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Al-Nahl

Summer 1995



Hazrat Promised Messiah, Alaihissalaam.

His Love and Devotion for the Holy Prophet, Sall Allaho Alaihe Wasallam, is
Unparalleled in the History of Islam

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Repentance

The Holy Quran

يا ايها الذين امنوا توبوا الى الله توبة نصوحا
عسى ربكم ان يكفر عنكم سيئاتكم
ويدخلكم جنت تجري من تحتها الانهار
يوم لا يخزي الله النبي والذين امنوا معه

O ye who believe! turn to Allah in sincere repentance. It may be that your Lord will remove the evil *consequences* of your deeds and make you enter Gardens through which rivers flow, on the day when Allah will not abase the Prophet nor those who have believed with him.

(Chapter 66 [Al-Tahrim]: Verse 9)

The Holy Prophet

(Sal Allaho Alaihe Wasallam)

Abu Musa Ash'ari relates that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: Allah will continue to hold out His hand at night so that he who has sinned during the day might repent, and will continue to hold out His hand during the day so that he who has sinned at night might repent, till the sun should rise from the west. (Muslim)

The Promised Messiah

(Alaihis Salato Wassalaam)

Some people are such that they are confronted with problems such as their jobs or some other reason because of which a greater part of their lives is spent in darkness. They can not pay any attention towards the offering of prayers and neither do they find an opportunity to hear the Word of Allah or the Sayings of the Prophet. The thought of pondering over the Book of Allah does not even cross their minds. When a long time has passed in such darkness, then such thoughts having been deeply rooted, become their second nature. At that time, if such a person does not turn towards repentance and seek forgiveness, then he would be very unfortunate. The best cure for negligence and laziness is, istighfaar. If one is afflicted with hardships because of the past negligence and laziness then one should get up in the middle of the night and lay in prostration before the Almighty God and pray; and in the presence of Allah, make a promise of a clean and true change in oneself.

(Translated from Malfoozaat, Volume 1, Pages 300-301)

Khataman-Nabiyyeen

Through The Eyes Of

Hazrat Promised Messiah, Alaihissalaam

Dr Rasheed Syed Azam, Qa'id Tarbiyyat Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A.

According to the Laws of God Almighty stated in the Holy Quran, the door to prophethood in Islam will remain open till the end of this world (7:36). Only Allah has the power to choose prophets (16:3) and prophethood is the highest grace from Him and He bestows it on whomsoever He pleases (62:5). The rule now is:

And whoso obeys Allah and this perfect Messenger shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, i.e. the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs, and the Righteous. And they are an excellent company.

(4 [Al-Nisa]:70)

The Holy Quran is the Perfect Book (2:3) and is the Complete Law (5:4). Therefore, only an *ummah* Prophet can appear in Islam, who is obedient to Allah and follows the Khataman-Nabiyyeen, the Perfect Messenger of Allah. No new Law (Shariah) is needed but a true prophet is always a mercy from Allah sent to purify people and guide them back to Allah. (79:19-20)

The Promised Messiah And Mahdi

Alaihislam

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi of this age was Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) of Qadian, India, who came at the appointed time from Allah in accordance with the Prophecy of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He was sent to revive the true Islam as revealed to the Holy Prophet by Allah in the Holy Quran. He

was an *ummah* Prophet. During his life on this earth he wrote more than eighty books which are truly a running commentary of the Holy Quran and show his dedication to the cause of Islam for the love of Allah and the Holy Prophet. Under Allah's command he established his *jamaat* as Ahmadiyya Movement In Islam to unite all humanity in love and peace under the banner of his master, Muhammad Mustafa *Sallallahu alaihe wasallam*, the Khataman-Nabiyyeen.

The Promised Messiah's Sacred

Writings

A person with even very little intellect and some honesty and fear of Allah can easily discover by reading the sacred writings of the Promised Messiah that he was indeed from Allah and his writings contain nothing but the truth about Islam in its purest form. What does he say about the Holy Prophet? A small sample of his writings is presented here for the discerning critic and enlightened readers:

The gist of our faith is: *la ilaha il-lallah* Muhammad-ur-rasoolullah

(There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.) Our belief, which we hold in this life here on earth and to which we will continue to adhere firmly till the time that we pass on to the next world, is that our spiritual leader and Master, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is

khataman-nabiyyeen, the seal of the prophets and the best of the messengers. At his hands religion has been perfected and blessing of Allah has been consummated which guide man on the right path and further on to God Himself. We hold this belief with absolute certainty that the Holy Quran is the khatamul-kutub, the seal of all divine books, and not an iota can be added to or subtracted from its prescribed teachings, inhibitions, commands and injunctions. There will be no revelation or word from God which may amend or abrogate or change or alter any of the injunctions of the Holy Quran. If anyone subscribes to such views, in our opinion, he ceases to belong to the body of believers and becomes a heretic and an infidel thereby. (Roohani Khazain, Vol.3, P. 170: Izala-e-Auham)

We do believe that there is none worthy of worship except God Almighty and Sayyadana Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is His Messenger and khatamul-anbiya. We believe that Angels, Resurrection, Day of Judgment, Heaven and Hell all are reality. (Roohani Khazain, Vol. 14, P. 323: Ayyamus-Sulh)

It would not have been possible for me to have attained this grace if I had not followed the footsteps of my lord and master, the pride of all prophets, the best of mankind, Muhammad, the chosen one, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Whatever I have achieved, I have achieved by following him, and I know from my truly verified

experience that no man can reach God to obtain a deeper understanding of His ways without following this Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Now, let me also make it known that the very first thing you are rewarded with, after having completely submitted yourself to the instructions and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, is that you are granted a new heart which is always rightly inclined. Such heart loses all love for this material world and instead it begins to yearn for an everlasting and unending heavenly pleasure. Having achieved this sublime state, your heart is now ready to receive that perfect and purest love of God. All these blessings are bequeathed to you as a spiritual heritage because of your complete obedience to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. (Roohani Khazain, V. 22, P. 64-65: Haqeeqatul Wahee)

I have been made to understand that of all the Messengers, the one who brought the perfect and purest of teachings full of wisdom, and one who exhibited in him the noblest of human qualities, is the Holy Prophet Muhammad, our lord and master, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him." (Roohani Khazain, V. 17, P. 345, Arba'een 1.)

From a study of the life of the Holy Prophet, khatamal-anbiya, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, it will become manifest to every reader that the Holy Prophet of Islam possessed exemplary character with purest heart. He

was ever ready to sacrifice his life for God, he pinned no hopes on men and entertained no fear of them. He reposed his entire trust in Allah. Having enslaved himself entirely to the will and pleasure of Allah, he did not care what hazards he would face and what suffering he would be subjected to at the hands of the idolaters as a result of declaring to the world the message of the Unity of God. (Roohani Khazain, V. 1, P. 111, Braheene Ahmadiyya)

When we examine with fairness and justice all the prophets of the past, we find that Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, the Holy Prophet of Islam, stands out as the most valiant among them, the one who fully possessed all the qualities of life and was the one most endeared to God. (Roohani Khazain, V. 12, P. 82, Sirajul-Muneer)

The Holy Prophet, The Living Prophet

For all the children of Adam there is now no Messenger and intercessor other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the chosen one, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. So you should endeavor to cultivate true love for this magnificent and majestic Prophet and not place any one else above him in any manner so that you may be counted in Heaven among those who have attained salvation. Remember also that salvation is not something which is attainable only after death. Rather true salvation manifests its light in this world. Who is truly delivered?

One who believes that God is Truth and that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the intercessor between God and mankind; he also believes that under God's command there is no prophet equal to him and that there is no book of the status of the Holy Quran. And for none else God proclaimed that he should live for ever with his message and his law, but this noble Prophet lives for ever. (Roohani Khazain, Vol. 19, P. 13, Kashi Nuh)

The Promised Messiah's Poetry: Love and Devotion to the Prophet

The Promised Messiah Alaihisalam also wrote many beautiful poems to express his love and devotion to the Holy Prophet of Islam. Here are a few samples:

Thy boundless blessings of peace
Be upon Mustafa, O God;
Verily through him we receive Thy Light.

My soul is eternally bonded
To the soul of Muhammad,
I made my heart drink deep,
Of the brimful cup of his love.

It was because of you that we
Became the best of all the peoples,
O Prophet of God who
Is the best of all the prophets.
As you marched ahead of all the rest,
We too stepped forward.

Let alone the human beings,
Even all the angels in the Heavens
Follow suit and join me,
As I sing thy praise.

(Roohani Khazain, V. 5, Pp 225-

Our Perfect Leader

That leader of ours,
From whom radiates all light,
His name is Muhammad.
He is the one,
Who has captivated my heart.

All prophets are holy,
One better than the other.
From God on high he is,
The crown of all creatures.

Today he is the sovereign,
Of the world of religion,
The crown of all the Messengers.
The healthiest influence;
The purest, the most comely;
The most trustworthy,
The most dependable:
Allah this superlative praise,
Befits him alone.

(Roohani Khazain, V. 20, P. 456,
Qadian Ke Ariya Aur Ham)

Al-Qaseeda

The Promised Messiah has written very extensively, about his beliefs and his devotion to God Almighty and his love for the Holy Prophet, primarily in Urdu but also in Arabic and Persian languages to inform all Muslims about his claim and to show them back the way to Allah through true essence of Islam. Al-Qaseeda, a laudatory poem, is composed in flawless and fluent Arabic and is a literary masterpiece in honor of Khataman-Nabiyyeen. This encomium has 70 couplets and is included in the part of Roohani Khazain, Vol. 5, P. 590-594, A'eena-e-Kamalat-e-Islam. No one has dared to accept a challenge from the Promised Messiah till this day to produce such glowing tribute to the Holy Prophet of Islam

in such an eloquent and elegant diction. The Qaseeda provides a unique spiritual experience to a discerning critic with a longing heart and a keen eye.

The Promised Messiah's face was glowing with joy, it is reported by his companions, when this Qaseeda was completed. Huzoor Aqdas addressing the Holy Prophet, conveys his salutations and love and obedience with such pathos and glowing tributes which has no parallel in human history. This empathy and the complete identification with the Holy Prophet of Islam in the cause of Allah was the reason that the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the Promised Messiah will reflect his second coming and will be buried in his grave. What a tribute! The Promised Messiah says (The number of couplet is given in the parenthesis at the end of the couplet):

O my beloved, you are the unending fountain-head of Allah's blessings and knowledge and the whole humanity is now looking up to you to quench their spiritual thirst. (1)

Those who seek and discover that the cups of their life are empty come running towards the ocean of your blessings filled by Allah's Grace. (2)

You are the spiritual *sun* who has brought light to the four corners of the world. (3)

Your face reflects the glory of Allah and His attributes find expression through your excellent character. (41)

Allah has bestowed upon you all the best and the highest qualities of man and He has perfected the gift of prophethood in your person as Khataman-Nabiyyeen. (46)

I have received the gift of spiritual life through you, O my Master and Perfect Leader, and I am nothing but your very humble servant. What a miracle! How well he raised me to life.

(62)

O Lord, My Creator, Your everlasting blessings be upon the Holy Prophet in this world and in the life hereafter.

(63)

Look at me, O My Master, with mercy and grace. I am your most humble servant. (67)

Now, no rational person will fail to recognize the truth about the Promised Messiah and his love for the Holy Prophet, khataman-nabiyyeen. The Promised Messiah appeared at the right time according to the prophecy of the Holy Prophet and completed his mission under Allah's commands.

Ahmadiyya Beliefs

Every Ahmadi Muslim, by the grace of Allah, believes that Jesus (Hazrat Eesa, alaihissalaam) was a true and noble prophet of Allah and he died a natural death at the end of his term on this earth and is buried in Kashmir, India. How long the mullahs will continue to wait for 'Messiah' to descend from Heaven? Only Heaven knows! He never went up there with his physical body in the first place. Do they ever study and understand the Holy Quran?

It is also our true belief that the prophethood in Islam will continue as this view is supported by the Holy Quran, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and reliable Ahadith, and all early true reformers and thinkers in Islam preceding the advent of the Promised Messiah. The appearance of a follower

(an *ummati*) Prophet is contained in the meanings of khataman-nabiyyeen. We believe that the Holy Prophet was so great that his followers can attain the status of prophethood in Islam because no new law is now needed. Our God is a living God and talks to His chosen ones even today.

Conclusion

Those people who falsely accuse Jamaat Ahmadiyya and its Holy Founder, Hazrat Promised Messiah, *alaihissalaam*, to be disrespectful to Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa, Khatamal-Anbiya, peace and blessings be upon him, do so without any fear of Allah in their hearts. For them it would be sufficient to quote the following verse of the Holy Quran:

Beware of the day of Judgment when We shall call people along with their leaders. Whoever is given the book recorded with his deeds in his right hand will be eager to read it and find that he will be dealt with mercy and justice. But whoever remained spiritually blind in this world shall also be blind in the Hereafter and will be even farther removed from the path leading to Allah. (17:72,73)

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HOW I ACCEPTED ISLAM

Ali Murtaza, New York

(Brother Ali Murtaza is Secretary of Ithar or Social Services, Majlis Ansarullah, USA. He has been actively involved in the service of the Jamaat and the Majlis. Like other stories published in Al-Nahl before, this story is also very inspiring. May Allah reward these brothers with unlimited blessings. Amin.)

My name is Ali Murtaza. I am forty-three years old, having been born on May 18, 1952. I live in Brooklyn, New York. I am married and have three children, one girl and two boys. I was born and raised in Eagle Rock, North Carolina, which is in Wake County. At the time of birth, my parents had named me Leonard L. Jones. My family at Eagle Rock, was a typical African American Southern Baptist family, meaning you went to church on Sundays from morning until noon. Then the regular service carried over to mid afternoon until 1:30 or 2:00 PM, depending on if the preacher was long winded or not. Religion was always a major part of my life, as the women in my family saw to that.

There were prayer meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday night, bible class on Friday night and church on Sunday. It was during my younger years in North Carolina that I started to question the concept of the divinity of Christ.

I left Eagle Rock, N.C., when I was fourteen years old and went to Atlantic City, New Jersey, to

live with my mother. I stayed there until 1972, the year I joined the United States Navy. While I was in the navy, my mother passed away. I decided to settle in New York after my military tour was over. When I got to New York I was advised by

my mother's best friend to look up her son, Akbar Musafiri Tshaka, to help me get settled. So in the summer of 1975, I met Akbar and was immediately impressed with his name and his looks or I should say style, as he was what we called "hip." Akbar invited me to have dinner with him at a local Indian restaurant, (this was the first time I had ever tasted Indian food and I fell in love with the food instantly). We ate and talked about the world and Islam. As I

did not know anything about Islam, Akbar gave me a book, as a gift. The book was entitled, "The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam" by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. This was to be one of many books given to me by Akbar. Through reading this book and others I developed a thirst for knowledge about Islam and I started to



read anything I could find on the subject. I became overwhelmed with the character and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the prayers that he would recite and all the effort his followers took to preserve his actions, sayings, and other details of his life. I became particularly interested in the Sufi books as they brought me in touch with the beauty, fragrance, and love of Islam. Coupled with the Promised Messiah's book about Jesus in India, my belief in the divinity in Jesus was removed so completely as if I never believed in it. I guess in a way I never did.

In 1977, I took an overseas job which landed me in Iran. I could not believe I was in a land where Muslim saints had been born, lived, and died. I was moved by the warmth that the Iranian people extended to strangers. Here I was befriended by a Persian brother by the name of Hussein Rajabi, he became my guide, teacher and friend. Hussein gave me a book entitled "Nahjul Balagha of Hazrat Ali." This book increased my knowledge even more as I read his eloquent and spiritually deep sermons. In Iran during the summer of 1977, Hussein Rajabi took me to an unfinished mosque on the outskirts of Tehran called "Hussayniyya Haiet Beni Fatima" where I accepted Islam at the hand of Ayatollah Nassere Makareme Shirazy. My stay in Iran was short but the memories will last me all my life.

In August of 1977, I returned to New York with a new religion and found myself a stranger in my own country as there was such a contrast between the Islamic society of Iran and the Non-Islamic society of America. Thus began my spiritual Jihad with myself as everything I used to do that was Un-Islamic became repugnant, and I found myself becoming more of a loner. My life was going through such an upheaval during this time that I feared losing what I had gained through Islam as I started to lose touch with the

Islamic connections I had made within the Ahmadiyya community when the mission house was moved out of Brooklyn. I stayed caught up in this dilemma until around 1991 during the Gulf Crisis.

It was at this time that I felt an intense need to take control of my life and decide if I was going to be a Muslim or something else. So I prayed to Allah for guidance. Prior to this I had a dream during Ramadan of 1984. In the dream, I saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, laying his hands on the afflicted people and healing them one by one. I had been summoned to be among the people being healed. I always remembered this dream and its details.

During the Gulf Crisis Akbar and I started to have night vigils on the phone discussing the ramifications of the war. It was during one of these conversations that Akbar informed me that the Ahmadiyya Community was having a Quranic exhibition at a hotel in New York City and suggested we get together and attend. At this exhibition I met Brother Nazir Ayaz, President of the New York Ahmadiyya Jamaat. Ayaz Sahib invited Akbar and myself to the upcoming Musleh Maud Day meeting at the Jamaica Queens mission house. We accepted his invitation and when I entered the mosque it was like coming home especially when I saw Nurrudin Abdul Latif and Umar Bilal Ebrahim (during 1979 Nurrudin invited me to his home and gave me some instructions in learning how to read Arabic along with some books about the Promised Messiah and Ahmadiyyat). When the Musleh Maud Day meeting concluded, Brother Nazir Ayaz made the announcement that there were two Ahmadis who had been away from the community for a while and he asked the congregation to give us Salaams to welcome us back. As I was not an Ahmadi, I wanted to correct Ayaz Sahib's statement and right at that moment I knew what I had been looking for and I

knew what had been keeping me from Ahmadiyyat. I knew that to become an Ahmadi one had to accept the ten conditions of baiat. In the past, I did not feel I could live up to the standard that the baiat represented, but at that instant I saw that in order to become purified it could only be done by accepting those ten conditions. In short, I had to give up hell to obtain paradise. So on March 10, 1991, I accepted Ahmadiyyat at the hand of Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Cheema, during the

Khilafat of our beloved Huzur, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, may Allah be his support.

Since becoming an Ahmadi I have had the blessings from Allah to meet the Khalifa several times, each one better than before, visited Rabwah, and Qadian and met the righteous people of both places. Additionally, Allah has blessed me with spiritual experiences that have increased my faith and made me to understand and to fear and to love Allah.

I conclude this brief outline of my acceptance of Islam and Ahmadiyyat with:

سبحان الله وبحمده سبحان الله العظيم
اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد

Subhan-Allahi wa bi hamdihee subhan-Allahil-Azim. Allahumma Salli ala Muhammadin wa Aale Muhammad.

Readers' Views

Dear Editors,

Assalamo alaikum wa rehmatullahe wa barakatohu.

I would like to commend your efforts in the publication of the newsletter, Ansarullah News. It is beautiful and very informative. In addition, I would like to thank you for the beautiful job in the publication of *Al-Nahl*. The winter issue was very inspiring. The life narratives were full of suspense. Realistically, the narratives were well presented. I wish to make a particular reference to *Rewards of A Seeker*, by Brother Muhammad Isa Jan Khan of Toronto Jamaat. I would like to personally applaud him for his generosity in sharing this beautiful story with us. I am confident that he would be pleased to know that this story has touched many hearts and has had and continue to have immeasurable positive effects on the readers. May Allah reward you all abundantly for your efforts. Please continue the good work.

Wassalam,

Abdur Rahim Kolade,

Washington, D.C.

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The Concept of Khilafat

An Overview

Nasir M. Malik, Detroit

The Concept of Khilafat is a multi-faceted subject. The survival and progress of mankind, in general, and Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, in particular, largely hinges on a proper comprehension of this fundamental concept. A lack of complete understanding of this important concept has deprived many a people of its blessings and has shattered their unity, peace, and harmony. The advent or establishment of Khilafat is a Mercy, a Blessing, a Favor, and a Gift for a people from Allah (*Subhana wa Ta'ala*). Conversely, the absence or removal of Khilafat is a Punishment and Deprivation for a people from Almighty Allah as a direct outcome of the wrong doing and transgression of those people. In this brief article, I will discuss a broad overview of the Concept of Khilafat and its terminology.

The word 'Khalifa' means a successor, a vicegerent, a substitute, etc. It is derived from the word 'Khalafa' which means, he came after, or stood in place of. The word 'Khilafat' is derived from the word Khalifa and means the 'Office of a Khalifa.' The word 'Khalifa' can be applied to either a person or a people. A Khalifa can either be a vicegerent of Allah called a 'Khalifatullah,' or a successor of a Khalifatullah, called a 'Khalifatunnabi.' A unique feature of the office and personality of the Khalifatullah and the Khalifatunnabi is that both of them are appointed for life. Another striking similarity between the requirements ensuing from both these offices for their adherents is that of complete, unconditional, and unequivocal obedience and servitude, in letter

and spirit, to the Khalifatullah and the Khalifatunnabi.

Allah (*Subhana wa Ta'ala*) has called man his Best Creation. In man, Allah has created the capability to reflect or mimic, the attributes of Allah. Of course, each person has been given a different capacity to do so. The purer and cleaner one's heart and soul, the brighter the reflection of Allah's attributes in his personage. The Holy Founder of Islam, Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (*sall-Allaho alaihe wa-sallam*), the Messenger of Allah, being the Seal of the Prophets and the Perfect Leader has the best reflection of Allah's attributes. And, hence, he is the Best Khalifatullah and the Perfect Role Model for the entire mankind for all times.

A Khalifatullah is directly appointed by Allah through direct revelation to him. A Khalifatunnabi, on the other hand, is indirectly appointed by Allah through a wonderful election process conducted by the true and righteous followers of that Khalifatullah. Generally speaking, the mission of a Khalifatullah is to found the fundamental beliefs (*aqaa'id*), practices, and spiritual leadership of a people, as in the case of 'Law Bearing or Independent Prophets' like Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham), *alaihissalaam*, Hazrat Musa (Moses), *alaihissalaam*, and Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (*sall-Allaho alaihe wa-sallam*). Some Khalifatullah, however, were commissioned by Allah to revive, rejuvenate, or re-establish the beliefs and practices of other Khalifatullahs, as in the case of 'Non-Law Bearing or Dependent Prophets' like

Hazrat Eesaa (Jesus), alaihissalaam, and Hazrat Ahmad, alaihissalaam. On the other hand, the mission of a Khalifatunnabi is to develop and protect the organization (*tanzeem*), administration, and spiritual guardianship of the people who follow that Khalifatullah.

From the Holy Quran, we find that a Khalifatullah can be a 'Nabi' (Prophet), or a 'Rasool' (Messenger), or a 'Malik' (King/Sovereign). For example, regarding Hazrat Adam, alaihissalaam, Allah says: *I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth...* (Al-Baqarah, 2:31). Thus Adam was the first Khalifatullah Prophet. Similarly, Hazrat Ibrahim, alaihissalaam, Hazrat Musa, alaihissalaam, and Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (*sall-Allaho alaihe wa-sallam*) were Khalifatullah Messengers. Also, regarding Hazrat Daood (David), alaihissalaam, Allah says: *O David, We have made thee a vicegerent in the earth...* (S'ad, 38:27). Thus David was a Khalifatullah King. Similarly, Hazrat Suleiman (Solomon), alaihissalaam, was also a Khalifatullah King. We find in the Holy Quran: *Moses said to his people, 'O my people, call to mind Allah's favor upon you when He appointed Prophets among you and made you Kings...'* (Al-Ma'idah, 5:21).

From the history of religion, we find that, under a grand Divine Plan, certain independent Khalifatullah Messengers, after a period of time, were succeeded by certain other dependent Khalifatullah Prophets. Such holy persons were both Khalifatullah (in that they were directly appointed by Allah) and Khalifatunnabi (in that their mission was to revive and rejuvenate the religion of their master Khalifatullah Messengers). For instance, Hazrat Isa, alaihissalaam, succeeded Hazrat Musa, alaihissalaam, and Hazrat Ahmad, alaihissalaam succeeded Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (*sall-Allaho alaihe wa-sallam*). We also find that some Khalifatullah Messengers were immediately succeeded by some

other Khalifatullah Prophets. For example, Hazrat Ibrahim, alaihissalaam was succeeded by Hazrat Is-haaq (Isaac), alaihissalaam and Hazrat Ismael (Ishmael), alaihissalaam, and Hazrat Is-haq, alaihissalaam, was successively followed by Hazrat Ya'qub (Jacob), alaihissalaam and Hazrat Yusuf (Joseph), alaihissalaam. Similarly, some Khalifatullah Messengers temporarily appointed other Khalifatullah Prophets in their own lifetime during their absence from their people. For example, describing the travel of Hazrat Musa, alaihissalaam to the Mount, Allah says in the Holy Quran: *Moses said to his brother, Aaron, 'Act for me among my people in my absence...'* (Al-A'raf, 7:143).

Under the Divine Plan, the mission of the Khalifatullah is designed to spread and last over a pre-determined period of time. The Khalifatullah being a human being has a limited physical life in this world. The time span of his mission, however, typically exceeds much beyond his life span. Therefore, after his demise, he is succeeded by one or more of his Khulafa (plural of Khalifa), who are called, in the most common religious terminology, the Khalifatunnabi. Typically, a Khalifatunnabi is not a prophet in that he is not appointed directly by Allah. For example, from the Bible and the Judaic history, we find that Hazrat Musa, alaihissalaam, was succeeded by Joshua bin Nun; from the earlier Islamic history, we find that Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (*sall-Allaho alaihe wa-sallam*) was succeeded by Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq (*razi Allaho anho*); and from the latter Islamic history (Ahmadiyya history), we find that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, alaihissalaam was succeeded by Hazrat Hakeem Maulvi Nurruddin (*razi Allaho anho*).

A Khalifatunnabi and his community (Jama'at) of righteous people together constitute what is commonly known as the blessed Institution of Khilafat. In this institution, the Jama'at

and the Khalifa are like the body and the soul. The Khalifa is like the brain and the nerve center and the Jama'at is the body. As the soul, the brain, and the nerve center, the Khalifa protects the spirit of the Jama'at, feels the pain of the body, and warns, directs and controls the body. Similarly, as the body, the Jama'at protects, preserves and harmoniously follows the Khalifa. The Khalifa being indirectly appointed by Almighty Allah, has special support, succour, and guidance from and extraordinary communion and relationship with Allah. Thus, the Institution of Khilafat operates and functions under Allah's protection for Allah's pleasure. Through this wonderful and unique institution, the community of true believers preserves and continues the Blessings and the Mission of Prophethood long after the physical demise of the Prophet.

Regarding the general promise, purpose, benefits, and timing of Khilafat for Muslims, Allah has revealed a special verse in the Holy Quran called the 'Aya-e Istakhlaf.' It reads as: *Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors (from among) those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security (and peace) after their fear...* (Al-Nur, 24:56). This, however, is a

conditional promise. The reward and protection of Khilafat is promised only to those who are true believers and who do good deeds for the service of Allah and the Mankind. Or, in other words, the real fruits, benefits, and blessings of Khilafat will be reaped and received by only those who are true believers and who do good deeds for the service of Allah and the Mankind.

The entire mankind can be the beneficiary of all the Blessings of Khilafat by recognizing, accepting and following the Best Khalifatullah, the Holy Founder of Islam, Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (sall-Allaho alaihe wa-sallam), the Messenger of Allah. In this age, these Blessings have been magnanimously revived, rejuvenated, and replenished, in their pristine pure form, for distribution to and absorption by the entire mankind, till the end of times, by Almighty Allah (*Subhana wa Ta'ala*) through the Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya. May Allah enable us, the Ahmadi Muslims, to absorb these Blessings by truly internalizing the beautiful Concept of Khilafat. Also, may Allah empower us to take these Blessings to the entire mankind under the Divine Leadership of our Beloved Imam, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV (*ayyadahollaho taala binasrihil aziz*), 4th Successor of the Promised Messiah (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *alaihissalaam* of Qadian, India). *Ameen.*

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Sadr Ansarullah, USA, has noted that many members of Ansarullah have not paid the Ansarullah Chanda Literature. All the members are reminded that the rate of Chanda Literature, for Ansarullah, has been set at \$10.00 per year. Currently the cost of publishing Al-Nahl is being met out of other funds. This creates a burden on our other important activities. Members are therefore urged to please pay their share of the Chanda Literature as soon as possible. May Allah enable us to fulfill our obligations in a timely manner. Amen.

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The Greatest Blessing

Sohail Z. Hussain

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

We Praise Him and Send Blessings on His Noble Messenger and On the Promised Messiah, peace be on both.

The stories of what led converts to the religion of Allah has never ceased to intrigue me. While we don't expect them to be perfect, we can right away sense that they possess an inner yearning to purify themselves. Be it a flicker or a flame, something within their hearts desires to come closer to Allah, their Creator. They realize that they can only do so by entering into a covenant with Him and His appointed way. Upon accepting, they become emblazoned with the light of faith and, if Allah wills, shine it forth so brilliantly that whatever hardship was caused by their acceptance becomes, as it were, a burned out and insignificant memory. The following is an account of my own humble story.

I was born in 1972 into a loving and caring extended family in Nagpur, which is a well-sized city in India. My parents, their parents, and many generations before them belonged to the Dawoodi Bohra Community, which is a small sect of Is-

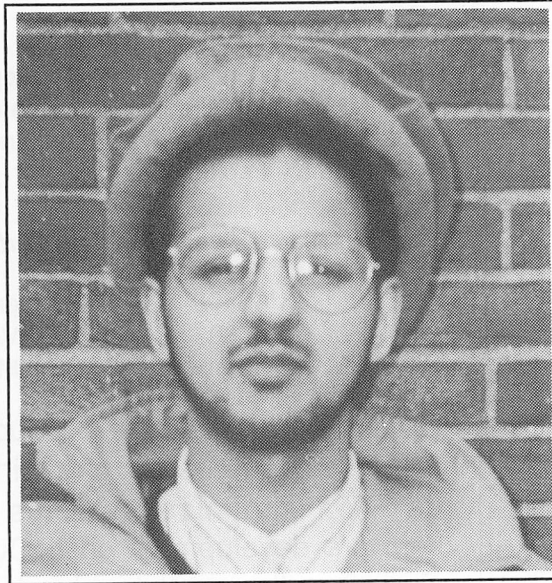
maili Shias based mainly in India.

Even now, two decades later, I still remember with fond memories the abundance of affection given to me by my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and older brother. I also remember some vivid images of the Bohra community's practices. Some of them seemed rather mysteri-

ous. For example, every so often during congregational meetings, we would hit our chests with our hands and mourn over the martyrdom of the beloved grandson of the Holy Prophet (sal Allahu alaihe wasallam), Imam Hussain. The whole gathering would become aroused in emotion; some would shout, "Ya Hussain (Oh Hussain), Ya Ali (Oh Ali [the father of Imam Hussain])!" and other slogans. The chest beating would go on harder, and some of the men would

go into a frenzy. In the end everyone would prostrate and issue a prayer. This repertoire of activity would occur again perhaps the next month and continually afterwards in exactly the same way.

At home whenever a spontaneous misfortune occurred, the household members, particularly the ladies, would cry out in distress, "Ya Ali Madad (Oh Ali, Come to our aid)!" Thus my family be-



longed to a typical Shia community, yet one which was very tight-knit.

In 1977, a year after my parents went to the United States, my brother and I were called to join them in New York City. The Bohra Community in the New York-New Jersey area was substantially smaller than in Nagpur. Still the community held intact. The meetings retained their standard of conduct, etiquette, and uniform. Religious functions usually began with standard pre-written sermons, then were followed by formal prayers, and finally ended with delicious meals.

As I entered my teens, however, I began to feel a certain indifference to the arrangement. The sermons were usually the same ones delivered over and over many times before. If there were nuances, they were in the use of metaphors or fantasy-like stories of people being brought back from the dead or water turning into jewels. Consequently, I found little substance in them. The sermons revolved mostly around the tragic events at Karbala or Hazrat Ali's and Imam Hasan's assassination, may Allah be pleased with them, or the unfounded accusations that the first three Caliphs of Islam, may Allah be pleased with them, had usurped the succession following the demise of the Holy Prophet (sal Allahu alaihe wasallam), a succession which allegedly should have fallen upon Hazrat Ali and his physical progeny. Sometimes the sermons also touched on the chain of successors in the Bohra community leading up to the present leadership. Nonetheless, we would hear the same things.

Despite the boredom from the sermons, I still looked forward to the functions. For one, I liked the social atmosphere. After prayer and during dinner, I would enjoy the company of my peers. In addition, I knew everyone and was enamored with various customs, many of which tried to inculcate a camaraderie, such as greeting everyone and observing respect for elders. Wherever we met, we

were expected to observe a high level of speech, manners, and cleanliness. In short, I think that I respected the community for its attempts to uphold a high degree of morality. This was in stark contrast to the practices at school in America.

Although I remained interested in attending religious functions, by graduation time from high school in 1990 I stopped performing my prayers on the premise that I didn't feel I was getting much from them. I resolved that I believed in Allah and would someday resume my prayers if I could figure out their benefit. The following summer passed by in this pitiful state.

College was starting in the fall. I was told that it would be a time of learning new things and becoming exposed to different worlds. I was in store for far more than I thought. When I first arrived, it was not much different from my expectations. Most of the students were interested in hedonistic pursuits and some were serious about specific issues, either political, social, or academic.

The campus was a little independent enclave, but an artificial one. In the beginning, I was somewhat disheartened. I wanted something more. One day, it happened. As I was chatting with a dormitory mate, a jovial-looking boy turned the corner and started walking towards my room. He approached me and asked, "Are you Sohail Hussain?"

"Yes, I am."

"Assalamo-alaikum. My name is Irfan Al-ladin. I'm going around trying to recruit members for the Muslim Student Association. I found out from your resident director that you were living just one building across from me."

Pleasantly surprised, I returned his greeting and that was the start of a fast friendship, solidly based on piety. My dear friend Irfan may not have thought much of this first meeting. But to me, he came like a shining angel from amidst a thick and dark forest. Certainly, I was grateful to Allah for

this companion.

Irfan and I would meet daily. He would talk about Islam and its greatness relative to Christianity, and he constantly mentioned his community and leader. I explained to him that I personally had little knowledge on any specifics of the Holy Quran, Ahadith, or even the Bible for that matter but that comparative religion was my favorite topic. So we discussed, and I learned.

Among the first lessons was the translation to Sura Fatiha, the first seven verses of the Holy Quran. As soon as I heard them with their meaning, I became enamored with them. Simple, yet powerful; a mark of authority and compassion from the author, Allah Himself. A few days later, by the grace of Allah, I was back performing my prayers. I began reading more on Islam and the Holy Prophet (sal Allahu alaihe wasallam). As each day passed, I felt myself becoming reborn into a new mold. I now wanted to aspire towards piety and felt like dissociating from many of the social practices commonplace at college campuses, such as the extreme informality between men and women.

I associated all those positive changes to a form of Islam which I thought was practiced by the entire Muslim ummat. Despite the abundance of sects, Islam was a cohesive unit, I thought. Such naive presumptions were, however, quickly dispelled in the light of subsequent events.

One day every semester, all of the college clubs set up tables in the University's main hall for the purpose of recruiting members. I could not wait to help at the Muslim Students Association (MSA) table. I approached the literature-laden table and greeted the members seated next to it. The first thing which caught my eye on the table was an electronically mailed letter to all the local MSAs in the United States and Canada stating that the 'Qadiani' group, also known as the Ahmadiis, were Non-Muslims whose literature had to

be banned from college libraries. This was disturbing, since I remembered that Irfan's community, from whom I had hitherto learned so much, were the Ahmadiis.

After reading the letter, I asked the MSA vice-president sitting next to me what this meant. Among the glossed over things he said, he mentioned that the Ahmadiis had a different Holy Quran. I pointed to one on the table and asked him to show me what the difference was from the one we all accepted. As was my guess, he had no idea. Things were looking very suspicious to me.

The first major incident with the MSA occurred when they raised an uproar over Ahmadi literature and hence banned it from their table. Irfan and I tried to reason with them, yet they would not budge. Soon they would disrupt our Tabligh meetings and eventually they added to their constitution the definition of a Muslim: One who believes that Muhammad (sal Allahu alaihe wasallam) is the last and final prophet. This was their new kalima. These incidents and many others made it crystal-clear to me that between the Ahmadiis and the other Muslim groups, the former always turned out to be better than the latter.

By the time our relations with MSA had reached such a low, I was a senior in college and already an Ahmadi. But even by the end of my first semester as a freshman, I had lost almost all trust in the MSA at my campus. If I had to choose between them and my Ahmadi friend Irfan, there was no question that I was with the latter. May Allah reward him for his great patience in dealing with the so-called Muslims.

When I came home during the winter and spring breaks, my parents were pleased to see that I was involved in my prayers and recitations of the Holy Quran. I attended Bohra events, and it made them happy. But they gradually realized there was something very different about their son, which troubled them.

I felt myself to be constantly changing, developing faculties I never experienced before. And as I was gradually approaching closer to Ahmadiyyat, I felt an urge to adopt its practices. I changed my mode of Salat from the Bohra Shia style to Ahmadi style, which is basically from the Hanafi school of jurisprudence. I could not accept the Shia views about the Companions of the Holy Prophet (sal Allahu alaihe wasallam) nor could I get myself to associate with the chest beating which takes place during Ashura in the month of Muharram. As I mentioned earlier, I found little interest in the sermons delivered at the Bohra mosque, and I found much wisdom at Ahmadiyya gatherings. I was particularly affected by the sermons delivered by the Khalifa, may Allah strengthen his hands.

Summer 1991 was just beginning. Preparations were made by Jamaat Ahmadiyya New York to host the Khalifa for a couple of days. It was an exciting time for them as well as for me. I had heard a number of Khutbas and questions and answers sessions delivered by the revered personage. I was eager to see him in person.

The occasion was a questions and answers session with non-Ahmadi Muslim guests. We were all seated in the Mission house's main room awaiting his arrival from a short trip. A few minutes after everyone had gathered, he walked briskly into the room at the pace of an energetic sportsman; indeed he was one. He was a marvelous sight. Cheerful, humble, his face shone of a smile which told of piety, love for his guests, and an occasional desire to tell a good joke. That evening I was rapt in attention to his presence.

After the meeting, I was innumerable blessed to have had a chance to meet with him personally after his dinner. Upon meeting me, Huzur hugged and kissed me on the cheek and told me he thought I was an Ahmadi all along. We sat down, and he told me about his previous encounter with

Bohras. The meeting, although of only 10 to 20 minutes, impressed upon me a deep and long-lasting love for the Khalifa. May my progeny sacrifice themselves for the cause of Khilafate Ahmadiyyat.

The fall semester of 1991 passed by with great speed. I learned more about Islam and Ahmadiyyat. I even participated in religious competitions during the annual gathering of the auxiliary organization Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya. I had become fully enamored with Ahmadiyyat and adjudged it to be the true religion of Allah. Now all that remained was to join. I knew my parents and family members would be furious if I did. Yet I asked myself if it was not indeed worth everything in this life to receive the benefits from Allah now and in the next life?

While I pondered over this point, my worried parents sent me to one Bohra priest after another to discuss religion. A brief episode with one priest, the Sheikh Sahib, as we all referred to him, is worthy of mention. Among his arguments, the Sheikh Sahib once asked me if I accepted that the Holy Prophet (sal Allahu alaihe wasallam) said on an occasion that, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is the gate." Remembering what Huzur, our beloved Khalifa, had once mentioned about this, I said, "Sir, I have no disagreement on this point."

He smiled.

I went on, "You see, the Holy Prophet (sal Allahu alaihe wasallam) was both an usher of glad tidings and a Warner. He commended Hazrat Ali (razi Allahu anho) on his great knowledge and wisdom, which he had learned from him. Simultaneously, it was a warning to the Muslims to realize who the spring and center of knowledge really was, that is, the Holy Prophet (sal Allahu alaihe wasallam) himself.

"In fact, this carries such a prophetic meaning which is beyond belief. Today it serves as a warning to those who make their center of atten-

tion Hazrat Ali and leave the Holy Prophet (sal Allaho alaihe wasallam) aside as some great incomprehensible prophet, whose great mission was to appoint Hazrat Ali as his successor. They have made the city the gateway and the gateway the city. The hadith is prophetic in that its advice would be so necessary today for a great number of Muslims, namely the Shias."

The Sheikh Sahib's smile turned flaccid. In attempt to control his anger, he decided the room had gotten too warm for him and excused himself for a short walk outside. Thus my encounters with Bohra's priests only increased my inclination towards Ahmadiyyat.

The auspicious moment took place in the spring 1992 of my sophomore year, immediately following the holy month of Ramadhan. I was half-way through reading the Promised Messiah's book entitled Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam when I came upon the following passage on finding the path of Allah:

How shall we discover that path and how shall we acquire that light? Be it known that in this world every effect has a cause and behind every move is a mover. For the acquisition of every type of knowledge there is appointed a way that is called the straight path. Nothing can be achieved in this world without conformity to the rules that nature has appointed in that behalf from the very beginning. The law of nature informs us that for the achievement of each purpose there is appointed a straight path and the purpose can be achieved only by following that path. For instance, if we are sitting in a dark room, the straight path for obtaining the light of the sun is for us to open the window that faces the sun. When we do that, the light of the sun instantly enters the

room and illumines it. Thus it is obvious that for the acquisition of God's love and real grace there must be some window, and there must be an appointed method for the acquisition of pure spirituality. Then we should see the straight path that leads to spirituality as we seek a straight path for the achievement of all our other purposes. That method is not that we should seek to meet God only through the exercise of our reason and by following our self-appointed ways. The doors which can only be opened by His powerful hands will not yield to our logic and philosophy. We cannot find the Ever-Living and Self-Subsisting God through our own devices. The only straight path for the achievement of this purpose is that we should first devote our lives, together with all our faculties, to the cause of God Almighty, and should then occupy ourselves with supplication for meeting Him, and should thus find God through God Himself. (Page 57, 1993 Publication)

I was now resolved. No longer could I wait. Since I considered Ahmadiyyat to be the true religion sustained by God Almighty, denying it would be tantamount to denying Allah Himself. Moreover, I could never come closer in meeting with Allah unless I followed His prescribed path. This is a point which I understood long before. Any sane person would come to such a conclusion. Yet reason is only the beginning. Man must delve into his heart and supplicate to His creator for the courage and resolve to hear and to accept, without any excuses. Only then will Allah the Almighty clean out the debris of false notions from a believer's heart and establish His throne in its place.

Upon reading this statement during that tranquil night, I supplicated: Oh my Lord, if I am doing something wrong by accepting Ahmadiyyat, then cause me to fail in my progress as an Ahmadi and show me the right religion. But if Ahmadiyyat is, in fact, the true religion and the true Islam, then make me stick to it and cause me to become a devoted follower.

The next morning, I signed the bait form with an Ahmadi friend as witness.

Accepting Ahmadiyyat opened for me by the grace of Allah advancement in almost every angle of involvement. For one, I started to receive a number of pious dreams, some of which, because I could not relate them to previous experiences, I feel were true. Many of them revolved around Hazrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IV, may Allah strengthen his hands. The details of one dream are worthy of mention. In the spring of 1992 on a Thursday night, just a few weeks before I performed baiat, I dreamt that I was sitting in a small room with a handful of people, and we were all listening to Huzur, who was delivering a sermon. I entered the dream as he was just finishing. He seemed pensive and detached. Most startling, however, was that his garb was entirely black. Upon finishing the sermon, he walked past us into another room without making any gesture of a good-bye. The dream ended with me remarking to someone standing by me that it was odd that the Khalifa didn't say anything to us after the sermon.

The next day, as Irfan and I were headed to Jumua prayers in his car, I related the whole dream to him. Later on that day, we found out that Huzur's wife had passed away. I immediately wrote to Huzur, and he replied soon after that he felt I had indeed experienced a true dream. Sometimes Almighty Allah sends a message of His presence through such phenomena.

In other dreams, I would be in the company of a few people and Huzur would pass by us, waving.

Then I dreamt that along with a small gathering in a minivan, I would pass by Huzur. In the last dream of this series of dreams, I found myself traveling in a train to Pakistan, this time sitting next to Huzur. We chatted a little bit about the area we were traveling through. Whatever the meaning of these dreams, I found them extremely pleasant. They left in me a profound love for the Khalifa.

As an Ahmadi, I felt blessings even in the worldly spheres. I felt myself to be sharper, more alert, and far more focused. My parents used to argue that my concentration on religion would divert me from my studies. It is simply by the grace of Almighty Allah and no doing of my own that after accepting Ahmadiyyat, I received only As in my classes (except for two or three A-s), whereas before I was a B+ student. When I immersed myself in religion, I was actually enabled to do better in the worldly affairs.

My parents' reaction to my acceptance was at the very least unpleasant. The next few months were marred with trying moments. Soon I was skirted to India for religious "retraining;" actually, the trip turned out to be a nice vacation. Upon returning home, I found myself being compelled to make one vain compromise after another, primarily dealing with isolating myself from the Jamaat. Finally, I explained point blank to my parents that as far as religion was concerned, there would no longer be any compromise whatsoever. They could do as they wished; eventually they would have to answer to Allah the Almighty.

I expected this bold attitude to create an uproar. Yet miraculously, my family's opposition immediately subsided. Neither my parents nor any of my family members continued to express their intolerance as they had shown previously. By the grace of Allah, I had truly learned an important lesson which is embodied in the Holy Quran.

Never soften in matters of faith. You can be lenient regarding just about everything else, but never your faith. About the Holy Prophet (sal Allaho alaihe wasallam) and his companions, the Holy Quran says:

Muhummad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are firm against the disbelieves but tender among themselves. Thou seest them bowing and prostrating themselves, seeking Allah's grace and pleasure. (48[Al-Fath]:30)

By the grace of Allah, things have relatively normalized at home. The situation may again on occasion become tense. Yet time heals many wounds. I hope I have not portrayed anyone harshly or unjustly. For one, my parents are dear

and loving individuals. Therefore in ending, I appeal to the reader to pray for all the participants in this story. For now is the time for the world to accept the blessings of Allah vouchsafed in the advent of the Mahdi and Messiah of the Holy Prophet (sal Allaho alaihe wasallam). They may make doctrinal hurdles in their way of accepting Ahmadiyyat. Allah knows better what is in their hearts. Yet whatever they do, until they accept Ahmadiyyat, they will never be saved from the calamities which the All Powerful has prepared for those who turn away from His message. Oh our Merciful Lord, may their hearts become softened and may they see your light and accept Your Grace. Amin.

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of All the worlds.

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Silent Reminders

Majeed A. Mian

Some years ago, in the jungles of Guyana, a so called spiritual leader, Jim Jones, passed a cup of poison to hundreds of his followers and commanded them to drink it. Hours later Jim Jones and his followers were found dead. The news shocked the world and continues to haunt the minds of those who can not see the rationale of such an action. While the ghastly memories were still fresh in the minds of millions of people, the World was alarmed once again by the burning alive of David Koresh and his followers in Waco, Texas. More recently dead bodies of the followers of another religious group were discovered in Switzerland. While many questions remain unresolved in the minds of many, one fact is very clear that mankind remains relentlessly in the search for spiritual guidance. Unfortunately, some people who are in search of such guidance, do not go about with right intentions and thus fall prey to self proclaimed religious guides who not only rob them of their hard earned money but also involve them in unlawful activities. Eventually when they are faced with legal action, they prefer death over disgrace, bringing their whole religious order down with them. We Ahmadies know very well that one such phony prophet, Alexander Dowie and his community in Zion, Illinois, met their admonitory end through the prayers of Hazrat Promised Messiah, peace be on him, at the turn of the twentieth century.

From the study of history, we find that such phenomena have been common throughout the human civilization. God Almighty, the Creator of the Earth and everything in there, has made arrangements for the guidance of mankind. His way of providing the guidance is that He chooses the

most capable person of the time to carry out that mission helping him with revelation and heavenly signs. He also protects these seemingly helpless few against the treachery and might of the majority. Such men, in general terms are known as, prophets of God. The prophets have always been very humble and have never had any desire for worldly wealth. They always preached against the accumulation of wealth and instead exhorted their followers to spend their wealth on the poor and needy. This message was, however always in direct conflict with the general ways of the societies in which the prophets appeared. That is why the true prophets were always rejected and their communities persecuted by the majorities of their time. As a sign of their truth, the prophets eventually succeeded in forming a community of the true believers of God which slowly grew in number. Their growth became rapid at a later promised time and thus they became the new pillars of civilization. As these communities distanced from the time of their prophets, they gradually drifted back into their old ways until the society was once again plunged into the spiritual darkness. When that happens, people once again begin to seek the lost spiritual guidance. Some continue to seek that guidance through prayers and patience. Such people are always rewarded by Allah but others with worldly desires, fall prey to scams and false religious leaders. There have been many such religious groups or *cults*. The true religion however always survives despite all the efforts of its opponents to annihilate it. On the other hand, these man-made religions initially thrive without any opposition but soon disappear from the face of the Earth, in many cases with disgrace. It must be

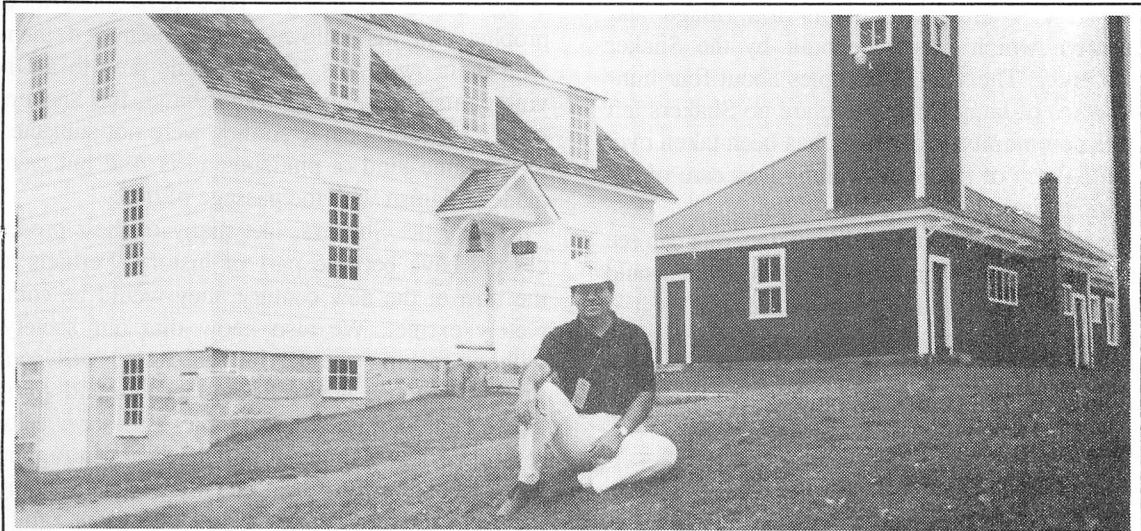
noted that not all such religious groups were involved in unlawful activities. In some cases it seems that these groups evolved out of a genuine desire by their leaders to reform the society. Unfortunately they ignored the laws of nature, the Divine teachings, and the practice of the prophets. That is why despite their apparent harmless posture towards the society, they were removed from the surface of the earth. In order to teach a lesson to the human beings though, Allah preserved some of their science, warning the future generations as to how these communities flourished for some time but were eventually made to disappear in a manner as if they never existed. One such example was the Shakers.

The Shaker Movement began as an offshoot of the Quaker denomination of Christianity. It was founded in England in the 1760s. It became a cohesive unit under the leadership of a woman named Ann Lee, referred to as Mother Ann Lee by Shakers. They came to America during the Revolutionary war. Shakers were opposed to wars

of any kind and that is why they did not participate in that war. However, since they had come from England, during the war they were suspected of being British spies. During the nineteenth century, this movement spread rapidly through the Northeastern and Eastern parts of the United States, claiming at its height around six thousand members.

The Shakers believed in technology and are responsible for many important inventions, e.g. the washing machine, the flat broom, packaged seeds, etc. They are renowned for their furniture and handicrafts.

The Movement underwent a rapid decline during the 20th century. This is mainly attributed to the vow of celibacy imposed on the Shakers. There are about twenty seven Shakers left in the United States, today. The Shakers increased their numbers during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by taking in children from state orphanages. These children were all trained in various useful skills and, at age 21, were given



The Author at the Shaker's Village

the choice of staying on as a Shaker or of leaving the community. The records show that the majority left, but then went on to be extremely useful and productive members of any community they subsequently lived in. However, in the early twentieth century, when state orphanages were considered cruel and cold by the society, and orphaned children were given for adoption to families, the Shaker membership began to decline drastically, and there were fewer and fewer younger people to replace the aging members.

They were called Shakers because, during their prayer and worship sessions, they were so moved by the spirit of their religion that they would get up and dance and sing loudly, expressing their enthusiasm for God. Although men and women were kept separate for all purposes, they worshipped in the same room of the church and eventually became known far and wide for their music. Today, Shaker furniture and music are remembered but very little is generally known about their religious beliefs now.

Canterbury is a small town near Concord, New Hampshire. There are remnants of a village near this town which was once built by the Shaker community. The village occupies about four hundred acres of land. Since there are no Shakers left in this community, the village has been taken over by an agency of the State which takes care of the historical sites.

In their prayer room in the village, one can see the Shakers' motto on the wall. A Muslim would perhaps look at this motto in amazement as it is the exact translation of a Farsi verse of a famous Muslim saint, Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, who lived during the thirteenth century:

دست با کار و دل با یار

Hands to work, hearts to God

One is also amazed by the Shakers' belief in the segregation of sexes. A Muslim would not

hesitate to think that they must have been inspired by the Islamic teachings in this regard, perhaps without understanding the real philosophy behind it, they carried it too far. They practiced strict celibacy, which was one of the reasons for their downfall. While going through their buildings and seeing their technological inventions, one is reminded of the ancient tribes of Aad and Thamud who have been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Aad were also technologically very advanced for their times. Allah says about them in the Holy Quran (26[Al-Shu'ara]:129, 130):

اتبنون بكل ريع اية تعبون
وتخذون مصانع لعلكم تخلدون

Do you build monuments on every
high place seeking vain glory,

And do you erect palaces as though
you will live for ever?

Here, we see a sign of greatness of our Lord in the treatment of these two different kinds of people. Aad was a community of people who were arrogant and oppressors. They persecuted their prophet and his followers. God destroyed them with their own tools. They became prey to a Divine punishment. On the other hand, the Shakers were a peaceful people so they were not subjected to the same kind of punishment as Aad but were made to vanish with the passage of time.

Today the Shakers, like many of their predecessors have become part of history. Perhaps at the turn of the new century, they would be completely extinct. We also know that our society, without seeking the Divine guidance, will continue to produce new religious leaders and cults. These cults, like the Shakers may also survive for a short period of time but only to disappear again. The real answer however, lies in seriously seeking the right direction. Over a hundred years ago, a religious movement by the name of, Jamaat Ahmadiyya was started by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam

Ahmad of Qadian, India. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Mehdi appointed by Allah, The Almighty. To prove the truth of his claim, numerous Divine Signs have been witnessed by millions of people around the world. This has always been the way of Allah whenever He appointed a prophet for the guidance of mankind. The Jamaat raised by Hazrat Promised Messiah, peace be on him, has not only survived the insurmountable opposition but has progressed beyond imaginations. Today, this movement under the leadership of the fourth successor of the Promised

Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, may Allah be his help, is established in about one hundred and fifty countries of the world and continues to progress by leaps and bounds. Seekers after truth of all color and creed are invited to seriously study the goals of Ahmadiyya Movement. They will most certainly, find the truth over here and will experience first hand, the Signs of their Lord. May Allah remove the ills of our society by granting its people the wisdom to recognize the true Divine Guidance. Amin.

Program Majlis-e-Shura Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A. *FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1995*

- 10:00 AM Recitation of the Holy Quran, Ansarullah Pledge
 Address by Amir Sahib, USA
- 10:45 Qaid Amoomi (General Secretary)
 - i. Report of the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Talim-o-Tarbiyyat and Tabligh, and General Subcommittees of the Last Shura
 - ii. Proposals Not Accepted for Consideration by the Shura 1995
 - iii. Proposals Accepted for Consideration by the Shura 1995
- 11:15 Qaid Mal (Financial Secretary)
 - i. Implementation Report: Recommendations by the Finance Committee of the Last Shura (1994)
 - ii. Budget for 1996
- 11:30 Formation of Subcommittees
- 12:00 Committees Meet
- 1:00 PM LUNCH AND FRIDAY PRAYERS
- 3:00 Committees Meet and Prepare the Reports
- 5:30 Presentation of the Report of the Committees
- 7:00 Elections of the Sadr and Sadr Safe Doyem (Presided by Amir Sahib or his representative)
- Closing Remarks
- 7:30 DINNER AND PRAYERS

Program 14th Annual Ijtema Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A.

At Baitur Rehman Mosque, Silver Spring, Maryland

Friday September 15, 1995

6:00 PM Registration
7:30 DINNER AND PRAYERS

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 1995

5:15 AM Fajr Prayer, Dars-ul-Quran
7:00 BREAKFAST
8:00 Registration

FIRST SESSION

10:00 Recitation of the Holy Quran, Ansarullah Pledge and Poem
Opening Remarks: Amir Sahib or his representative
10:45 Prepared speech contest (5 minutes per speech): *Responsibilities of Ansar with respect to the revelation to the Promised Messiah, Alaihis Salam*, "I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the earth."
11:45 Speech by Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Cheema, Missionary, Northeast Region
"Responsibilities of Ansar as mentors for the children and youth of the jamaat."
12:15 Maulana Shamshad Ahmad Nasir: Waqfe Aarzi scheme and Ansar
12:45 LUNCH
1:30 Zuhr and Asr Prayers

SECOND SESSION

2:00 PM Recitation of the Holy Quran and Poem
2:15 Maulana Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad, Retired Amir and Chief Missionary, USA : *How to become a successful Daee-il-Allah; Some Practical Guidelines*
2:45 Daee-il-Allah experiences (Workshop): Secretary Tabligh and some new Ahmadis
3:45 TEA BREAK
4:30 Sports Competitions [One Mile walk, One hundred meter race, Arm Wrestling (Group I: 40 -60 years old; Group II: 60 and Above), volleyball, tug of war]
7:30 DINNER AND PRAYERS
8:30 National Majlis Amla: Meeting with Zo'ma and Muntazimeen Amoomi.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 1995

THIRD SESSION

5:15 AM Fajr Prayer, Darsul Quran
7:00 BREAKFAST
8:30 Recitation of the Holy Quran and Poem
8:45 Sadr, Majlis Ansarullah, USA: *Annual Progress Report*
9:00 Contests: Recitation of the Holy Quran, Reading of any one tradition of the Holy Prophet and giving its meaning and explanation, recitation of the poem of the Promised Messiah, Recitation of the English translation of the poem, and impromptu speech.
11:00 TEA BREAK
11:15 Question & Answer Session
12:15 Prize Distribution
12:45 Concluding Speech: Amir Sahib or his representative
1:30 Lunch and Prayers

Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A.

Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A., is an auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc. U.S.A., 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, U.S.A. It consists of Ahmadi Muslim men above the age of 40. The Arabic expression *ansarullah* literally means *helpers of God*, and is taken from the Holy Quran (61:15).

Ansar Pledge

اشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له
واشهد ان محمدا عبده ورسوله

I solemnly promise that I shall endeavor till the end of my life for the consolidation and propagation of Islam and Ahmadiyyat and for upholding the institution of Khilafat. I shall also be prepared to offer the greatest sacrifice for this cause. Moreover, I shall urge all my children to remain true to Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya. Insha Allah.

Publications

Al-Nahl: This copy in your hands, published quarterly.

Ansarullah News: Monthly newsletter, copy available from the Sadr or Secretary Ishaat.

Salat Chart: 18x24" B&W, Arabic with English transliteration and English translation, \$2/copy.

Ansar Card with Ansar pledge on it: Free from Secretary Ishaat.

Calendar

West Coast Ansar Ijtema: Los Angeles, CA, August 12 and 13, 1995.

U.S. National Annual Ijtema Ansarullah and U. S. National Annual Shura Ansarullah: Washington, D.C: September 15-17, 95.

National Majlis Aamila Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A.

1993-1995

Sadr (President): Dr Karimullah Zirvi
Naib Sadr Saf Doem: Dr Mubarak Ahmad Shah

1995

Naib Sadr Awwal: Syed Sajid Ahmad
Qa'id Umumi (Gen. Sec.): Naeem Chaudari
Naib Qa'id Umumi: Zabeeh Ullah
Qa'id Mal (Finance): Mansoor Viqar Sayyed
Naib Qa'id Mal: Naim Ahmad Waseem
Qa'id Taleem (Education Sec.): Salim Nasir Malik
Qa'id Tarbiyyat: Dr Rasheed S. Azam
Naib Qa'id Tarbiyyat (Rishta Natah): Munir Hamid
Qa'id Tabligh: Khalil Mahmud
Qa'id Ishaat (Publications): Majeed A. Mian
Qa'id Ithar [*eesaar*] (Social Services): Ali Mur-taza
Qa'id Tehrik-i-Jadid: Dhul Waqar Yaqub
Qa'id Waqf-e-Jadid: Rashid Ahmad
Qa'id Zehanat-o-Sihat Jismani: Dr Imtiaz Chaudhary
Qa'id Tajnid (Census): Abdul Wahid Sheikh
Auditor: Jalaluddin Abdul Latif

Arakin Khususi

(Special Members)

Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad Sahib, Washington, D.C.
Dr Muzaffar A. Zafr, Dayton, OH.
Dr Ahsanullah Zafar, Lambertville, N.J.
Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad Sahib, Washington, D.C.
Mr Mohammad Sadiq, N.J.

Some Ansar with Hazrat Khalifat-ul-Masih, Ayyadahollaho ta'ala.



Al-Nahl
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