently, in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City Bombing, an expert on terrorism was interviewed on one of the TV networks. The expert was asked the question, "How can we as a nation avoid such disasters in the future?" The expert sighted that we, very well, may need to increase our intelligence facilities. His comment made me

think that intelligence is best served when guided by love, affection and sympathy for others. I also wish to point out here that intelligence is only part of a human being's soul. As I have said the soul consists of the spirit, the mind and the heart. The heart, in reality, bears witness to the truth of the spirit and the mind.

Let us review some religious assertions from the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran as they relate to the spirit, mind and heart. In the Bible, it is written: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts." Psalms 139:23. This verse, in my thinking, implies that God is capable of looking into the heart of man, and by doing so, sees the thoughts of an individual.

In the Quran, 2:226, it is written:

"God will not call you to account for such of your oaths as are vain, but he will call you to account for what your hearts have earned." Here it is made clear that we are responsible to God for the intentions of our heart. Once the mind-set of good intentions are embedded in the heart, we are likely to cleanse our hearts of evil and vile intentions so as to avoid the consequence of such intentions.

When one loves God, one, then, loves all of God's creation. One cannot sincerely love God and not love God's creation. A true Religion, when sincerely practiced, is that which puts one in harmony with God and his fellow man. When one moves away from religion, one moves away from light. We all have a center of consciousness, which is in the heart. The expansion of consciousness must include God. The expansion comes from understanding the attributes of God. And by expanding ourselves in any of the attributes of God, we excel.

LOVE is one of the attributes of God of course, no matter how hard we try, our love will never have the magnitude of God is Love; however, we should strive to love God and all of God's creation with all of our heart. We should fear displeasing God in any in any way.

The person who has the fear of God in their heart, has wisdom; and only God knows the righteousness that lies in the heart.

In Matthew (12:35) it is written: "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

I conclude by saying that proper education and spiritual guidance are necessary for us to do good deeds. Those who realize in their hearts that it is God who created mankind, will respect mankind and try to

The Importance of Education in the Light of Religion

serve all of humanity. They will realize that God is the creator, the Sustainer and Perfector. They will realize that they can attain the highest spiritual stature and can reflect God's Divine Attributes, so as to become the mirror of their Creator. Therefore, while there is life in us, there remains a chance to move toward the light of righteousness by seeking knowledge and educating ourselves.

He realizes that it is God Who determines his capacities and is the only one who can provide him with appropriate facilities.

He/she who fears God, will heed; But the most wretched will not. They are the losers. They only expose themselves to the fire of disbelief.

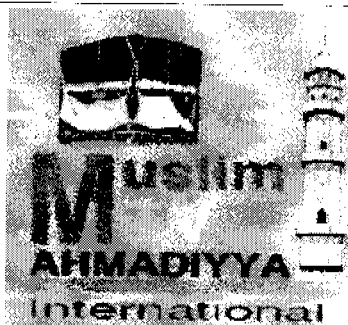
However, God is Forgiving, Merciful.

The other day a friend of mine told me about a bumper sticker that he saw on a car which said:

"Don't wait until you're dead to find out that there is a God." While there is life, there remains a chance to move towards the light of righteousness, by seeking knowledge and educating ourselves.

The Quran says: "Surely, he indeed will prosper who purifies himself. And remembers the name of God and offers Prayers."

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The Importance of Seeking Knowledge in Islam

Abdul Ahad Khan Chowdhury, Los Angeles, CA

A recent article in a California newspaper bemoans the passing of the opportunity to get “lost in the woods” for hunters, skiers, and fishermen - an opportunity that was sometimes used on purpose by people aiming to “get away from it all.” It is all because of the increasing availability of Global Positioning System technology - GPS for short.

In a typical GPS system the position of a hand-held transmitter-receiver in a person’s possession is pin-pointed with great accuracy by radio signals from two or three satellites positioned in space, above the earth. The error in accuracy can be less than a meter. The user simply consults the display on the device and finds out exactly where (within the limits of accuracy) he or she is on the face of the earth, and can find the way to trails and relief stations easily (however unpleasant the return to civilization might be). Spacecraft on exploratory missions make use of similar guidance systems on their interplanetary voyages.

“Impressive!” we say, when we hear of the rapid strides that mankind is making in science and technology. However, against a technological background of computers and a myriad of other electronic wonders, the development of GPS pales into insignificance when compared with the development of the astrolabe and other navigational aids against a background of almost total medieval ignorance. And who were the people who invented, developed, and/or spread those pioneering instruments all over the globe, from which actions the entire world has benefited over the centuries? Some of these devices did owe their theoretical and practical design to Greek thinkers. It was none other than the trailblazing Muslims of yore, however, who developed and propagated the concepts they learned, no matter what the source. These Muslims had taken to heart the Qur’anic passages such as:

“Allah will exalt in rank those from among you who believe and those to whom knowledge is given” (58:12),

and

“Keep up the supplication: Lord, bestow on me an increase of knowledge” (20:115).

In Islam, the acquisition of knowledge, both spiritual and temporal, has been made mandatory on every believing man and woman. Knowledge is described as a priceless commodity in description after description:

“Convey! And thy Lord is Most Generous, Who taught man by the pen, taught man what he knew not” (Al-Qur’an, 96:4-6).

“Ask them: Can those who know be like those who know not? (Al-Qur’an, 39:10)

“Seek knowledge even if you have to travel to China. (Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

“The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of a martyr.” (Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

Knowledge is like the lost wealth of the Muslims. Retrieve it from whoever you may find it.” (Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

This last of the above-mentioned ahadith (recorded statement made by the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him) will probably explain the sentiments expressed in the following passage authored by Dr Abdus Salam, who shared the Nobel Prize in Physics with two other scientists in 1979:

“A unique feature of the Muslim endeavor [sic] is that the Commonwealth of Islam cut across the barriers of geographical and racial limitations. The algebraists, mathematicians, geographers, astronomers, chemists, men of letters, physicists, etc, which Islam produced, came from different parts of the Muslim Empire - they were Arabs, Persians, Turks, Afghans, Spaniards, etc. Not only did they cut across those barriers from within, but also they were extremely tolerant of the ideas of those from without.”

An example of the degree of tolerance mentioned by Dr Abdus Salam can be found in the reaction to the writings of Maimonides, a Jewish theologian who lived in Egypt under Muslim rule. Some of his writings were highly critical of aspects of Islamic belief. When they were publicized inadvertently, the Jewish community in Egypt braced itself for an outburst of anger and attacks. But surprisingly enough for them, such a reaction never materialized. On the contrary, the scholarly portion of Maimonides' expositions received much approbation from other writers. A hadith (recorded statement made by the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him) from Tirmidhi runs as follows:

“Abi Sa'id Khudri relates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said: A believer never has his fill of knowledge until he ends up in paradise.”

From Tirmidhi again, we read:

“Anas relates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said: He who issues forth in search of knowledge is busy in the cause of Allah until he return from his quest.”

Down through the centuries, millions of Muslims have sincerely attempted to gain wisdom and knowledge, preserve those treasures, and pass them on to posterity. Please note here that after the fading away of the Greeks' Lyceums and Academies and subsequent centuries of “darkness,” the first institutions of higher learning were the universities established at Granada, Cordoba, and Seville. These universities were established by Muslims, and present-day universities are still patterned closely on the Iberian prototype of centuries ago. The implication is, of course, that the modern world — East and West — owes much more to Muslim scholars than most people realize.

In reference to Muslim Spain's contributions to the West, Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, says in a 1993 address:

“Cordoba in the tenth century was by far the most civilized city of Europe. We know of lending libraries in Spain at the time King Alfred was making terrible blunders with the culinary arts in this country. It is said that the 400,000 volumes

The Importance of Seeking Knowledge in Islam

in its ruler's library amounted to more books than all the libraries of the rest of Europe put together."

During periods of dynamic Muslim progress, many scholars rose to fame by virtue of their erudition and knowledge in many different fields. Reproduced below is a brief list of famous scholars who lived at the time of the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad (750-1258 C.E.):

al-Razi (Rhazes)	Physician
ibn-Sina (Avicenna)	Physician, philosopher, astronomer: called "the Persian Galen"
al-Khawarizmi	Mathematician, astronomer, geographer; founder of algebra; major proponent of Arabic numerals, the negative sign, and the symbol for zero
al-Biruni	Philosopher, historian, scientist
Umar al-Khayyam	Poet, mathematician, astronomer
ibn Hayyan (Geber)	Father of modern chemistry
al-Ghazali	Philosopher
al-Farabi (Alpharabius)	Philosopher
Firdausi	Writer, poet

During the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain (925-1031 C.E.), the Islamic community produced some of the most brilliant thinkers the world has ever seen. These sages include:

ibn Rushd (Averroes)	Philosopher, astronomer
Mohyuddin ibn al-Arabi	Muslim mystic
ibn Khaldun	Historian
Al-Baytar	Botanist, pharmacist
ibn Batuta	"Globe-trotting" traveler
al-Zarqali	Astronomer
ibn Zuhr	Physician

Critics of Islam sometimes produce a specious argument that is designed to weaken the Muslim community's claim to promoting learning and preserving wisdom. It is the accusation that Muslims have actually participated in the destruction of stores of knowledge, specifically, in the torching of the great library at Alexandria. This allegation, however, has never been supported by any concrete evidence, from what the present writer has seen. On the contrary,

another explanation for the tragedy is available, which the reader will note a little later. It is interesting that the first *khalifa* (caliph, or successor) of the Ahmadiyya Movement, *Hadrat* Maulvi Nuruddin (may Allah be pleased with him) heard the same allegation from a non-Muslim. When he asked the other person where he had found this piece of so-called information, he was told that it was in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. To this, the erudite *Hadrat* Maulvi Nuruddin (may Allah be pleased with him) brusquely replied, "It is not in Gibbon." The gentleman left confounded. Some days later, he visited *Hadrat* Maulvi Nuruddin (may Allah be pleased with him) again and admitted that he had simply been unable to find it anywhere in the massive tome. It, therefore, seems to be simply a jaundiced view, spread by innuendo, that has given the Muslim attitude toward learning and progress a bad name in some quarters.

For a possible explanation of the burning of the library, I refer my readers to *Mathematicians are People, Too*, by Luetta and Wilbert Reimer (Dale Seymour Publications, 1990). In an article about the Greek mathematician Hypatia, the authors portray a scenario in which a group of religious bigots led by Archbishop Cyril of Alexandria - definitely not Muslims! - burn down the library. Incidentally, Gibbon's famous masterpiece - referred to above - does describe the horrible end to which Hypatia was subjected, at the hands of the same bigots. Thus, the Reimers' version of events seems plausible, at the very least.

It is no secret that, even in this day and age, it is those nations that prosper which have committed themselves to learning, whether material or otherwise. Witness the intellectual dominance of Germany for many decades. Witness the spectacular rise of Japan, Taiwan, Mainland China, and a host of other countries. (Dr Abdus Salam has marveled, in an article, at the fact that high-schoolers in China were learning about "orders of infinity.")

Contrast the seriousness toward learning and education found in some countries with the frivolous attitude toward school and knowledge-gathering that we see around us, in this very nation. In the U.S., more often than not, the word "schoolboy" or "schoolgirl" is used in a derogatory sense to label those who are serious in their studies. ("Nerd" is also used.) It is not then surprising that, in a series of tests and comparisons of intellectual prowess, U.S. students consistently

scored the lowest of all when compared to other industrialized (and some developing) nations. (A certain Middle-Eastern country is reported to have done poorly in a few subject areas, too. That country has suffered through war and civil strife in recent years, though, unlike the United States.)

However, all this will change, with Allah's help. A community of serious students and researchers are gradually making their presence felt in the upper echelons of higher education in the U.S., England, Italy, and beyond.

I believe, Muslim scientists and researchers will be at the forefront of new discoveries and new explorations. Those of us of the Ahmadi persuasion firmly believe in a resurgence of Muslim (and secular) thought and achievement, akin to what the world had seen during the first golden age of Islamic scientific progress. It is the Ahmadi community in Islam that has produced the first Muslim Nobel Prize laureate in Science, Dr Abdus Salam. There will be many more scholars of international stature, Insha Allah.

In conclusion, I quote a lengthy quote from the Holy Prophet of Islam, Mohammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, from Abu Daud and Tirmidhi, which will drive into our minds, I believe, the importance of seeking knowledge:

“Abu Darda relates that he heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) say: For him who adopts a path seeking knowledge, Allah eases the way to paradise and angels spread their wings for a seeker of knowledge, being pleased with his occupation, and all that are in the heavens and the earth, including the fish in the water, ask for forgiveness for a learned one. A learned one is superior to a worshipper as the moon is superior to all the planets. The divines are heirs of the prophets and the prophets do not leave an inheritance of *dirhems* [monetary currency of the time] but only of knowledge. He who acquires knowledge acquires a vast portion.”

May Allah grant us all the opportunity to partake of His infinite bounty of wisdom and knowledge, and thereby transform the earth into

News and Views

Compiled by Syed Sajid Ahmad

MTA: an Example of Beneficial Use of TV

The contemporary technical advancements make a befitting media for the insemination of Islam, the religion of peace with God and Man. The Worldwide Ahmadiyya Community is apt at taking advantage of these conveniences. One such example is the round-the-clock broadcasts of Muslim TV Ahmadiyya all over the world to promote excellence in human learning and practice of faith and morality. But such strategy is obscure to the ones who have decided to counter the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, the spiritual leader of the time.

KABUL – The Taleban Islamic movement on Wednesday gave Afghans 15 days to get rid of their television sets, video players and satellite receivers as inadmissible to Islamic morality... The Taleban has anyway put a stop to television broadcasts in the two-thirds of the country it controls... But ... the Taleban deputy minister in charge of its Department for Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue said people continued to watch video tapes and foreign television channels received via satellite dishes... The new order says owners and shopkeepers can sell their sets to neighboring Pakistan... (Nando Times, Internet Edition, July 8, 1998)

It is ironic that the neighboring Pakistan is also an Islamic Republic and Taleban want to transfer their undesired items to their Muslim brothers.

Freedom of Religion at Workplace

It is pertinent that people of all faiths be given adequate freedom of religion in an advanced society. The proposal below needs to be extended to all employers in the country.

WASHINGTON – President Clinton ... plans to issue a memo to the heads of government agencies giving them three instructions:

- to permit employees to engage in personal religious

expression to the greatest extent possible;

– to reasonably accommodate workers' religious practices, including religious holidays, prayers and the Sabbath;

– and to prohibit federal employers from coercing workers to join in religious worship. (Reuters, 14 Aug 1997)

Religious Freedom in Post-Communism Russia

While the world is watching Russia's transformation into a democratic state, Russia is formulating laws to define religious freedom.

MOSCOW – ... The law requires religious organizations to re-register by a December 1999 deadline and imposes a 15-year waiting period for groups deemed "nontraditional." The preamble identifies Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism as Russia's traditional faiths. Unregistered groups lack full legal rights and cannot conduct missionary work or educational activities. Pope John Paul II says the law threatens the survival of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia, and the U.S. Senate said it would withhold aid to Russia if the law were implemented. President Clinton said in May the law was not being put into effect but the issue would require "continued and close monitoring." (Reuters, July 15, 1998)

Hate Crimes in the U.S.

God made all people equal. None has superiority over the other in daily dealings. This teaching is for all nations of the world, rich or poor, advanced or backward.

WASHINGTON – Even as violence overall is dropping, hate crimes against Asian Americans rose 17 per cent last year, according to a report by a national civil rights group. The 27-page report by the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium cites more than 500 incidents against Asians that it says were primarily motivated by racial animosity, ranging from the murder of a Vietnamese American student on a Southern California Tennis court to racist slurs scrawled on the

campaign signs of a Filipino American candidate for local office. (Dawn, Internet Edition, 10 September 1997)

An Injurious Festival

Islam teaches peace with God and Man and puts forward teachings which nourish human body, mind, morals, and soul, and enhance their beauty. It teaches individual, family, and national protection against harm. It teaches, "... And cast not yourselves into ruin with your own hands..." and abrogates all customs, traditions, or festivals which damage humans physically, intellectually, morally or spiritually, contrary to some other competing societies.

NEW DELHI, India (August 24, 1998) – An old custom of hurling rocks at others during a local festival in northern India has left 800 people injured, a local news agency reported. Twenty-five people were hospitalized in critical condition after residents of two rival villages hurled rocks at each other Sunday during the Gotmar festival in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, United News of India news agency reported. Every August, residents of the two villages near the town of Chhindwara, 465 miles south of New Delhi, line up across a river and hurl rocks and abuses at each other during a ceremony. Getting injured is considered a good omen. Once the ceremony is over, residents of both villages eat and rejoice together. The origin of the custom is not clear.

Sex Segregation

Sex-Segregation principles outlined by Islam are a befitting resolution to many problems in today's western societies. Studies continue supporting Islamic way.

Men and women in the military should be segregated more in basic training in order to improve their ability to wage war, a Pentagon report said today. (Associated Press, 17 Dec 1997)

Rewarding the Violator

Islamic teachings, for more than fourteen hundred years, have discouraged immorality in society by eliciting its degrading effect on the society and by prescribing harsh punishments. On the other hand,

even in today's enlightened world, some societies have been rewarding the aggressors by making them masters of the oppressed, and punishing the oppressed by making them life partners of the oppressor against their wishes, as is apparent from the following news item.

LIMA – The Peruvian Congress voted ... to repeal a law dating from 1924 that allows rapists to go free if they marry their victims, legislators said... Similar laws are on the books in other Latin American countries. (Nando Times, Internet Edition, April 4, 1997)

Polygamy in the U.S.

Practice of polygamy in the US has recently come into news. Here is a snapshot.

SALT LAKE CITY (August 3, 1998) – Carrying out his sworn duty to uphold the Utah Constitution is becoming a public relations hot potato for Gov. Mike Leavitt. The sticking point is Article III, which mandates religious tolerance but adds this caveat: "Polygamous or plural marriages are forever prohibited."

The early Mormons' practice of plural marriage, renounced by the church in 1890, has persisted among religious splinter groups and hasn't been prosecuted in more than 45 years. Today, there are an estimated 30,000 polygamists in the West.

The issue is a political, religious and cultural mine field in a state where 70 percent of the governor's constituents are Mormon.

Leavitt, a descendant of Mormon polygamists, appeared to stumble when asked about the child abuse case at a July 23 news conference. Refusing to flatly condemn polygamy, he suggested that it may be protected as a religious freedom, despite a century of case law to the contrary.

"It's clear to me in this state and many others, they have chosen not to aggressively prosecute it," he said. "I assume there is a legal reason for that. I think it goes well beyond

tradition.”

“What needs to be cracked down on, if there is to be such a crackdown, is any abuses of peoples’ civil and human rights,” he said.

On Friday, the governor backpedaled from his religious freedom statement, although he stresses that he does not condone polygamy.

Polygamy within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began in secret among its leaders – founder Joseph Smith had 33 wives – but was openly practiced after the Mormons fled to the future site of Utah to escape persecution.

Congress passed tough anti-bigamy laws and the church, under threat of having its assets confiscated, abandoned the practice in 1890. Then Congress insisted the anti-polygamy clause be included in the Utah Constitution when statehood was granted in 1896.

Modern polygamists continue to observe Mormon doctrine and are convinced the church was wrong to abandon plural marriage. The church disagrees; polygamists are summarily excommunicated.

On Friday, the governor said that after speaking with prosecutors, he had concluded polygamy isn’t pursued in court not because of religious freedom but because – as with fornication, sodomy and adultery – it is difficult to do so.

He cited three reasons: lack of proof, since most polygamous marriages take place in private and are not documented; case law preventing children from being removed from a polygamous home; and higher priorities for law enforcement.

There may be another reason. The last time the law was enforced, when state and federal agents raided a polygamist community in 1952, it became a public relations debacle. Photographs of crying children being dragged from parents’ arms and husbands being jailed turned public opinion against the authorities.

Revelation of Qur'anic Verses to Followers of Islam

Syed Sajid Ahmad

Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and the Mahdi, peace be on him, was bestowed with the blessing of revelation from Allah, the Almighty. Some of his revelations consisted of verses of the Holy Qur'ān. Of these revelations, the following five have been especially singled out by his opponents because these verses are addressed in the Holy Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

- i. Say, 'O mankind! Truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah.' (The Holy Qur'ān, 7:159)
- ii. ... a Lamp that gives *bright* light. (The Holy Qur'ān, 33:47)
- iii. O thou that has wrapped *thyself* with *thy mantle*! (The Holy Qur'ān, 74:2)
- iv. And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples. (The Holy Qur'ān, 21:108)
- v. Surely We have given thee abundance of *good*. (The Holy Qur'ān, 108:2)

Some of his opponents have taken these revelations as objectionable. Some of them go so far as to say that *Hadrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, 'alaihissalām, God forbid, stole these verses from the Holy Qur'ān and usurped them for himself.

To analyze the validity of such an objection, we need to investigate the following two questions:

- a. Can the verses of the Holy Qur'ān be revealed to a Muslim or not?
- b. Can the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, which are specifically directed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, be revealed to a Muslim or not?

To answer these questions, we quote examples of a number of well-known great Muslim saints.

1. Shaikh Mohiyuddīn ibn al-'Arabi wrote:

The coming down of the Qur'ān on the hearts of the saints has not been terminated though it (the Qur'ān) is safe with them (in its original form). It's descent is to give them a taste of divine revelation. Some of them attain this state. (Jawābāt Makkīyah Vol. 2 Chapter 159, p 258)

2. *Hadrat Shaikh Abd-ul Qādir Jālīlī* writes:

O human being, if you continue progressing in righteousness, Allah will exalt you so much that he will address you with (the following words of the Holy Qur'ān): "Thou art this day *a man* of established position *and* trust with us." (The Holy Qur'ān, 12 [Yūsuf]:55)

(Dutūhul-Ghaib, Essay 28, p. 171. Sūrah Yūsuf)

3. *Hadrat Mujaddid Alif Thānī* received the following words (which are from the Holy Qur'ān) as revelation before the birth of his son:

"We give thee glad tidings of a son whose name shall be *Yahyā*." (The Holy Qur'ān, 19[Maryam]:8)

(Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī, Persian, Delhi, Vol. 2, p. 136)

A boy was born to Mujaddid Alif Thānī and he named him *Yahyā*.

4. The following verses of the Holy Qur'ān were revealed to Maulvi Abdullāh Ghaznavi:

... We shall facilitate for thee every facility. (The Holy Qur'ān, 87:9)

And if thou follow their *evil* example *from the knowledge* that has come to thee, thou shalt have no friend nor defence against Allah. (The Holy Qur'ān, 13:38)

And keep thyself attached to those who call on their Lord, morning and evening, seeking His pleasure. (The Holy Qur'ān, 18:29)

So when We recite it, then follow thou its recital. Then upon Us *rests* the expounding thereof. (The Holy Qur'ān, 75:19-20)

And strain not thy eyes after what We have bestowed on some classes of them to enjoy *for a short time* —the splendour of the present world— (The Holy Qur'ān, 20:132)

... and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his evil inclinations, and his case exceeds all bounds. (The Holy Qur'ān, 18:29)

And thy Lord will soon give thee and thou wilt be well pleased. (The Holy Qur'ān, 93:6)

Have We not opened for thee thy bosom... (The Holy Qur'ān, 94:2)

(Sawaneh Maulvi Abdullah Ghaznavi by Maulvi Abdul-Jabbar Ghaznavi and Maulvi Ghulam Rasul, pp. 5, 15, 35-37)

5. Hadrat Khaja Mir Dard has listed his revelations in his book, 'Ilm-ul-Kitab. A number of these consist of the verses from the Holy Qur'ān. One of them is

And warn thy nearest kinsmen... (The Holy Qur'ān, 26:215)

('Ilm-ul-Kitab, p 64)

6. The following verse was revealed to Hadrat Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya many a times:

And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples. (The Holy Qur'ān, 21:108)

(Jawami'-ul-Kalam, Malfuzat Gaisu Daraz, p 226)

7. While describing the creed of Hadrat Imam Ibn al-'Arabi concerning the Imam Mahdi, Hadrat Imam Abdul Wahhab Shirani write:

Shariah of Muhammad will be revealed on him. (Al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir, Vol.2 p 89, Exposition 47).

The above references from well-known Muslim saints clearly indicate that

- ☆ A believer can be blessed with revelation.
- ☆ The revelation can consist of a verse from the Holy Qur'ān.
- ☆ The revelation can consist of verses of the Holy Qur'ān directly addressing Hadrat Muhammd, the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace

and blessings of Allah be on him.

Therefore, in view of the above quotes, revelations from the Almighty to the Promised Messiah, alaihissalām, are a matter of pride for the Muslims that Allah, the Almighty, chose one of them to be the Messiah and Mahdī, exactly as was promised to the Muslim world by our Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

Reference: Kitāb-i-Mahfūz, Islam International Publications, 1992.

Upcoming Events

Following events are scheduled locally. Please call the related local center for further information.

□

Muslih-i-Mau'ūd Day, February 21, 1999

Fulfilment of the prophecy of *Hadrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, concerning the Muslih-i-Mau'ūd (Promised Reformer) in the person of *Hadrat* Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, may Allah be pleased with him.

□

Masih-i-Mau'ūd Day: March 21, 1999

Fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the second coming of the Messiah in the person of *Hadrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, peace be on him, and his works.

□

'Id-ul-Adha: March 28, 1999

Celebration of the sacrifice of *Hadrat* Ibrahim, peace be on him, worldwide.

□

Khilafat Day: May 30, 1999

Meetings concerning the institution of vicegerency in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

□

Local Ahmadiyya Muslim Communities are scheduled to celebrate the

Noble Character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings of Allah be on him, on September 19, 1999.

□

Spokespersons from major religions are expected to participate in

Religious Founders' Day

arranged at various locations on October 17, 1999.

□

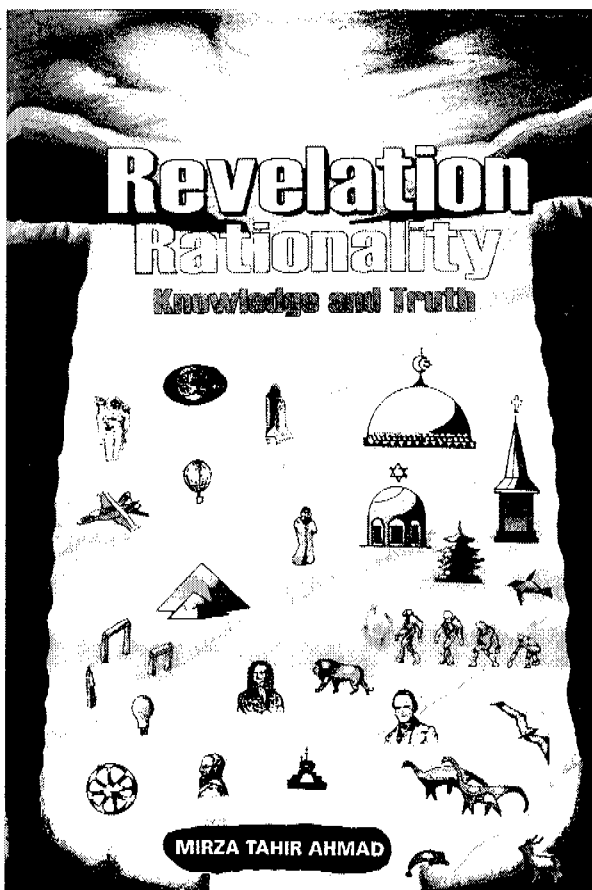
Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth

A Book Written by Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad
Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Community
(May Allah be his support)

Arshad Khan

One of the most pervasive dilemmas in the history of human thought is the rift that seems to divide religion from rational thought. Many contend that human beings, forever having to wrestle with forces that they cannot completely explain nor control, reconcile their weaknesses by attempting to explain the unexplained through means of religious belief. Critics reply by noting that in the process of having faith in religious belief, many ignore the scientific, sensible voices of reason and rationality, and shy away from a logical appreciation of the available evidence. Can religion and rationality ever be reconciled? The question is not merely an academic one, but influences the way in which the diverse peoples of the world view their lives and often provides a context and meaning to their existence. The philosophical questions underlying this issue have been great enough to stimulate the minds of numerous men and women throughout the ages.

While many religious-based treatises have been written on the subject, a comprehensive view of these subjects from an Islamic perspective has been sorely absent. In his new book, *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth*, Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the supreme head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, provides long awaited answers to these thought-provoking questions concerning religion versus rationality from an Islamic perspective. Ahmad cites numerous verses of the Qur'an to provide the Islamic point of view from the religion's primary textual source. Questions concerning the origin of the universe, the Darwinian theory of evolution by natural selection, cosmology, and the future of life on earth are meticulously evaluated, in light of Qur'anic principles and teachings. Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad is also adept at presenting a concise review of major religious ideas, including the concept of revelation among the world's great religions, religious perspectives on



cosmology, etc. Ahmad emphasizes the beauty of the evaluative scope of Qur'anic text and how such text provides meaningful answers to questions regarding our past, present and future. All in all, the book will no doubt be indispensable to students of religion and science alike, as it attempts to present a review of ideas which relate to both of these disciplines.

The book is published in hard cover, page size is 6 in. × 9 in., consists of 750+ pages, 8 plates, and 31 full-page illustrations.

Write, with your name and address, to *Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Books Section, 2141 LeRoy Pl, N.W., Washington DC 20008*, for your own copy (US\$ 15) for your reading pleasure.

Bait-ul-Zafar, New York

Mosque and Activity Center

The Ahmadiyya community in New York is one of the oldest in the U.S. Its continuous growth and expanding membership over the years has been requiring it to move its center from one area to another. Due to the increasing number of the members, the former Mosque and Mission House in Brooklyn was considered too small. In early 1982, with the approval of Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih III, Allah's mercy be on him, a Regional Committee was formed to locate and acquire a larger venue to meet the needs of the community. When Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IV, may Allah be his support, proposed a plan for the establishment of five Centers in the U.S.A., a Special Committee was formed through whose efforts and by the Grace of Allah, Baitul-Zafar was acquired, which is the present Mosque and Mission House in New York. It was purchased in August 1984. It took further 6 months to obtain the Certificate of Occupancy. It is a spacious, multi-story multipurpose building in a quiet neighborhood.

Baitul Zafar cost \$450,000. Half of the amount was raised locally and the rest came from the National Mosque Fund. It cost another \$30,000 to \$40,000 to renovate the place and make it suitable for the use of the community.

The members of the community responded with great fervor as usual when donations were invited. Great financial sacrifices were observed. Ladies sold their jewelry and contributed to the Mosque Fund. There is a long list of men who made great sacrifices, some of the members contributed over \$100,000 each.

During its renovation, true spirit of voluntarism (Waqār-i-Amal) was practically exemplified. Community members took up services ranging from laborer to attorney to make the project handsomely successful.

Since its opening, Bait-ul-Zafar has been and is a venue for many important national, regional, and local functions. When you are in the area, please visit Bait-ul-Zafar at 86-71 Palo Alto Street in Holliswood for your spiritual uplift.

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15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring MD 20905 (301) 879-0110

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(602) 624-4100

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Baitul Hameed Mosque

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Conditions of *Bai'at* (Initiation)

in The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

by *Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian*

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (*peace be upon him*)

The initiate shall solemnly promise:

I. That he/she shall abstain from *Shirk* (association of any partner with God) right up to the day of his/her death.

II. That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication, adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they may be.

III. That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the Tahajjud (pre-dawn supererogatory prayers) and invoking *Darood* (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*); that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.

IV. That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means.

V. That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trials; and shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of Allah and keep himself/herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from it at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the contrary, he/she shall march forward.

VI. That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and shall completely submit himself/herself to the authority of the Holy Quran; and shall make the Word of God and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*) the guiding principles in every walk of his/her life.

VII. That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.

VIII. That he/she shall hold faith, the honor of faith, and the cause of Islam dearer to him/her than his/her life, wealth, honor, children and all other dear ones.

IX. That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only; and shall endeavor to benefit mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.

X. That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good, for the sake of Allah, and remain faithful to it till the day of his/her death; that he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connections demanding devoted dutifulness.

(Translated from *Ishtihār Takmil-i-Tabligh*, January 12, 1889)

Excellence in Knowledge

Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him (1835-1908), prophesied as follows:

Allah has informed me many a times that He will bestow great honors upon me and hearts of the people will be filled with love for me. God will cause my Community to spread all over the Earth and cause my people to be victorious over all other groups. And the members of my Community will advance in knowledge and understanding so much that they will render the enemies of True Islam speechless through the light of their truth and logical arguments. Hosts of people will enter my Community from all nations of the world to taste the spiritual water from my fountain and will become a dominant force. There will be many trials and obstacles on the way but God Almighty will fulfill His promise of final victory.

(Ruhānī Khazā'in, Vol. 20, pp 408-9, London Edition)

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