

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

The Muslim Thinker

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PEACEFUL – TOLERANT – RATIONAL – INSPIRING

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Letters are welcome and should be sent to The Editor at the address on front cover. Any articles in this magazine without an indication of author or source are contributed by the Editor.

The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore* is an international Muslim association, founded in 1914, dedicated to the propagation of Islam. It presents the *true, original* message of Islam, as found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, a message obscured today by grave misconceptions.

We believe that Islam seeks to *attract the hearts and minds of people* towards the truth, by means of reasoning, persuasion and a display of its own inherent beauty. It condemns the use of coercion, force or political power to advance the faith.

Some Islamic teachings which we stress are as follows. Islam is:

- (1) **Peaceful:** Only allows use of force in unavoidable self-defence; teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.
- (2) **Tolerant:** Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any belief or religion.
- (3) **Rational:** In all matters, it urges use of reason and the ever-growing knowledge of mankind; blind following is disallowed, and independence of thought granted.
- (4) **Inspiring:** Worship is not a ritual, but a living contact with a living God. God listens to man, answers his prayers, and speaks to His righteous servants even today.

Our Founder, *Hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), was a servant of Islam, with the mission of bringing about the spiritual and intellectual victory of Islam. He believed that, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, NO prophet is needed nor can one arise. However, Divinely-inspired reformers will continually arise to rejuvenate the religion and rekindle a true, living faith within the hearts.

Our Teachings

From the work *Kishtī-e Nūh* (Noah's Ark)

by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Be not deceived that you have fulfilled your duty by merely believing a few things, for Almighty God wishes to bring about a complete and thorough transformation within you. He demands of you a death (of former ways), after which He shall breathe a new life into you. Make reconciliation among yourselves, and forgive the faults of your brethren, for wicked is the person who does not agree to be at peace with his brother. He is in danger of being cut off, for he sows the seed of dissension. Renounce your base passions in every way and settle your differences quickly. Despite being in the right, humble yourselves like one who is in error, that you may be forgiven. Get rid of the fatness of low desires because a fat man cannot enter the narrow gate to which you are called. Luckless is he who does not accept those words which have come out of the mouth of God and have been taught by me. If you wish that God may be pleased with you upon heaven, be at harmony with one another as twin-born brothers. The greatest among you is he who most forgives his brother's trespasses. Wretched is he who is stubborn and does not forgive; he has no share in me.

True connection with God

Fear the displeasure of God, for He is holy and has a high sense of honour. Evil doers cannot attain the nearness of God. The proud, the unjust and the dishonest cannot approach Him. Everyone who is not jealous for the name of the Lord cannot draw nigh to Him. Those who are bent low upon sordid worldly gain, like dogs, ants or vultures, and seek material comforts, cannot have access to Him. An evil eye cannot see Him, and an impure heart cannot know Him. He who casts himself into fire (of tribulations) for His sake, shall be

delivered from hell-fire; he who weeps for Him shall laugh; he who cuts asunder the ties of this world for His sake shall meet Him. Be the friends of God with a sincere heart, truly and fervently, so that He may befriend you.

Show kindness and mercy to your juniors, your wives and your poor brethren, so that mercy may be shown to you from heaven. Be for God in right earnest, so that He may be for you. The world is a place of trials and afflictions; so take hold of God with firmness and fidelity, that He may keep these calamities from coming near you. No misfortune arises upon earth until a decree is issued from heaven, nor can an evil be removed until mercy descends from heaven. It is prudent to take hold of the root and not to trust to the branch. It is not forbidden to you to make use of medicines or means, but it is forbidden to you to put your trust in these, for only that will ultimately happen which God intends. For those who are willing to endure it, trusting in God is the best course.

Reverence for Holy Quran and Holy Prophet

It is essential that you do not forsake the Holy Quran, for in it is your life. Those who honour the Quran shall be honoured in heaven; those who give precedence to the Holy Quran over every tradition and saying shall be given precedence in heaven. There is no book on the face of the earth for the guidance of the world but the Holy Quran, and no apostle or intercessor for mankind but the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Endeavour to have true love for this Holy Prophet of honour and glory, and give not excellence to anyone over him, so that you may be included in heaven among those who are saved. Remember that salvation does not begin *after* death, rather, true salvation is that which reveals its light in this very life.

Who is saved? He who is certain that God is truth, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the intercessor between men and God. Under heaven there is no other apostle of equal rank with the Holy Prophet, nor any Book of equal excellence with the Holy Quran. For none has Almighty God willed an everlasting life, but for this chosen Holy Prophet who lives forever. . . .

O all you people who call yourselves my followers: You cannot be recognised as my followers upon heaven until you truly follow the path of righteousness. Say your five daily prayers with such awe and attention, as if you actually see Him. Keep your fasts faithfully for the sake of God. Everyone who is liable to pay *Zakāt* must do so. If the *Hajj* to Makka is obligatory upon you, and there is no impediment, you must perform it. Do good so as to love it well, and forsake evil so as to hate it. Know it for certain that no deed goes up to God which is devoid of true righteousness. Righteousness is the root of every goodness; if the root has not been neglected, the deed shall not go to waste either.

It is necessary that you should be tried with various afflictions and adversities as the faithful before you were tried. Beware that you do not stumble! The earth cannot inflict any harm upon you if you have a strong bond with heaven. It is your own hands, and not your enemy's, that cause you a loss. If your earthly honour is all lost, God will give you an eternal glory upon heaven. Forsake Him not, therefore. You must suffer various afflictions, and be deprived of some long-cherished hopes, but grieve not, for your God tries you as to your steadfastness in His path. If you wish that even the angels should praise you in heaven, rejoice when you are persecuted, and be thankful when you are abused, and sever not the tie when you meet with failures.



Introduction to Islam

Answers to common questions about Islam.

(Continued from last issue.)

17. *Does Islam give any arguments to prove the existence of God?*

Yes, the Holy Quran gives three kinds of arguments on this point.

Firstly, it refers us to the physical world which shows great order and arrangement, works according to laws, and where everything has a set purpose in the whole scheme of things. There is also immense beauty in nature which attracts man's heart. Science is discovering more and more of these characteristics of the world all the time. So behind this highly purposeful and beautiful working of nature must be One, single Intelligence of great beauty and attraction. Secondly, the Quran tells us about the close and deep connection between God and the inner nature of every person. There is an in-built desire in each and every person to search for something higher than oneself, and when in difficulties a person instinctively wants to call upon a Hidden Power to help him. Thirdly, and most convincingly, Prophets and men of God appeared in every nation in the world and showed their people the reality of God through their teachings and works. Just as most of us learn about science not by making all the discoveries ourselves, but by accepting the work and evidence of those who devote themselves to the study of science, similarly the proof of the existence of God is provided by the lives of the great luminaries whom God sent all over the world for this very purpose.

18. *Other religions also teach the existence of God. Is there any difference between their teaching and the Islamic concept of God?*

Yes, there are some important differences. The first major difference is that Islam teaches the absolute one-ness of God, with Whom no one can share in Divinity. No idol, nor any religious or spiritual teacher, can possess some Divine power or attribute. Secondly, Islam teaches the highest conception of God, and does not accept any limitation to His power and knowledge, while other religions set limits to Him. For instance, Islam rejects the Hindu belief that God is not the Creator of matter and souls but exists alongside them. It also rejects the Christian doctrine that God is unable to forgive sins unless He punishes someone, and so He sent His 'son' to suffer the punishment for all humanity. Moreover, a son is needed to take the place of the father when the father dies, and clearly this cannot apply if God is perfect. Thirdly, Islam refutes the idea that any human being, however great,

was a 'manifestation' of God on earth, or a Divine incarnate.

19. What are the practical consequences of these three differences?

These differences dignify and elevate the position of man. Belief in the one-ness of God means that man should not worship or be a slave to anything in the world, such as idols, forces of nature, heavenly bodies, religious leaders, kings, dictatorial systems, etc. So man is meant to conquer the world around him, not be afraid of it; and each person is meant to use his or her own intelligence and reason, not blindly obey someone else.

Belief in the highest conception of God means that man's own progress is unlimited. His knowledge and power, though insignificant as compared to God's, can go on increasing. Rejecting the belief that a person could be a 'manifestation' of God, means that one should look upon the great Founders of religions, not as 'gods' shrouded in mystery and possessing supernatural powers, but as mortal human beings who by their own lives and example showed others how to live.

20. Is there any other important distinctive feature of the Islamic concept of God?

Yes. Islam teaches that Allah is "the Lord (*Rabb*) of all the worlds". (*Rabb* is pronounced like the word *rub*.) Allah is, therefore, not just the 'god' of the Muslims, nor the god of a particular race, religion or nation, but the only One God for the whole of mankind. As the Lord of all the nations He has not only provided means of physical sustenance for all the countries on earth, but also sent His guidance to every nation for its moral progress. He is equally just and loving towards every section of humanity, and has no favourite or chosen people, or rejected ones.

21. How does man stand in relation to God, according to Islam?

God has given man not only a body, but also a soul through which he can come into contact with his Creator. But whereas the body, like the rest of nature, is bound to obey the laws of God, the soul is free to follow God's guidance or to reject it. The soul's development

lies in willingly following the guidance God has revealed through His prophets.

According to Islam, each person's soul is "God's Spirit" which has been breathed into him or her. This means that man's soul has a special relationship with God, and man is capable of emulating the Divine attributes on his own small scale (see no. 23 below). God is unimaginably near to man's soul, nearer to it than even man himself. He knows a person's innermost thoughts, even those which the person himself does not consciously realise. In man's soul there is implanted love for God and yearning after God, and it cannot find complete contentment without God.

22. *What are the other things the Holy Quran tells us about God?*

It tells us a great deal. Most frequently it calls God *Rahmaan* (Beneficent) and *Raheem* (Merciful). *Rahmaan* really means that God is so loving and generous that He has granted man innumerable blessings as free gifts without any effort on man's part. God is *Raheem* means that He is merciful so that when man makes the effort to use his God-given bounties for good purposes, God helps him to succeed. For instance, God has given man all sorts of physical resources in this world, without any effort on his part. When man tries to exploit these resources for the good, God makes him successful. The Holy Quran also tells us that God is Forgiving, Affectionate, Supreme, Just, very close to each person, and knower of his thoughts and deeds.

23. *What is the purpose of believing that God possesses these attributes?*

So that man can try to acquire and display the same kind of qualities in his life. God is the *Rabb* (the Provider and Fosterer of the whole world), so man should try to provide for others. God is *Rahmaan*, and so man too should take the initiative in doing good to other people. God is *Raheem*, and so man should help and encourage those who are doing good. God is All-Knowing, All-Seeing, and Wise, so man too should try to perfect his knowledge and acquire wisdom. Believing in the Divine attributes also stops one from harming others

for personal gain. A person who truly believes God to be his *Rabb* (Provider) knows that He will always look after him, and so such a person would never try to take someone else's due. A person who truly believes that God is All-Seeing and All-Knowing would know that he could never hide any bad deed, however secret, from God.



Message of a Universal Faith

by Dr Allah Bakhsh

Late General-Secretary, Central A.A.I.I. Lahore

In the world today, two matters stand out uniquely prominent: consciousness of world peace, and happiness and prosperity of all mankind. Modern scientific inventions have transformed our globe into a kind of cosmopolitan city. The big cities of today present the spectacle of almost a resort of universal nature, wherein can be found persons of all races and nations. Such an intermingling of all mankind on the physical, political and cultural basis, is a challenge for various faiths to discover *a universal religion*. Faith, if rightly understood in its true spirit and if practised in life by its votaries, is by far the most potent factor conducive to peace, happiness and prosperity of man. Even if faith be considered as one of the factors, is not the time beckoning various faiths to unite? While mankind is already on the threshold of unity in secular spheres, does it not call for a united faith-front, in order to complete that union? All faiths have a common origin and a common aim: a Divine origin, and the aim of surrender to God's will and service to mankind. In view of these common fundamental concepts of faith, the differences should sink into insignificance. But where minor and formal rituals assume the form of disputes and discord, the fault must be found with the over-enthusiastic and fanatical followers, and not with the teachings of the faith itself.

Characteristics of a universal faith

Let us then consider the characteristics of a universal faith. These are mainly four: a universal God, a universal Guide, a universal code of laws, and a universal brotherhood. Only a conception of a universal God can unite all mankind, because it is His universal attributes of dispensation, mercy, beneficence, and equal treatment of all mankind without any racial, national or religious discrimination, that are conducive to bring about union among humanity. His universal law of requital of good and evil must be equally operative for all, without the least partiality or prejudice of any kind.

A universal guide should be a historical personality, who in his life presents a perfect model and panorama of all kinds of human activities. Only a perfect exemplar who has experienced all vicissitudes of life, can hold homage from all human beings, and be a source of inspiration for unity. A universal teaching must be comprehensive, containing all truths, ever previously revealed or ever needed for an advancing humanity. Lastly, the resultant of these three universal factors, comprising the fundamental concepts of a universal faith, should be the formation of a universal brotherhood. If such a society comes into being, all discord and differences are bound to disappear. It should not be mistakenly thought that natural differences between man and man will be altogether eliminated. It is wrong to conceive and expect such an unnatural state of affairs. But the formation of a universal fraternity on the basis of universal concepts of faith as described, is sure to bring about a real union conducive to universal peace, and the progress and prosperity of mankind, and therefore to usher in an era of universal happiness which is the agreed aim of all man's activities.

As a critical student of the faith of Islam, I present a few aspects of this religion, and leave it to the reader's fair judgment if the universal characteristics, enumerated above, form a part of Islam.

Islam — a universal faith

The God of Islam is named as *Rabb-ul-'ālamīn*, its Holy Prophet

(peace be upon him) is called *Raḥmat-ul-lil-‘ālamīn* and its book *Zikr-ul-lil-‘ālamīn*. All the three names are suffixed by the word ‘*ālamīn*’ which means *worlds*. Thus translated they mean: a Providence for the world, a Mercy for all the nations, and a Reminder for all human beings. Universality is, therefore, indicated by the very titles of God, the Holy Prophet and the Book of Islam. Let me go a little into detail.

God would not be universal if He behaves differently with different persons and peoples. He must treat everyone in an equitable and just manner. He should have one law for all His servants, whether belonging to this or that nation, and to this creed and faith or the other.

Here is His universal law of treating equitably all His subjects, as stated in the Quran:

“The person who does an atom’s weight of good shall see it, and one who does an atom’s weight of evil shall also see it.”
(99:7-8)

Certain people have distorted the above Divine law by making exceptions on account of religion or race etc. Their notions about a chosen race are refuted in the following verse:

“They say: None shall enter the garden except a Jew or a Christian. Say: Bring your proofs if you are truthful. Nay, whoever surrenders himself to God and is a doer of good to others, he shall have his reward from his Lord; and there is no fear nor grief for such.” (2:111-112)

And in another verse the idea of a chosen nation on account of faith has been rejected thus:

“Those who believe, the Jews, the Christians or the Sabians — whoever believes in God and the hereafter and does good deeds, he shall have his reward from God, and no fear or grief shall come upon such.” (2:62)

In this verse it is clearly stated that the Divine law of retribution is equally operative on the basis of one's faith in God and the hereafter, and good actions, and not merely on lip-belief. A Muslim, a Christian, a Jew and persons of any other persuasion are all placed on an equal footing.

The converse is also equally true. We read in the Quran:

"They say: Fire shall not touch us but for a few days. . . . Nay, whoever earns evil, his sins overwhelming him on all sides — such are the inmates of the fire." (2:80-81)

"Neither according to your wishes, nor according to the wishes of the people of the Book, whoever commits an evil, he shall be requited for the same, not finding any friend or helper against God. But whoever acts virtuously, whether male or female, being a believer, these will enter the garden, not being dealt with unjustly a whit. And who has a better religion than the one who submits himself wholly to God, and is a doer of good deeds." (4:123-125)

Differences in doctrine no bar to goodwill and peace

Doctrinal and ritualistic differences shall always remain. Even then the God of the Quran is a universal God Whose universal law of retribution operates equally. Another verse says:

"If they reject thee, say: my work is for me and your work is for you; you are clear of what I do and I am clear of what you do." (10:41)

Justice is administered on an equal basis of nature of deeds because such is the character of a universal Providence. The Quran says:

"I am commanded to do justice between you. Allah is our Lord as well as your Lord; we shall have reward for our deeds and you for yours. Thus there is no contention between us and you." (42:15)

As the reward is to be bestowed on actions, so at another place, as

in the above verse, the Quran enjoins ending of all disputes:

“Do you then still dispute with us about God? He is our Lord, and also your Lord; for us are our deeds and for you your deeds. We are sincere to Him in obedience.” (2:139)

Universal spiritual dispensation

The dispensation, whether secular or spiritual, of a universal God is on an equal footing for all nations. Accordingly, the Quran says:

“There is not a people but a Divine warner has been raised among them.” (35:24)

“Every nation had a Divine messenger.” (10:47)

“Every nation had a Divine guide.” (13:7)

“For every one of you, We have appointed a law and a guide.” (5:48)

Due to such universal teachings of equity and equality of mankind, the Quran concludes thus:

“All people are but a single nation.” (2:213)

“People are naught but a single nation, but they disagree.” (10:19)

Addressing all the prophets, the God of the Quran says:

“This your community is one community, and I am your Lord, so keep your duty to Me alone. But they (the followers) became divided, each faction rejoicing in what is with them.” (23:52–53)

Divisions and disputes are the creation of the divergent tendencies in man, whereas God has been good, gracious and bountiful, equally to all His people.

Muslims have been prohibited to speak harshly or abusively of other gods thus:

“Do not abuse gods whom they worship besides Allah, lest they through ignorance abuse Allah in return.” (6:109)

Of course, it is not the intention that mutual discussions for finding out the truth should be dispensed with. But in this regard also, the aim should always be mutual understanding, and not such which results in bitterness and bickering. Thus the Quran says:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with people in the best possible manner.”
(16:125)



Uses of word *Nabī* (Prophet)

Classical Muslim saints and scholars apply *Nabī*
to Non-prophets

The words *nabī* (prophet) and *rasūl* (messenger) are generally applied only in their narrow, specialised sense, referring to the great prophets of God in whom Muslims are required to believe. The Last and final such Prophet was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, after whom no prophet is to come. However, without violating the finality of prophethood, these words have been applied, in a broad and non-technical sense, to the saints who arose within Islam.

1. Mujaddid Alif Sani (d. 1624)

Referring to the first two Khalifas of Islam (Hazrat Abu Bakr and Umar), this great Mujaddid of India wrote:

“These two men, on account of their eminence and greatness, are counted among the prophets (sing. *nabī*) and have their qualities.”

(*Maktubat, Daftar I, part iv, letter no. 251, p. 64*)

He has thus applied the word “prophet” to Hazrat Abu Bakr and Umar, who were *muhaddases* and not prophets.

2. Jalal-ud-Din Rumi (d. 1273)

He was one of the greatest mystical poets and philosophers of Islamic history, and his work *Masnawi* is commonly known as *the Quran in the Iranian language*. He has used the word prophet for non-prophets in the following verses of poetry:

- i. "O disciple! He [your spiritual guide] is the prophet of the time because he reflects the Holy Prophet's light."
- ii. "In the path of virtue, be anxious to serve humanity, so that you may attain prophethood within the Muslim nation."

We give below the opinion of three modern-day Muslim theologians on these verses.

a. Allama Khalid Mahmud is a leading opponent of the Ahmadiyya Movement who attended the Cape Town court case in 1987 to assist the anti-Ahmadi side. In a book he has quoted and explained these verses as follows:

"In the path of virtue be anxious to serve humanity, so that you may attain prophethood within the Muslim nation."

"This does not refer to the attainment of the rank of prophethood, but the attainment of qualities of prophethood. If there is brevity here, it should be interpreted in the light of Maulana Rumi's belief about the finality of prophethood given earlier. To interpret a writing contrary to the intent of the author is utterly against the rules of knowledge and integrity. In this respect, the Maulana refers to every spiritual guide who follows the *Sunna* as metaphorically a prophet: '*O disciple, he is the prophet of the time, because he reflects the Holy Prophet's light*'."

(*'Aqidat al-Umma fi Ma'ni Khatam an-Nubuwwat*, p. 112)

We only ask Allama Khalid Mahmud to apply the same principle to the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. During the court hearings, referred to above, this passage was quoted in the presence of Allama Khalid Mahmud.

b. Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi (d. 1977) was an Indian religious scholar of recent times. Regarding the use of the word *nabi* for saints, who are not prophets, he once wrote in his newspaper as follows:

“Recently, by co-incidence, I found an example of it in the poetry of Maulana Rumi. And that too, not in some apocryphal work, but in the renowned and famous, authentic book *Masnawi*. Regarding the status and excellence of the spiritual guide it is written:

‘When you give your hand into the hand of a spiritual guide, you seek to imbibe wisdom as the mentor is the knowing and discerning. O disciple, he is the prophet of the time because he reflects the Holy Prophet’s light.’

“It is clearly stated here that the perfect spiritual guide is the prophet of the time because he reflects the light of prophethood. Great theologians, philosophers, and spiritual men have written commentaries on the *Masnawi*, but none of them took exception to this form of expression. Rumi’s own son, Sultan Walad, has made the following comment: ‘The exaggeration in likening a saint to a prophet refers to the penetrating effect of his guidance; otherwise, at no time was prophethood thinkable after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.’ — *Masnawi*, vol. v, p. 67, footnote 13, printed at Kanpur.

“Obviously we will still call it lacking in due caution, but it is equally obvious that instances of such lack of caution are to be found in the writings of the great religious leaders of classical times.”

(Newspaper *Sidq Jadeed*, 8 August 1952)

(Note: Hazrat Mirza did not show any “lack of caution” in his use of these terms. He was anxious to take the greatest care to ensure that these terms were not misunderstood and abused.)

c. In an introduction to Rumi’s *Masnawi*, Maulana Sajjad Ahmad

writes:

“Usually the word *nabī* is used in a specialised sense, but Rumi applies *nabī* to reformers of a high rank, as in the verse: ‘*In the path of virtue, be anxious to serve humanity, so that you may attain prophethood within the Muslim nation.*’”

(*Muqaddama Masnawi Rumi*, p. 23)

3. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (d. 1943)

He quotes the classical theologian Sayyid Abdul Wahhab Shi‘rani and then gives his own comment:

“‘When the Holy Prophet Muhammad realised that some people among his followers would take the termination of revelation with dislike, he proposed a part of apostleship (*risālat*) for the specially-chosen ones of his nation. He instructed those who were present at his preaching to convey the teachings to those who were absent. Hence he commanded them to deliver the message, so that the word *rusul* [pl. of *rasūl*] may apply to them.’

“Now look, in this text he has referred to mere preaching as apostleship.”

(*Al-Tanbiyya al-Tarbi fi Tanziyya Ibn Arabi*, pp. 100–101)

4. Maulana Sana-ullah of Panipat

A classical commentator of the Quran, he writes in his commentary:

“*Rasūl* has a broad significance, applying both to men and angels. . . . Some scholars say that, as a general metaphor, the word *rasūl* is applied to saints as well.”

(*Tafsir Mazhari*, p. 140)

5. Maulana Mufti Kifayat-ullah

He was a theologian of this century, and head of the *Jami‘at al-Ulama*, India. He defined a *muhaddas* as follows:

“A *muhaddas* is he who receives the word of God by special revelation. Some scholars consider such a one to be a prophet

of a low rank, and others consider him to be a saint of a high order.”

(*Majālis al-Abrār*, footnote, p. 18)

MUSLIM SAINTS CALLING THEMSELVES ‘PROPHETS’

1. Abu Bakr Shibli (d. 945 C.E.)

It is recorded of this famous Iraqi saint:

“Have you not considered this, that when the Holy Prophet Muhammad appeared in the form of Shibli, he [Shibli] said to a student of his who was a recipient of visions: Bear witness that I am the Messenger of God. So the student said: I bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of God. This is not something unlawful and wrong. It is just as a sleeping man [in a dream] sees one person in the form of another. And a low-ranking type of vision is one where what a person sees in a dream he sees while awake.”

(*Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. ii, p. 46, by Abdul Qadir Jili; see also the English translation in R. A. Nicholson’s *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 105)

2. Abdul Qadir Jilani (d. 1166 C.E.)

i. The following spiritual experience was related by him:

“God gave me the blessing of attending at Madina. One day I was busy in the remembrance of God in solitude when He took me from this world and from my own self, and then returned me. And I was saying: ‘*Had Moses been alive he would have obeyed me*’. This was as if I was the author [of the Saying], and not as relating this Saying. So I knew that this was due to me being drawn away by God. I was effaced [*fanā*] in the Holy Prophet, and at that time I was not just so-and-so [i.e. Abdul Qadir], but I was certainly Muhammad. Otherwise, what I had said would merely have been relating something from the Holy Prophet.”

(*Saif ar-Rabbāni* by Sayyid Muhammad Makki, published in Bombay, p. 100)

The words '*Had Moses been alive he would have obeyed me*' are a Saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

ii. He writes in a poem:

"I was in the higher world with the light of Muhammad, In God's secret knowledge was my prophethood."

(From poem known as *Qaṣīda Rūḥī*)

3. Khawaja Mu'in-ud-Din Chishti of Ajmer (d. 1236 C.E.)

He was the *mujaddid* of his time and the saint who laid the foundations of the propagation of Islam in India. He wrote the following verses:

i. "Every moment the Holy Spirit [angel Gabriel] inspires into Mu'in,

"So it is not me who says this, but the fact is that I am the second Jesus."

(*Diwan Khawaja Ajmeri*, ode no. 70, p. 102)

ii. It is recorded:

"Once in our presence a man came to enter into the discipleship of the Khawaja of Ajmer. The Khawaja asked him to recite the *Kalima* [i.e. *There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*]. The man recited the *Kalima*. The Khawaja said to him: 'Say it like this, *There is no god but Allah and Chishti is the Messenger of Allah*'. The man did so, and the Khawaja accepted the pledge from him and invested him with the robe of honour."

(*Fawā'id as-Sālikīn*, p. 18)

4. Farid-ud-Din Shakar Ganj of Pak Patan (d. 1265 C.E.)

He says in a poetic verse:

"I am *wali* [saint], I am Ali, I am *nabī* [prophet]."

(*Ḥaqīqat Gulzār Ṣābirī*, sixth edition published by *Maktaba*

Sabiriyya, Qasur, Pakistan, 1983, p. 414.)

Revelation to Muslim Saints

Proves Quran is word of God

by Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din

Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din (d. 1932) was the founder of the Woking Muslim mission in this country, where in his propagation of Islam to the West he had to confront both traditional Christianity and the expanding atheism. He found that in this work his most powerful weapons were those principles of Islam which had been particularly highlighted in this age by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, his mentor and master who had inspired him to become a missionary of the Islamic religion. One such principle is that the righteous among Muslims can attain to a stage where God speaks to them, reassuring them, thus proving that God exists and that He revealed His word to prophets in the past.

We translate below extracts from the book *Mujaddid-i Kāmil* by the late Khawaja in which he has explained the importance of this teaching. In a discussion with the Bishop of Murphy at Cambridge in 1913, the Khawaja put to him the following challenge, based on a teaching of the Bible itself:

“Studying the Bible has confirmed me on one principle, which I consider to be the best criterion of the truth of any religion. ... Besides the great prophets who hold a very high rank, the Bible frequently mentions individuals to whom God used to speak and they received the messages of God as needed. The angels of God guided them from time to time. This is also seen in the life of Jesus, and to a certain extent the same is true of his disciples. However, there is no mention of it in the later

history of Christianity. I ask you only this, Are there among you today, persons of this kind who have communication with God, and who receive revelation and solace from God? If there are, the truth of your religion stand proved to me.”

The Bishop was unable to refute this argument, and had to evade the question.

The rest of this article consists of extracts from this book regarding the continuation of revelation among Muslims and the need for it.

Revelation continues

My demand to the Bishop was in accordance with the Holy Quran. Believers receiving revelation, or the coming of the angels to them to give them solace, are the distinctive blessings which God Almighty has reserved for the Muslim people. In the five daily prayers, our seeking the “right path” points to the fact that we are praying for this very blessing. We ask to be guided on the right path which was the path of those “on whom Thou bestowed favours”. Later the Quran gives as examples of such people the prophets, the truthful, the righteous and the faithful (*nabī*, *ṣiddīq*, *ṣāliḥ*, *shahīd*). It is not necessary that every person who reaches the rank of faithful or righteous also receives revelation; it is God Who bestowes this favour. Nonetheless, we are required to ask for this favour, and we can obtain it. ...

Again, the coming of angels to such people, and answering them, is clear from a plain text of the Quran:

‘Those who say that Allah is our Lord, and are then steadfast upon this declaration, angels descend upon them saying: Fear not, nor grieve, and receive good news of the garden which you are promised.’ (41:30)

... This verse gives the glad tidings that angels descend upon those who yearn for God, and steadfastness is the grade of the believer at which angels descend upon him. That rank is very hard to attain.

To sum up, revelation and the descent of angels are proven matters, and some saints among the Muslims attained this blessing. How-

ever, this is not revelation of that grandeur which was received by the prophets till the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and by means of which the Divine books were revealed. No angels ever brought a commandment of law to a Muslim recipient of revelation. But it is necessary that the fine and subtle points of the Book of God be disclosed by these means, and it is through revelation that the knowledge of the Quran is made known to the world. . . .

Modern age denies revelation to prophets

Till the start of the nineteenth century, followers of all religions believed that their revealed books contained actual words spoken by God. However, with the advancement of science and modern knowledge, together with the absence for centuries of any individual in these religions who received revelation, this belief lost its strength. Science is no adversary of religion; it is rather its servant, and has performed a great service for religion by showing the existence of God in an intellectual sense. But when there is no claimant to revelation, how can this phenomenon be studied? Gradually, it came to be believed that only the general sense of the Divine books had been inspired into the hearts of the holy recipients, or that they could read the Divine intent, and it was these ideas from God which they conveyed to people in their own words. In Islam, the belief that the Quran was revealed in words has existed from the beginning, and it means that every word of the Quran is of Divine origin. But when, on the one hand, there are hardly any recipients of revelation, and on the other, Western thought denied revelation absolutely, there arose a group among the Muslims as well which denied that the words of the Quran were revealed, but considered that the meanings were from God. The leader of this group in the last century was Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. . . .

As I have said, we can prove by arguments that the Holy Quran is a book full of wisdom and meets the needs of mankind, being sufficient for every human requirement. We can also show that the Quran is from the Divine source. But to believe that it consists of words actually spoken by God is not possible until it is accepted that God

speaks. The trouble is that since the last century the intellectuals have considered it impossible that God can speak to a man. ...

To accept that a book is from God, in the form of words, is only possible if a man claims not only that God speaks to him, but also that some of his companions and associates can attain to Divine communication as well. His own prophecies may occasionally not be convincing for some people, but if reliable persons from among his followers testify that they heard hundreds of prophecies from him which came true miraculously, and that they too receive a measure of this blessing, this would prove that revelation is in words.

After the Holy Prophet Muhammad's time, it was in the thirteenth Islamic century that the existence of revelation was denied. Previously the debate was about which Book should be considered as being from God, and that required giving arguments of a different kind. Today it is denied that any Book could have come from God. ... Jews, Christians and Arya Hindus, as I have stated above, do not generally believe today that their books were revealed in the form of words. Among the Muslims too, the intelligensia hold the same view as Sir Sayyid. If it is a correct belief that the Quran consists of words spoken by God, then the prime duty of the *mujaddid* of this century was to lay stress on the existence of Divine revelation. ...

We do not need a new Book from God, nor a new prophethood, since the Holy Quran and the example of the Holy Prophet have met our needs fully and perfectly. We only seek to establish the possibility of revelation from God, and sufficient proof of that is *mubashshirāt* (revelation to saints in Islam). The Last of the Prophets promised us that this blessing would continue among his followers. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad laid claim to this. In support of this, on the one hand he repeatedly made prophecies, and on the other, he cited such persons as witnesses who could be accepted as true witnesses in all worldly matters.

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