32nd Annual National Īṭīmā’ and 21st National Shūrā of Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA was held on Friday, October 4 – Sunday, October 6, 2013 at Baitur-Raḥmān Mosque, Silver Spring, MD

2013 Q3 Vol. 24 No. 3
About Al-Naḥl

The Al-Naḥl (pronounced annahl) is published quarterly by Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA, an auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islām, Inc., USA, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, USA.

Articles/Essays for the Al-Naḥl

Literary contributions, articles, essays, photographs, etc., for publication in the Al-Naḥl can be sent to the editor at his email or mailing address below. Textual contributions can be provided in plain text, Microsoft Word, or Microsoft Publisher.

References should include as much of the following information as available: the name of the publication, volume and number, name of the author, the date and place of publication, the name of the publisher, and the page number(s).

Please keep a copy of your submissions. We may not be able to return originals unless an arrangement is made beforehand.

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The Al-Naḥl is funded by Anṣār contributions for literature set at $10/Nāṣir/year. All Anṣār are requested to pay their contributions punctually to ensure the timely publication of the magazine.

Subscription Information

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System of Transliteration

In transliterating Arabic words, the following system, adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society, is followed.

- at the beginning of the word, pronounced as a, i, u preceded by a very slight aspiration, like h in English word ‘honor.’
- th, pronounced like th in English word ‘thing.’
- ḥ, a guttural aspirate, stronger than h.
- kh, pronounced like the Scotch ch in ‘loch.’
- dh, pronounced like the English th in ‘that.’
- ṣ, strongly articulated s.
- ẓ, strongly articulated z.
- ṭ, strongly articulated palatal t.
- z, strongly articulated z.
- ḍ, similar to the English th in ‘this.’
- ḍ, a deep guttural k sound.
- ḍ, a sort of catch in the voice.
And thy Lord has inspired the bee, saying, 'Make thou houses in the hills and in the trees and in the trellises which they build, 'Then eat of every kind of fruit, and then pursue submissively the paths prescribed by your Lord.' There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying hues. Therein is a cure for men. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who reflect. (The Holy Qur’ān, 16 [Al-Naḥl]:69-70)
Let me first introduce the subject of revelation in language and examples that are more familiar to my Western readers. “Let us be silent that we may hear the whisper of God.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Prof. Mark W Muesse, in his lecture series Confucius, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad, describes the phenomenon of revelation or what others may prefer to call inspiration. He writes:

I mentioned Bernard Shaw’s play about Joan of Arc, in which she claims to hear voices from God. Later in the play, as Joan is being interrogated for suspicion of heresy, she is asked by King Charles, ‘Why don’t the voices come to me? I am king, not you.’ Joan tells him:

‘They do come to you; but you do not hear them. You have not sat in the field in the even listening for them. When the angelus rings you cross yourself and have done with it; but if you prayed from your heart, and listened to the thrilling of the bells in the air after they stop ringing, you would hear the voices as well as I do.’

As Joan suggests, there is nothing extraordinary about hearing the voice of God, but one needs to make the effort to listen.

Whether we call what we hear the voice of God or of conscience, the sound of silence or the rhythms of the breath, the lives of our four sages remind us of the necessity to stop and pay attention to our lives. Taking time to be quiet and attending to our lives need not result in some intense, enlightening religious experience. Indeed, such intense moments are rare. But it must be a regular practice, just as Muḥammad stopped to pray five times a day and the Buddha meditated in the quiet of each night. It is simply a way to remind ourselves of what is really important, because we forget. (Prof. Mark W Muesse. *Confucius, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad*. The Great Courses transcript book, 2010. Pages 456-457.)

And it is not for a man that Allāh should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger to reveal by His command what He pleases. Surely, He is High, Wise. (The Holy Qur’ān, 42 [Al-Shūrā]:52)

He is Allāh, and there is no God beside Him, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Gracious, the Merciful.

**Dual Nature of Human Capabilities**

The Messiah of this age, Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiānī (may peace be on him), also referred to as the Promised Messiah, writes about the purpose of human life and nature of human brain in his book Ḣaqiqatul-Wahy:

Let it be clear that man has been created with the ultimate purpose to recognize his Creator. Man is supposed to have full awareness of his Creator and to understand His attributes to a level that his cognizance reaches a degree of certainty. Therefore, Allāh has designed the human mind with two different talents. On the one hand, he has been given intellectual abilities. As a result of these abilities he is able to study Allāh’s creations, and by observing divine purpose in every particle of nature, by studying the organization and order in the natural systems of the universe, he is able to fully realize that this elaborate infrastructure of the earth and the heaven cannot be by itself, without a creator. He can conclude that there should be a Designer and a Maker of all this!

On the other hand, Allāh has gifted man with spiritual powers and perceptions as well. This dual gift from Allāh is for the reason, that, whatever limitations and shortcomings are left from the domain of intellectual capacity should be satisfied with the spiritual abilities. It is obvious that intellectual abilities given to man are only able to study the earth and the heaven and observing individual details declare that this profound and organized universe should have a creator. It is beyond the capacity of the intellectual abilities to go further and declare that such a Creator of this universe does exist! It is not within their scope to announce that there is indeed such a Maker! (Ḥaqiqatul-Wahy, Rūḥānī Khaza’in, vol. 22, pp. 7-8)

The Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) emphasizing the need of this spiritual facility of human mind concludes:

It is, therefore, self evident that man’s comprehension needs to advance to the point where he knows that there is indeed a Creator. A mere inference that there ought to be...
a creator cannot be considered to be a complete understanding. (Haqiqatul-Wahy, Ruḥānī Khazā‘īn, vol. 22, p. 8)

Also:

It is through spiritual abilities that mankind finds certain knowledge about its Creator. This certainty of knowledge mankind owes to the prophets of God and not to the philosophers of nature. (Haqiqatul-Wahy, Ruḥānī Khazā‘īn, vol. 22, pp. 1-70)

Allāh describes the purpose of human life in these words:

وَمَا خَلَقَ الْجَبَرِيٰ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ

And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me. (The Holy Qur‘ān, 51 [Al-Dhāriyāt]:57)

In accordance with the purpose of human life, Allāh has gifted human mind with dual capabilities, intellectual and spiritual! What does science say about how the human mind works? What is the known physiologic basis of dreaming or revelation? To study all these questions one needs to study the unconscious or the subconscious mind.

The Subconscious Mind

Human mind can be considered to have two aspects, a smaller well known ‘conscious’ part and much larger but elusive ‘subconscious’ module. Subconscious mind is the set of complex mental activities within an individual that proceed without his full awareness. It is understood by the psychologists that such unconscious processes may affect a person’s behavior even though he cannot report on them directly. Freud and his followers felt that dreams and slips of the tongue were really concealed examples of unconscious content too threatening to be confronted directly by the conscious mind. All competent investigators now assume that the conscious part of the mind is a very limited and restricted area of the total personality. This conscious part of the mind extends in varying degrees out into a much larger area of reality.

The use of these terms conscious and subconscious mind in no way indicates that we possess two minds. The varied activities of mind should be considered as a part of a wide spectrum with varying level of awareness of its activities. A good analogy should paint a picture that indicates the essential unitary character of mind. Mind functions on two levels, or in two areas, namely, the conscious, self-aware part of mind and the creative and ingenious subconscious level. This two-fold nature of mind activity does not indicate two minds or one mind with two separate divisions. Mind is a unity and functions as such. The two-fold activity of mind is an interrelated process. The conscious mind can be considered to be the tip of the iceberg with a much larger capacity in the form of subconscious lying hidden from our eyes.

Psychologists have used various illustrative analogies to describe the relationship and function of two levels of mind. One approach to this problem is by comparing the conscious and subconscious mind to coral islands found in some parts of the ocean.

On the surface of these coral islands there is a small circular area of a rock-like substance surrounded by ocean water. On this protruding edge is found a fringe of tropic vegetation. This is all there is to be seen on the surface, with no suggestion of the mighty structure down to the ocean’s floor built by uncountable millions of coral creatures during eons of time. The human mind is to a degree like these coral islands.

Yet another analogy can be that of a well. This will be an old fashioned well six to eight feet in diameter, walled up with stones and filled with water. The well is the human mind. Sometimes we think of it in terms of the diameter enclosed within the brick walls. However, on deeper reflection, it is an ocean of water, extending its subterranean depth, into the subsurface water extending miles in every direction away from the brick wall. The only point at which the infinite reservoir of mind activity can be observed is at the very surface of the water in the well.

The subconscious level of mind constitutes a volume of experience and reality much greater in extent and in creative power than the conscious part of the mind, but it is obscure and is hidden from superficial examination. This subconscious mind carries with it all the mental images

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and emotional states which have been experienced during the life of the individual. In the analogy of well it extends under the surface for miles and miles as ground water.

So much about the subconscious mind but we need to know a little about the physiology and basis of sleep to study this subject further.

**Sleep And Dreaming**

Sleep and dreams have aroused the interest of mankind since time immemorial, as reflected in the writings of the different religions and civilizations. These phenomena by their very nature have a mystique about them. Even though there are several poetic, philosophical, and religious references to these phenomena, the science of sleep has began to develop in the last 50 years only and has picked up pace since. This revolution may be traced back to the discovery of a type of sleep characterized by rapid eye movement (REM sleep), first reported by the physiologists Eugene Aserinsky and Nathaniel Kleitman in 1953. This brought the awareness that sleep was not, as popularly believed, a state of unconsciousness. REM sleep proved to have characteristics quite at variance with the prevailing model of sleep as recuperative deactivation of the central nervous system. It was shown that various central and autonomic nervous system measurements, during REM stage of sleep, seemed more akin to wakefulness than the other type of sleep, called Non-REM sleep. It has been observed with the help of special scans by scientists that different parts of brain are as active in REM sleep as during the state of wakefulness. REM sleep is popularly associated with dreaming, especially bizarre, visual, and seemingly random dreams. So in the last few decades it has become common knowledge that sleep is not a passive phenomenon when different body actions are shut off. It is a different type of existence with altogether different activities, far removed from a state of sheer unconsciousness.

Given sleep's heterogeneous nature, no single theory predominates, as it is difficult to describe one single "function" of sleep. Restorative theories of sleep describe sleep as a dynamic time of healing and growth for organisms. For example, during stages 3 and 4 of Non-REM sleep, or slow-wave sleep, growth hormone levels increase, and changes in immune function occur. In some studies, sleep deprivation has led to decrements in immune function. Sleep helps in the neurological growth also. The newborn infant or neonates may spend an average of about 16 hours of each 24-hour period in sleep, although there is wide variability among individual babies. In neonates, as the brain is actively developing majority of sleep is REM sleep rather than Non-REM sleep. In neonates, 75% of sleep is REM whereas converse is true for the adults. It has been suggested, for instance, that the high frequency and priority in the night of REM sleep in the newborn infant may reflect a need for stimulation from within to permit orderly maturation of the central nervous system (CNS). Another interpretation of age-related changes in REM sleep stresses its possible role in processing new information, the rate of acquisition for which is assumed to be relatively high in childhood but reduced in old age. So sleep in general and REM sleep in particular has all the ingredients necessary for the reprocessing of all the learning during the daytime. The conscious mind goes to sleep but the subconscious mind is fully awake and well and kicking at full throttle. It continues to be seat of creative ideas and possible dreams, both bizarre and fantastic on the one hand and true dreams on the other hand.

The Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) notes that the blessings of Al-Rahman God are general and for all. He writes in Haqiqatul-Waḥfy about the nature of true dreams or revelations:

God Almighty has with a few exceptions granted all men with eyes, nose, and ears and blessed them with sense of smell and other senses and has not been miserly towards any nation. Likewise, Allāh has not excluded any people or nation from the blessings of the basic seed of the spiritual faculties. Just like you see that the sunlight reaches every place and no place whether clean or dirty is exempted from it. Same is the law for the light of the spiritual sun and it shines in all places regardless of the spiritual station. However, it is true that this spiritual light loves a heart that is clean, pure,

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**Prayer in Congregation**

Haḍrat Abū Hurairah (may Allāh be pleased with him) has related that the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) said: “Prayer in congregation is more than twenty-five times greater in merit than Prayer at home or in the shop, etc. Therefore, when a person makes his ablutions carefully and proceeds to the mosque with the sole purpose of joining in the service, his station rises in grade at every step and one of his sins is wiped out. From the moment he enters the mosque he is accounted as a participant in the service while waiting for the service to begin, and, so long as he causes no inconvenience to anyone and his state of purity is maintained, the angels continue to pray for him: Allāh, have mercy upon him; Allāh, forgive him; Allāh, turn to him with compassion.” (Bukhārī *and Muslim*)
and true. (Haqiqatul-Wahy, Rūḥānī Khaza’in, vol. 22, p. 26)

In other words, dreams, even the true ones, are a shared feature among all humans. There are, however, some differences in the true dreams of the ordinary and the pious. That will be examined later.

**The Powers of Subconscious Mind**

Thomas Edison, the famous American inventor, who, singly or jointly, held a world record of 1,093 patents, did most of his creative work at night subconsciously. The great French writer, Voltaire, known for his courageous crusader against tyranny, bigotry, and cruelty, frequently spent as much as fifteen to sixteen hours in bed, calling his secretary when there was anything to be committed to writing. Henry Cobb, the millionaire fruit packer, once said that all the really important ideas which helped him to build his business arrived in his mind at night while lying in bed. Elbert Hubbard, a freelance newspaperman, known for his moralistic essays, declared that his most important ideas came to him while working in his garden or riding horseback. There are numerous examples of creative work accomplished by men who moved through their activities with leisure and balance. Alfred Russell Wallace became a public figure in England during the second half of the 19th century, known for his courageous views on scientific, social, and spiritualist subjects. His formulation of the theory of evolution by natural selection, which predated Charles Darwin’s published contributions, is his most outstanding legacy. He would go for days and weeks feeling no desire or interest in work. During these periods he occupied himself with his garden or simply by reading a novel. Then, a sudden impulse would come bringing him an explanation, a theory, a discovery, the plan of a book, and this impulse usually came to him like a flash of light. Subconscious activity generally brought with it not only plans but the material, the arguments and the needed illustrations.  

From the time of Socrates, the founder of ethical science, and possibly a prophet of God, to the inventive genius of Ford, Marconi, Westinghouse, Einstein, and Kettering, this little-understood field of mental activity has delivered the insight and know-how for almost every great achievement in science, industry, and the arts. The noted German scientist, von Helmholtz, best known for his statement of the law of the conservation of energy, when speaking to a group of friends on his seventieth birthday said: “Happy ideas come unexpectedly, without effort, like an inspiration, so far as I am concerned. They have never come to me when my mind was fatigued or when I was at my working table.” The French mathematician, Henri Poincare, described his creative work in almost the same terms. He stated that creative ideas did not come to him while he worked at his desk, but frequently flashed into his mind while he engaged in other activities. William Blake, the English artist and poet, did his immortal work while his subconscious was in complete control. The poet, Coleridge, developed in detail his great poem, Kubla Khan, while his confused conscious mind was under the influence of an opiate. Tschaikowsky, the composer, said, “The germ of a future composition comes suddenly and unexpectedly.”

Walter Bradford Cannon, Professor Emeritus of Physiology at Harvard, says:

> From the years of my youth, the unearned assistance of sudden and unpredicted insight has been common. While a student in high school, I was occasionally puzzled by “originals” in algebra, the solution of which was not at all clear when I went to sleep at night. As I awoke in the morning, the proper procedures were immediately evident and the answers were quickly obtained. On an occasion, I was handed a complicated toy which was out of order and would not operate. I examined the mechanism carefully but did not see how the defect might be corrected. I resorted to sleep for a solution of the problem. At daybreak the corrective manipulation appeared thoroughly understandable, and I promptly set the contraption going. As a matter of routine I have long trusted unconscious processes to serve me—for example, when I have had to prepare a public address. I would gather points for the address and write them down in a rough outline. Within the next few nights I would have sudden spells of awakening, with an onrush of illustrative instances, pertinent phrases, and fresh ideas related to those already listed. Paper and pencil at hand permitted the capture of these fleeting thoughts before they faded into oblivion. The process has been so common and so reliable for me that I have supposed that it was at the service of everyone.  

Freud, in his book *The Unconscious*, states, “Our most intimate daily experience introduces us to sudden ideas of the source of which we are ignorant, and to results of mentation arrived at we know not how.” Frederic W. H. Myers stated that the achievements of any man of genius “are the products of ideas which he has not consciously originated but which have shaped themselves in profounder regions of his being.”

The importance of the subconscious mind is indicated by Dr. Edmund W. Sinnott of Yale University, in his book Cell and Psyche:

> He (man) is no mere glorified robot, ruthlessly weighing everything in the scales of survival and physical satisfaction. He is a vast deal more than a bundle of purposes with an intellect to help accomplish them. From, far down within him, in that deep subconscious matrix where matter and energy and life are inextricably mixed together, there surge up into consciousness a throng of emotions, longings, loves and hates, imaginings and
aspirations, some exalted and some base, which form the most important of what he is. 4

The great Swiss psychologist, Carl J. Jung, in his book Psychology and Religion says, “The subconscious mind is capable at times of assuming an intelligence and purposiveness which are superior to actual conscious insight.” Another authority, Dr. Leon J. Saul, states, “Since Freud, it has been fully established that consciousness and even the conscious ego functions are, in a sense, only surface phenomena, however important they may be for adaptation and for man’s development. They are like the protruding tip of an iceberg, of which the main mass extends into the depths broad and deep.” 5

An illuminating inquiry into the nature of the flash of ideas and the extent of its occurrence among scientific men was reported by Platt and Baker in 1931. In their inquiry into the appearance of hunches among chemists they received answers from 232 correspondents. Assistance from a scientific revelation or a hunch in the solution of an important problem was reported by 33 per cent; 50 per cent reported that they had such assistance occasionally; and only 17 per cent, never. Professor W. D. Bancroft, the Cornell University chemist, tells of talking to four fellow chemists regarding aid from hunches and finding that to three of them the experience was commonplace. The fourth did not understand what was meant by the reference and testified that he had never had the feeling of an inspiration, had never had an idea come to him unexpectedly from some strange “outside” realm. He had worked consciously for all his results and what was described by the others meant nothing to him. 3

In typical cases, a hunch appears after long study and springs into consciousness at a time when the investigator is not working on his problem. It arises from a wide knowledge of facts, but it is essentially a leap of the imagination, for it reaches forth into the range of possibilities. It results from a spontaneous process of creative thought. 3

One night, after falling asleep over a trifling novel, Dr. Otto Loewi awoke possessed by a brilliant idea. He reached to the table beside his bed, picked up a piece of paper and a pencil, and jotted down a few notes. He was professor of pharmacology at the University of Graz and was working on demonstrating that chemical agents liberated at the end of nerves are the mediators of nerve activity to control the organs that they supply. On awakening next morning he was aware of having had an inspiration in the night and he turned to the paper for a reminder. To his utter despair he could not make anything of the scrawl he found on it. He went to his laboratory, hoping that sense would come to what he had written if he were surrounded by familiar apparatus. In spite of frequently withdrawing the paper from his pocket and studying it earnestly, he gained no insight. At the end of the day, still filled with the belief that he had had a very precious revelation the night before, he went to sleep. To his great joy he again awoke in the darkness with the same flash of insight which had inspired him the night before. This time he carefully recorded it before going to sleep again. The next day he went to his laboratory and in one of the neatest, simplest and most definite experiments in the history of biology brought proof of the chemical mediation of nerve impulses. He prepared two frog hearts which were kept beating by means of a salt solution. He stimulated the vagus nerve of one of the hearts, thus causing it to stop beating. He then removed the salt solution from this heart and applied it to the other one. To his great satisfaction the solution had the same effect on the second heart as vagus stimulation had had on the first one: the pulsating muscle was brought to a standstill. This was the beginning of a host of investigations in many countries throughout the world on chemical intermediation, not only between nerves and the muscles and the glands they affect but also between nervous elements themselves. 3

In the cases described above, it may well be argued that all the necessary pieces of information needed for the resolution of the problem were already in the conscious mind, the subconscious only proving to be a more powerful tool for synthesizing such information in some mysterious manner. It is possible to attribute Dr. Otto Loewi’s dreams to the subconscious mind for it can be argued that subconscious had all the ingredients that went into the dream. But what about dream or revelation content that is totally foreign to that person. Sometimes the revelation can be in a language foreign to the recipient. This novelty of content is true for many a dreams and revelations of the prophets of Allâh. Many instances can be cited from the life of The Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allâh be on him) and the Promised Messiah

**Listening to the Friday Sermon**

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allâh be on him) said: “When it is a Friday, the angels stand at the gate of the mosque and keep on writing the names of the persons coming to the mosque in succession according to their arrivals. The example of the one who enters the mosque in the earliest hour is that of one offering a camel (in sacrifice). The one coming next is like one offering a cow and then a sheep and then a chicken and then an egg respectively. When the Imam comes out (for Friday Prayer) they (that is angels) fold their papers and listen to the sermon.” (Bukhârî)
Science Revealed

In the words of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad, Khalīfātul Masih IV (may Allāh shower His mercy on him):

We observe that many authentic cases of revelation are also reported outside the domain of religion. For instance, there are many interesting cases of highly complex information conveyed through revelation to some scientists. 6

In 1865 a German chemist, Friedrich August Kekule, was struggling to solve a problem in chemistry that had baffled all researchers. One night Kekule had a dream in which he saw a snake with its tail held in its mouth. This dream instantly put him on the right track leading to the solution of the perplexing question. Thus was unraveled the secret of the molecular behavior in certain organic compounds, a discovery which created a revolution in the understanding of organic chemistry. He interpreted this dream to mean that in the benzene molecule, carbon atoms bond together to form a ring structure. This knowledge gave birth to the huge and highly developed field of synthetic organic chemistry producing a vast new range of synthetic materials. The contemporary pharmaceutical industry has become growingly dependent on synthetic drugs. Mankind is indeed indebted to that one dream through which Kekule resolved that problem.

Elias Howe was the first person to mechanize the process of sewing. He too received the answer to a problem that had frustrated him for a long time through a dream. In his dream, he saw himself surrounded by savages, who threatened to kill him unless he designed a sewing machine. Being unable to respond he was tied to a tree and the savages started to attack him with arrows and spears. It surprised him to see eyelets on their spearheads.

On waking from this dream, he immediately realized the solution, which led him to invent the prototype of the sewing machine that was to dramatically revolutionize the sewing industry. Through his dream he understood that he should consider placing the eye of the needle in its point.

It was this idea which helped him resolve a seemingly impossible task. It is difficult to visualize the sorry state in which man would find himself today without the blessing of this dream. What a revolution was created indeed by this revelation!

How can we distinguish a dream arising purely from subconscious mind versus a revelation? It will have to be based on the judgment as to whether the subconscious could host the information revealed in the dream or not. If the information is altogether new and novel and there is no reason to believe that a certain person’s subconscious possessed that knowledge then the most reasonable explanation is to give credit to All Knowing Allāh for that particular piece of information.

The Criterion: Subconscious Mind Alone or Revelation

In their uninhibited and unchecked secularism, majority of psychologists and psychiatrists attribute all the dreams to subconscious mind. But there are certain things that the unconscious mind does not know so there is no mechanism for it to come up with secrets of the future or for that matter the secrets of past and present without being informed by the All Knowing Allāh. 7

He is Allāh, and there is no God beside Him, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Gracious, the Merciful. (The Holy Qur‘ān, 59 [Al-Hasrā]:23)

In the words of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad, Khalīfātul Masih IV (may Allāh shower His mercy on him):

There are two types of dreams—those which are generated by psychic factors, and those which are of Divine origin and carry a deeper significance. They may portend future mishaps or bring glad tidings. They may reveal information of which the viewer had no knowledge whatsoever prior to that particular dream. Such dreams bring to a sharper focus the probability of the existence of an invisible, conscious, transcendent, External Being who can, if He so pleases, communicate with humans on whatever subject He chooses. 6

He further states:

Revelation is just another name for the product of human psyche but only when commanded and controlled from on high by God Himself. 6

We can reasonably conclude therefore, that God must have created such a highly advanced and intricate receptive system within the human mind for the ultimate purpose of communicating with Him. Divine revelation therefore has nothing of the bizarre and unnatural about it.

In conclusion of this subheading let us quote from the Judge and Arbiter of this age. The Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) has said:

Some people put forward the objection that there are many groups like astronomers, soothsayers, physicians, palmists, etc., who claim to reveal the unseen and sometimes foretell things some of which come to pass, and that more recently some people have been able to reveal hidden matters through mesmerism; then how could the revealing of the unseen be conclusive proof of the Divine origin of revelation? The answer is that all these groups speak from conjecture and possess no
certain knowledge nor do they claim to have certain knowledge. Their so-called prophecies are based upon signs and doubtful indications which have no relationship with certainty and which are not above suspicion and error. Very often their predictions are proved baseless and false, on account of which those predictions lack all honor and acceptance and helpfulness and success. Those who indulge in those predictions are generally poverty-stricken unfortunates, and are held in no honor and are cowards and mean and unsuccessful and without any merit. They cannot convert the unseen to come into accord with their predictions and in their own circumstances they exhibit the signs of Divine wrath and they possess no blessing or honor or help from the Divine. But the Prophets and the Auliyā’ do not merely disclose the unseen like the astronomers, but with the grace and mercy of God, which always accompany them, they make such prophecies in which the lights of acceptance and honor shine like the sun and which comprehend the good news of honor and Divine help. Consider the prophecies of the Holy Qur’ān and you will find that they are not like the predictions of the astronomers or others but are full of majesty and glory. All those prophecies are characterized by declaring the honor of the recipients and the disgrace of their enemies, their glory and the humiliation of their enemies, their success and the failure of their enemies, their victory and the defeat of their enemies, and their prosperity and the ruin of their enemies. Can any astronomer or soothsayer or mesmerizer put forth such prophecies? Certainly not! Always to proclaim one’s own good, and the decline of the opponent and to refute whatever the opponent says and to promise the fulfillment of that which is in one’s favor, can only be from God and cannot be the doing of man. 8

The Promise Messiah (may peace be on him) about True Dreams and Revelation

As all kinds of moral and immoral men can have intellectual abilities; likewise this additional ability to have true dreams has also been distributed among mankind broadly. The Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) has described three categories of recipients of true dreams, describing the first category the writes:

There are three types of people who partake of true dreams. First, there are those who possess no merit in themselves and have no relationship with God Almighty. On account of their intellectual appropriateness they experience true dreams and visions that are not characterized by any sign indicating their nearness to God and their being loved by Him, nor are they of any benefit for them. Thousands of wicked and vicious people share such experiences. It is often observed that despite such dreams and visions their conduct is not praiseworthy and their faith is very weak, so much so that they do not have the courage to bear true witness and they do not fear God as much as they fear the world and they cannot separate themselves from the wicked. They dare not bear such true testimony as might offend a person of high status. They are slothful and lazy in respect of religious obligations and are wholly preoccupied with

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worldly anxieties and concerns. They deliberately support falsehood and abandon truth... Some of them see only evil dreams, of which a number come true, as if their brains have been fashioned only for evil and ill-omened dreams. They are not capable of having dreams that benefit them or indicate something good for another person. Their dreams are of a category which might be described as resembling the experience of a person who perceives smoke from a distance but sees neither the light of the fire nor feels its warmth. Such people have nothing to do with God and spiritual matters; they have been given only smoke which yields no light. (Ḥaḍiqatul-Wahy, Rūḥānī Khaza‘īn, vol. 22, pp. 22-25)

The Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) extends the analogy of fireless smoke to the second category of people. This group has some relationship with God but that relationship is incomplete and not perfect. The analogy of their true dreams and revelations is that of a person who perceives the light of fire from a long distance in a dark and cold night. This light enables him to avoid ditches, thorns, rocks, serpents, and wild beasts, but cannot save him from dying of cold. If such a person does not arrive within the warm circle of the fire, he is also destroyed in the same manner as the one who walks in the dark. The testimony of all the scientists, researchers, inventors and writers described above is indeed in line with the description of the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) quoted earlier, “Allāh has not excluded any people or nation from the blessings of the basic seed of the spiritual faculties.”

So the true dreams have several functions to serve. The dreams of the ordinary serve as a demonstration that this capacity is present in human mind so that masses in general can become more accepting of revelations of the prophets. For the chosen recipients of dreams, the dreams and revelations serve the purpose of reassuring them of God’s Providence. The Holy Qur‘ān says:

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\text{إنَّ الْذِّيْنَ قَالُواْ أَرْبَابُناَ اللَّهُ قَمْتُمْ إِلَّاً مُّبِينَ،}
\text{سَنَّبِلُ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمِّكَةُ مَتْنَهَا وَلَا}
\text{تَنْبِرُواْ وَأَيْضَ أَلِيِّي الْجَهَّالُ الْأَقْلَمُ،}
\text{مَفْتَعِدَةَ}.
\]

As for those who say, ‘Our Lord is Allāh,’ and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, saying: ‘Fear ye not, nor grieve; and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised. (The Holy Qur‘ān, 41 [As-Sajdah]:31)

Divine revelations to pious people who are non-Prophets are mentioned in the Holy Qur‘ān. Perhaps they fall in the second category of the recipients of true dreams as outlined by the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him). Numerous cases of non-Prophets receiving Divine revelation are mentioned in the Holy Qur‘ān. Revelations to the mother of Prophet Moses (may peace be on him) and Mother Mary are mentioned at more than one place.

About the final and the best category the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) writes:

The third category of people who experience true dreams and revelations can be compared to a man, who, on a dark and cold night, is not only guided by the bright light of a fire, but actually enters its warm circle, and is fully safeguarded against the effects of the cold. Only those people arrive at this stage who burn up the garment of low passions in the fire of love for the Divine and adopt a life of bitterness for the sake of God. They perceive death ahead of them and run forward to meet it. They accept every torment in the cause of God. For the sake of God, they become enemies of their ego and exhibit such a degree of strength of faith against it that even angels marvel at it. They are spiritual champions and all satanic assaults prove utterly ineffective against their spiritual strength.

They are truly faithful and devoted. Scenes of worldly pleasures cannot mislead them nor can they be turned away from their True Beloved by their love of wife and children. In short, no bitterness can frighten them nor can any physical pleasure bar their approach towards God. No relationship can disrupt their relationship with God. (Ḥaḍiqatul-Wahy, Rūḥānī Khaza‘īn, vol. 22, pp. 22-25)

According to the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him), the revelations of this third pious group have four distinctions from the dreams or revelations of the other two groups. Firstly, their revelations excel in clarity of the message and are not susceptible to multiple interpretations. Secondly, their revelations excel not only in quality but also in quantity and are frequent and not just episodic or paroxysmal. Thirdly, majority of their revelations cover subjects of great and possibly global importance and are not trivial. Fourthly and most importantly, their dreams and revelation speak of special favors from Allāh and describe His love and closeness to the recipient. These revelations are accompanied by special Signs of Allāh through which He plans to establish the reverence and admiration of these recipients among the God fearing. (Ḥaḍiqatul-Wahy, Rūḥānī Khaza‘īn, vol. 22, p. 69)

Divine revelations may not occur only in dreams but also while one is awake. Once, Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (may Allāh be pleased with him) was delivering a Friday Sermon and suddenly shouted, “O Saria, towards the mountain.” This, out of context and least expected, did surprise the audience who dared to seek an
Offering Supererogatory Prayer for Suffering Āḥmadīs

Addressing Āḥmadīs of all the Jamā’ats around the world in his Friday sermon of December 3, 2011, Ḥaadhrat Khalīfatul Masih V (may Allah be his helper) drew attention to the Āḥmadī brothers who are enduring hardship and persecution. Ḥudūr (may Allah be his helper) said that a true believer is the one who feels the suffering of his believer brother as his own, like the whole body feels the pain if a part of the body is in pain. Ḥudūr (may Allah be his helper) said that each Āḥmadī should offer two Nafl (supererogatory Prayer) daily, solely for those Āḥmadīs who are going through any torment due to their belief in Ahmadiyyat and are deprived of their civic and religious rights through vicious laws. Anṣār are encouraged to say Labbaik to the call of our beloved Ḥudūr (may Allah be his helper) and offer two Nafl daily and pray to Almighty Allah that the atrocities against Āḥmadīs may be removed, Āmīn.
peace be on him), while he was serving a prison sentence under a false charge. It was a strange dream, which had baffled the great sages of the king’s court, but did not present any difficulty to Joseph (may peace be on him) who rightly discerned its underlying message. It was this wise and masterly interpretation by him which was completely supported and testified by the events of subsequent years.

In his dream, the king had seen seven healthy, green ears of corn, and seven dried ones, carrying hardly any seed. He also saw seven lean cows devouring seven others who were strong and fat. When he related this dream to his courtiers demanding an interpretation, they dismissed it as mere subconscious ravings of his mind, carrying no significance.

Now it so happened that a servant of the king who had served a term with Joseph (may peace be on him) in the same prison was present at this occasion. He too had seen a strange dream while in prison, which Joseph (may peace be on him) had correctly interpreted, indicating that he would soon gain his freedom and return to serve his master, the king, once again. Hoping that Joseph (may peace be on him) might possibly interpret the dream of the king as well, he suggested that he should be sent to meet him. Having obtained permission, he visited Joseph (may peace be on him) in prison and related the king’s dream to him. Joseph (may peace be on him) immediately grasped its significance and explained it so logically that there was no ambiguity left.

Upon his return to the king, the servant related Josephs’ (may peace be on him) interpretation which ran as follows:

In the seven years which would commence from the time of the dream, God would shower His blessings upon Egypt in the form of abundant rains, resulting in bountiful crops and fruits. After these seven years of bumper harvests, seven lean years would follow bringing drought in their wake. These years would result in disastrous famine unless crops from the previous seven years were saved and stored to compensate for the loss of the drought years.

This interpretation impressed the king so profoundly that he issued orders for the immediate release of Joseph (may peace be on him) who, opted instead to remain in prison until a fair enquiry was held and the false charges against him were dropped. It was after he was honorably acquitted and the real culprit confessed her crime that he agreed to be released. He was exceptionally honored by the king and was appointed minister of finance and economic affairs in his government.

To the surprise of all, the events foretold in the dream came to pass exactly as interpreted by Joseph (may peace be on him). As such he not only saved the people of Egypt from disaster but also benefited the nomadic tribes and the populace of neighboring countries. The same events also resulted in reuniting Joseph (may peace be on him) with his family.

In the words of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Tāhir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masīḥ IV (may Allāh shower His mercy on him),

A dream like this with its subsequent fulfillment could in no way be dismissed as a glutton’s overfed fancy. 10

It cannot be attributed merely to the subconscious mind. The king’s subconscious mind had no access to this information whatsoever. This was a clear case of revelation. The Qur’ānic description of this history should suffice for a Muslim to illustrate how the internal psychic mechanism is activated by God with a purpose.

References

9. Tabarī

About the Author

Zia H. Shah is a physician practicing in Upstate New York. He joined Ahmadiyya Muslim Community during his medical school. He is the Chief Editor of the Muslim Times, an international blog to foster Universal brotherhood. He is also the Chief Editor of the monthly, Al-Islam eGazette that has a subscription of more than 40,000. He has authored more than 400 articles about Religion & Science, Islām, and Christianity. Follow @ZiaShah1.
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Most people know that Judaism, Christianity, and Islām are all descended from Abraham, the Patriarch of the three Semitic faiths. If these three religious “children” all came from the same “Father,” so to speak, why can’t they all just get along? The reason why Judaism, Christianity, and Islām seem at odds with each other can be understood as a result of the original purpose for each religion. First off, Judaism was meant only for the Jewish people—no one else.

God says in the Old Testament, in Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear ye O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” This is exactly what Jesus (may peace be on him) himself quotes to his followers when they ask him: “What is the highest commandment?” Hardly surprising—most people know Jesus (may peace be on him) was Jewish, that he was raised as a Jew and that he observed all the laws and rituals associated with Judaism. Jesus (may peace be on him) himself says he did not come to destroy the Mosaic Law (Matt. 5:17) and that his mission as stated in Matt. 15:24 was only to “gather the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel”—the Jews, in Judea and elsewhere.

Specifically, Jesus (may peace be on him) came as the Messiah for the Jewish people to reform them of their worldliness and hard-heartedness. Jesus (may peace be on him) also came to prepare the Jews for their next Prophet, one who would be like Moses and whose type and nature of prophethood (Law-bearing verbal revelation) along with the location of his advent (Mount Paran in Arabia) are mentioned clearly in Deuteronomy 18:18-21 and Deuteronomy 33:2. (Paul, a Rabbinical Jew educated under Gamaliel in the exegesis of the Torah and its numerous propheticies, must certainly have understood these prophecies and their import. This would explain why he went to Arabia for three years after initially converting to Christianity in 35 AD. Was Paul hoping to become the Law-bearing Prophet foretold in Deut. 18:18-21 and 33:2—the “Holy One from Mount Paran” prophesied in Habakkuk 3:3? Paul himself never tells, but his actions speak volumes.)

Islām came six centuries after Jesus (may peace be on him) to restore the original, pure understanding of the true Oneness of God as defined in Judaism, and to strengthen the love for God and the kindness towards humanity as demonstrated by the original Jewish followers who accepted Jesus as their Messiah. Let’s start with the Jewish Scriptures.

The Torah—the Old Testament—as it is called in the Christian Bible—was given by God to the Law-bearing prophet Moses (may peace be on him) for the Israelites only after they had escaped from centuries of slavery in Egypt. During that time, many of the Israelites had adopted some of the Egyptian gods besides Him.

From making any images of Him or worshipping any idols or any other gods besides Him.

This is why virtually all Jews do not believe that Jesus (may peace be on him) could be God in the flesh, or the literal, physical Son of God, because it violates God’s Laws given to Moses (may peace be on him). That is also why, in the Torah, in Numbers 23:19, God says very clearly: “God is not a man that he lies; neither is he the Son of man that He repents.” Here ‘son of man’ means a prophet; the prophet does not repent or pay for the sins of his people,* It is not an accident that Jesus (may peace be on him) referred to himself more than 80 times as “son of man.” He was proclaiming his status as a divinely-appointed messenger and beloved of God, a human being who faithfully followed his mission from God and in no way considered himself God in human form, as this is still sacrilege in Judaism.

The meaning of Numbers 23:19 is so straight-forward and obvious that Jewish Rabbis regularly quote this verse as proof that Jesus (may peace be on him) could not be God because God sent the Torah to purify the Jews of this very same pagan belief—that the Egyptian gods came down as animals and human beings, which was false. How could God then change his mind and bring back a pagan religious idea and say it was now true?

Judaism’s main theological purpose was to first lift up the Israelites and make them brave and self-confident after being cowed and debased as slaves in Egypt for centuries, and most importantly to then educate them about the absolute Oneness of God—the only God in the Universe, who was not a force of

* See also Exodus 32:30-33, where Moses (may peace be on him) pleads before God to punish him instead of the disobedient Israelites who built the golden calf, but God tells Moses (may peace be on him) He does not punish the innocent, only the guilty. In the Christian doctrine of the death of Jesus (may peace be on him) on the cross as the atonement for sin, God does just the opposite; punishing an innocent man for the sins of guilty mankind.
nature or a god in human form, because these were ideas that weakened people’s faith in the true, non-corporeal, transcendent God Who was not “of the creation” but was the supreme Creator of all creation. The Israelites were given an understanding of God that we still respect and believe to this day—that there is only one God, Who is all-powerful, all-knowing, eternal and unseen by the human eye.

Muslims believe that Jesus (may peace be on him) came to guide the Jews out of their hard-heartedness, which the teachings of the Torah had instilled in them to toughen them up and make them successful as a race. Jesus (may peace be on him) was their savior and messiah who followed the Jewish Law and did not come to start a new religion but only came to “gather, or minister to, the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.”

The first Christians were Jews who fully accepted their Promised Messiah. The later Christians were Gentiles, Greeks, and Romans. These Christians accepted the teachings of Paul, who presented Jesus (may peace be on him) as a God-man sent to die as the atonement for the sins of the people. This was an idea Greeks and Romans already believed—a “sacrificial savior” whose death and shedding of his blood would appease God and allow sinners to enter Heaven and escape the eternal punishment of Hell.

In Acts 14:11 it says: “For these Greek peoples believed the gods came down to Earth in the likeness of men...” They called Paul and Barnabus “Jupiter” and “Mercury”—which we know are just planets—but the Greeks and Romans thought these were living gods moving across the night sky. What Paul did was replace the many gods of the Greeks and Romans with just one God—God the Father as in Judaism—but to win over the pagans, he made this one god a three-person god-head consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is the Christian Trinity, but it derives, originally, from Egyptian beliefs dating back to 3,500 B.C.

One of the first Trinitarian god-heads was comprised of the Egyptian god Osirus, his wife the goddess Isis, and their son Horus. This idea was based on the family unit, which was something people could easily relate to. This Trinitarian idea of three separate entities forming one god-head was adopted by each successive culture until it was adopted by Paul to convert the Greeks and Romans to his hybrid interpretation of Christianity.

The Jews largely rejected this pagan idea of Trinitarianism because it was so completely foreign to their teachings in the Hebrew Bible. What Paul did was simplify a belief that had many gods and many yearly rituals of sacrifice and atonement. Paul made it one god with a one-time sacrifice of the god in human form—God Himself incarnated as His own son. It is no wonder Christianity spread so quickly! It was a definite improvement over the old, pagan beliefs—and a lot less expensive to the Christians in the Greek-Roman world.

Before Christianity, Greeks and Romans paid tribute with gifts or money to the gods and goddesses on their days of remembrance. In fact, the names for all the days in our week come from the names of non-Christian gods. In the Greek-Roman world, Monday comes from “Moon Day”—the day for worshipping the Moon god; Saturn was worshipped on Saturn’s Day, which became Saturday. The Sun god, Sol Invictus, (born on Dec. 25th) was worshipped—you guessed it—on Sunday. And when Christianity entered Europe, Norse gods and goddesses got their day (literally). From the Viking religion, we get the names for the remaining days of the week: Tuesday comes from Middle English Tewesday, the day of “Tiw” or “Tyr,” the god of single combat, victory and heroic glory in Norse religion. Odin/Wodin was honored on Wodin’s Day—known today as Wednesday; Thor’s Day became Thursday; and Friday comes from the Norse goddess Freya or Freya.

300 years later, when Christianity became the official state religion under the Emperor Constantine early in the 4th century AD, Jesus (may peace be on him) was worshipped on Dec. 25th as the god in human form—God Himself incarnated as His own son. It is no wonder Christianity spread so quickly! It was a definite improvement over the old, pagan beliefs—and a lot less expensive to the Christians in the Greek-Roman world.

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Christianity is that Islam saved a whole lot of cash money by not having to pay tribute to all these other gods. But that is not why they converted. No, of course not. The first Christians did not convert to save money, they converted to save their souls. One of the truly great things Christianity brought to the pagan world was its focus on leading a compassionate, moral life here on Earth, doing good to others, and preparing themselves spiritually for the next life with God.

So the folks who converted to Christianity saved a whole lot of cash money by not having to pay tribute to all these other gods. But that is not why they converted. No, of course not. The first Christians did not convert to save money, they converted to save their souls. One of the truly great things Christianity brought to the pagan world was its focus on leading a compassionate, moral life here on Earth, doing good to others, and preparing themselves spiritually for the next life with God.

To its credit, Christianity brings a much higher focus on the next life and the attainment of salvation, but it does so by making Jesus (may peace be on him) the physical incarnation of God for the purpose of killing him by crucifixion as atonement or payment for our sins, followed by his resurrection and ascension to heaven as “proofs” that he is, in fact, God. The problem with all these notions is that they clearly violate the Jewish understanding of the pure Oneness and non-physicality of God and the elemental justice required of God that only the guilty and not the innocent are punished for their sins (Exodus 32:30-33) and that the prophets do not pay (repent) for the sins of their people.

The difference between Islam and Christianity is that Islam does not allow any division of God into “persons.” With the Christian Trinity, our spiritual eye is no longer focused solely on One God, as in Judaism, but is now split up into three separate points of focus, with different levels of attention, honor and authority given to each “person” in the Trinity. Different levels of sanctity and respect are also indicated—the Holy Spirit being the only “person” of the Trinity you cannot blaspheme or you will never be forgiven.

This also clearly shows that the Trinity is three separate entities and not “three-in-one” because if they were really “one” you could blaspheme the Holy Spirit and be condemned for it, but Jesus (may peace be on him) and God (being blasphemed at the same time because they are all still “one” indivisible God) would forgive you because it is OK to blaspheme them. Assuming each “person” in the Trinity has an equal vote in dispensing judgment, the ruling would be 2-to-1 in your favor. In any court of law that would mean you were pardoned.

But to never be forgiven for blaspheming the Holy Spirit would require the Holy Spirit to be the supreme arbiter in God’s court, greater than Jesus (may peace be on him) and the Father (the Chief Justice as it were) with an overriding veto of any respective votes of forgiveness by Jesus (may peace be on him) and the Father—forgiveness you are promised by Jesus (may peace be on him) in Matt.12:31, Mark 3:28-29, and Luke 12:10. (That, my friends, is a Kangaroo court and not a true heavenly court of real justice.)

In standard Christianity, Jesus (may peace be on him) is the central focal point—he is the fulcrum upon which mankind’s salvation is leveraged by his death and resurrection. Jesus (may peace be on him) is also given all power to rule, judge, and forgive sins, and he is even given credit for creating the Universe along with God the Father. Salvation is now obtained in Christianity only by believing in the death, atonement, and resurrection of Jesus (may peace be on him), whereas Judaism and Islam both affirm that God does not share sovereignty or power with anyone; that He alone is the sole Creator of everything; that He alone is the Master on the Day of Judgment; that He alone is the only means of salvation; and that He alone has all power to show mercy and forgive us for our sins.

Islam returns man’s focus back to the pure Oneness of God as defined in Judaism, while keeping the high level of focus on prayer and spiritual purification which is required for the doing of good to others, and to attain communion with God in this life and in the next.
The Enduring Beneficence of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

Naeem Ahmad Rathore, New York

The essence and basis of our faith is that there never was, never will be, and there is none worthy of worship other than Allah, and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) is the Messenger of Allah.

The first part of this simple statement lays down that Allah alone is worthy of our worship as our God. As such He is the source of security and safety, the font of all happiness and goodness, and the final fulfillment for us.

It also follows that the purpose of our creation is to worship and adore our Creator and to seek His good pleasure by being ever mindful of our duty to Him and to be kind to His creation and to avoid the path that leads to a life of sin, indecency, and crime.

Alas, this easily said task is impossible without a perfect understanding of His Being, His attributes, His power, His capabilities, and above all, His Will.

A conception of Allah cannot be ascertained or captured by our senses. He cannot consciously be seen, heard, felt etc. We do not have a model to understand what He is and the ways in which He works.

The most any scientist or philosopher can assert is that this world must have had a Creator, there must be a Maintainer, and there ought to be a God, but none can really affirm that indeed there is a God.

And that brings us to the second part of the statement: Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) is the Messenger of Allah. We came to know that Allah exists since Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) told us that He does.

Only that person can confidently tell us that God exists and has the attributes that make Him worthy of Worship, who can claim to have himself experienced the communion with God, and who claims to be sent by God, to have been guided by and supported by God.

First of all this person must have no ancestral baggage, so no one can accuse him of being of a low birth, or belonging to a dishonorable family or clan. Also, he must be without much wealth or obligations, as all of these inherited assets and burdens could keep him from doing the right thing.

Before he was to assert his claims, he should already have an unblemished and exemplary high moral character that even his worst opponent cannot cast aspersions on his conduct. Even as a young man he would not be known to join others in revelry and idle pursuits. Indeed, he should be able to remind his fellow countrymen: “Have I not lived a lifetime amongst you?”

His personal integrity should be such that he would be called “The Trusted One” and “The Truthful One.” His own family, his servants, colleagues, friends, and neighbors should bear witness to his good heart and his cheerful disposition. All the town folk should find him to be a sure helper in time of need, and he should have the reputation of being a defender of the rights of the oppressed and the weak.

His sagacity and common sense wisdom should be so well known that his countrymen would believe him if he said that “There was a hostile army on the other side of the mountain.”

Now if such a man, whom we can now recognize as the Chosen One, lord of the Children of Adam, the Seal of the Prophets and the greatest Prophet of all times, our master: Muhammad Mustafa, Ahmad Mustabaa (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him)—If such a man was to proclaim that there indeed is a being who is our God, Who will provide us with guidance to live through the vicissitudes of this life, and prepare us for everlasting bliss and salvation of the life eternal—then we would have to take his claim seriously.

In the delivery of this message, however, there was a departure from the norm. Hadrat Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) did not act as postman, but rather as one who is fully conversant with the message, indeed ready and able to demonstrate the truth of God’s existence and His omnipotence from personal experience.

O Prophet, truly We have sent thee as a Witness, and Bearer of glad tidings, and a Warner, And as a Summoner unto Allah by His command, and as a Lamp that gives bright light. (The Holy Qur’an, 33 [Al-Ahzab]:46-47)

Hadrat Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was sent by Allah as a Shahid (a Witness) to Allah’s glory and greatness and he demonstrated to the world through his own experience that Allah is ar-Rahman, the Gracious Lord, as Allah had chosen him simply out of His grace.

Secondly, that Allah is ar-Rahim, the Merciful, giver of mercy, in that He appreciates the effort and rewards mercifully. The world saw his (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) efforts in the face of overwhelming odds. Being without resources, without worldly learning, with no backing from a powerful family or tribe or from an armed might, he carried on with his mission and saw gradual acceptance of his message.

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) knew for a certainty that Allah is Rabbul-‘Alamin, his Lord Sustainer in all of his situations, and stages, that He is sufficient for all His obedient servants.

The Holy Prophet (may peace and
blessings of Allāh be on him) saw every possible condition that a human being has to go through.

He was born an orphan, had richer relatives, worked at an early age to support himself, was a young man growing up in a promiscuous and permissive almost lawless society. In all these he acquitted himself as a righteous person.

He was married at first to an older and richer lady, and later to others of different backgrounds and particulars, and lived with all of them in an exemplary way.

He was poor, and later was in control of immense riches. He was helpless, and later was a head of state and government. He was persecuted and oppressed by his opponents and his predecessors, and later was a head of state and government.

Lastly, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) saw the preceding one and a study of his advent clearly proves it to be so.

His dire warnings to the disbelievers and evil doers as a Nadhīr (a Warner) came so true that in his lifetime there was no active opposition to him and the great leaders of his day who stood up against him were humiliated and no trace of their progeny can be found save those who accepted Islām.

And he called people to Allāh not only by his exhortations, but also with every faculty that God had given him. His Da'wā or invitation was through his personal example in leading a life devoted to the service to God, in his strength of faith and in the efficacy of prayer and by his fortitude in facing the hardship of adversity and war.

Lastly, he was sent as a Radiant Sun whose light has spread to the corners of the world and will remain till the end of time. His spiritual energy, the spirit of his holiness is still available to us in his Sunnah, in his traditions and his Sirat. To follow in his footsteps is to merit the love of Allāh.

The mission of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was not only to deliver the message, as we have seen, or just to explain it, or even to demonstrate the salient points of the faith, nay it was to live it completely from the greatest commandment to the smallest detail of personal hygiene!

We have the evidence of the mother of the faithful, Ḥadrat ‘Ā’ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her), saying that his life was the Holy Qur’ān.

He left no doubt that each and every commandment, regulation, detail of services of worship, laws of marriage, divorce, inheritance and resolution of disputes, the orders of precedence, in fact, the whole compendium of divine guidance is not only workable but eminently well suited to the human condition.

Recalling there is none worthy of worship other than Allāh, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh. It follows that as long as it pleases Allāh to keep this world in being, the Prophethood of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) will continue. As he is the Witness, the Bearer of Glad Tidings, The Summoner to Allāh, and The Radiant Sun; his ministry is ever living, everlasting.

There are multiple references in the Holy Qur’ān where believers are commanded to obey him, to follow his excellent example, to honor and respect him, and to appreciate his prayers and his blessings for them.

Indeed, Allāh says in Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān:

And how would you disbelieve when the messages/verses/signs/commands of Allāh are being rehearsed/recited to you and His

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Send detail and pictures of your local and regional events and Anṣār news via e-mail at newsletter@ansarusa.org

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Information about publication, articles, etc. including electronic version of publications to be considered for Sultānul-Qalam awards can be submitted at http://ansarusa.org/content/submission-msq-award

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Information about members who pass away is published in the newsletter and also in the “Year in Review” issue of Al-Naḥl with request for prayers for the departed souls and their families. Members are requested to provide information about deceased members at http://ansarusa.org/content/information-about-deceased-members

Clearly, the universal and timeless message of the Holy Qur’ān indicates that we will stay on the right path as long we hear of the guidance of Allāh SWT contained in His Holy Book, and we follow the good example of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him).

And whoso obeys Allāh and this Messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allāh has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs, and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these. (The Holy Qur’ān, 4 [Al-Nisā’:70]

This verse lays the foundation of achieving ever-higher spiritual stations by constantly working on improving on their obedience to God’s commands and adopting the Uswah (model) of His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him).

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Prophethood and Persecution—A Believer’s Story

Wajid Mahmud ibn Bashir, Harrisburg, PA

“And when thy Lord said to the angels, ‘I am about to place a vicegerent [or Khalifah] in the earth,’ they said ‘Wilt Thou place therein such as will cause disorder in it, and shed blood’—and we glorify Thee with Thy praise and extol Thy holiness,’ He answered, ‘I know what you know not.’” (The Holy Qur’ān, 2 [Al-Baqarah]:31)

For the followers and practitioners of the various faiths of the world many of the words and stories contained in their scriptures may often appear to be only stories of ancient times of mysticism and sorcery. For the Ahmadiya Muslim Community, our beloved Holy Qur’ān contains words more modern and up-to-date than the evening news on our favorite local channel. The above verse is a constant reminder of the daily life being lived by many of our brothers and sisters in countries around the globe. This life-giving blessing called the Holy Qur’ān is a never ending treasure of knowledge and guidance and just as it has guided the Muslims who were blessed to walk in the shadow of the Seal of all the Prophets, our Master Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), today it continues to offer the life-giving knowledge to those who pray to be included with the Muslims—talked about by not only Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) but whose mention was stated, by Allāh Himself—who would come in the Latter Days.

These Muslims would come under the banner of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose purpose and mission would be to raise the flag of Islam over all worldly and idolatrous beliefs. Today, we stand with pride under the banner of the Messiah of the Latter Days, Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiānī (may peace be on him), in hopes that Allāh, the All Knowing, will grant us the privilege and honor of being able to fulfill our duties and to meet the requirements to be labeled and remembered as the true followers of our beloved Master Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) in these modern times.

In this verse, Allāh, the All Knowing, states two distinct yet paired statements. These two statements would not be statements that would come and go with the passing of time and generations nor would they be only the personal property of one select race, tribe, or people. These statements would—like the rest of this timeless chest of knowledge, guidance, and teaching known by the simple name of the Holy Qur’ān—would continue to lead mankind on its journey till the Almighty deems the end of humanity in this physical world. These two simple statements given to the Humblest of the Humble (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) prove today almost 1,500 years later that the words given to the Seal of all Messengers (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) would prove that the connection between Allāh and this humble Unlettered One (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) would be a connection that neither man nor time itself would ever be able to break.

A bond that was so intense that even when the other bonds of guidance between all the other faith leaders of the world would be cut short the bond between the Creator of All the Worlds and this Orphaned One (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) would never be cut asunder and that the All Mighty Himself would protect his holy name and bring one into this world whose divinely guided hand would once again raise the name of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) with such fervor, love, and dedication never to be seen in human history and never to be witnessed again. This was done with completeness by a Messiah so engrossed in the love of Allāh and the love of his Master Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that he said that Allāh, the All Powerful, told him that if he would have asked he would have split the moon into two.

The first statement made by Allāh, the All Knowing, is, “I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth,”. The beauty of this simple statement is as timeless as it is easy to understand. As Ahmadi Muslims we accept all the Prophets as believers in the One True God and as men who because of their deep love and devotion to proclaiming the Oneness of the Almighty and their immense sense of caring and brotherhood for mankind culminating in the coming of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) whose closeness and bond with the Almighty encased the container of Prophethood till the end of time. As Muslims we recognize all the great heroes of mankind who selfishly lived their lives in praise of the Glory of God and whose every thought was encompassed with guiding man to reach the glorious heights of spiritual ascension given to us by the Almighty. This verse also proves that only the One True God can place and protect a prophet and that all false prophets would only be welcomed by rejection and embarrassment. So this verse not only states the coming of one Messenger but can be easily applied to every Prophet sent by the One True God since the dawn of the spiritual revolution beginning with Prophet Adam (may peace be on him).

On the flip side of the verse, the second statement by the All Knowing refers to the angels saying, “Wilt Thou place therein such as will cause disorder in it, and shed blood?” The angels having witnessed the lower moral character of mankind since the creation of our species continue to wonder as to why God would raise such an institution that would cause conflict, torment, and loss of life. Having witnessed the struggle within man as whether to accept high moral character or to accept and devout one’s self to the worldly lower qualities that reside in our natural selves the angels inquired time and time again why Allāh, the All Knowing, would continue to bring a
vicegerent into a world of men, who acted more like animals, to bring them back to the right path when it would only cause the spilling of blood and the loss of life, property, and honor. Just as the first statement has proved it unending truth surpassing the erosion of time and travel so the second statement also stands the test of time and social barriers. As Ahmadi Muslims, our education and study of all the Prophets lead us to understand, affirm, and validate the truth of this most simple yet glorious phrase of our beloved book of Guidance. Every Prophet was met with persecution, torment, and malice.

Every Prophet and his noble companions were forced to undergo trials of such unbearable misery only because they chose to worship the One True God rather than follow the sickened misguided teachings of those within the area of their preaching. Facing physical, financial, and mental persecution, these great lovers of God and His creation willingly bore the cross of pain, misery, and torment, all for the love of the Highest of the high, to help guide the lowest of the low. The noble lovers of God and their physically weak companions suffered the most horrible of pains only to attain the greatest of spiritual pleasures and closeness to the warmth and blessings of the Almighty. This is the story of all the believers since the beginning of time. This is the beauty, blessing, and wisdom of Allāh, the All Knowing, being displayed in this one timeless jewel of the All Knowing. In this verse, the All Knowing ensures mankind that He will never abandon mankind to drown in the pool of idolatry and false beliefs and that He will forever bless mankind with the beautiful garment of spiritual thread that will clothe us in the beauty of morality and love for our fellow men and women. Allāh, the All Knowing, blesses us with the knowledge that His guidance and protection will always be there to shield us from the forces of Satan and safeguard us from the trickery and lies of the Deceiver.

What could be a greater blessing than a security system that knows no sleep or slumber? Finally, the wisdom of the All Knowing is shown so brightly by putting both of these simple statements together in the same verse to show mankind that both Prophethood and persecution will forever go hand in hand and that by accepting one man has no choice but to accept the other. By choosing to eat peanuts we have no choice to accept the salty aftertaste it leaves in the mouth. By eating candy we must accept the sweet flavor brought on by the ingredient of sugar. This is the unbreakable bond that God has given mankind when he or she chooses to accept the “vicegerent” of the time.

As Ahmadi Muslims, this truth not only exists in the words of Allāh's revelation but exist every day in our lives. This is not a burden placed upon us by God or a cross placed on our shoulders by man; it is a realistic undeniable proven fulfillment of God's eternal promise to those who choose to accept His Truth and the truth of His Prophet. To Ahmadi, the promise that has been placed on our shoulders is a blessed fulfillment of the promise of the All Mighty of His beauty, His blessing, and His wisdom. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) when mentioning the true believers of the Latter Days, stated that they would be like me and my companions. Although, our persecution is nothing compared to the extreme cruelties placed at the feet of the Seal of the Prophets (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and his noble companions, the acts of anger, torment, and senseless killing of innocent Ahmadi only proves the truth of Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Muṣṭafā (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and his humble servant, the appointed vicegerent of these modern times, Ḥaḍrat Mīrẓā Ghulām Ahmad Qādiānī (may peace be on him). This same cup of persecution that was drunk from without the slightest of hesitation by the early companions now rest at the table of the companions of the second 'Īsā and from it we drink till our thirst is quenched. With no hesitation, our sisters and brothers dine at the table of the greatest of companions who without the slightest hesitance accept the call of the Messenger ready to offer their lives and the lives of their children all for the love of Ḥaḍrat Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). Oh what a holy and blessed table to dine!

Oh what tears of jealousy roll down my face of these brave companions of the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) who proudly accept the cross of the Messiah and everyday continue to envelope themselves in the robe of Khilâfât under the shield of the Messiah of our time (may peace be on him). The burden, better yet, the blessing that they are offered is a living symbol of the truth of the Messiah (may peace be on him) in that like the companions of our Master Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Muṣṭafā (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), these humble yet honorable followers of Imām Mahdī (may peace be on him) continue to smile in the face of a physical death and physical pain in knowing that at any moment whether day or night they are only mere steps away from being called to join the early companions around the campfire of the Seal of the Prophets (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him).

This is the true meaning of Islām, for these believers have given up just as willingly as the early companions, their life, time, property, and honor strictly for the cause of Allāh and His Messenger. This blessing that Allāh has placed on the Āhmādis across the globe continues to prove true after almost fifty years of torment in multiple countries across the globe that like the glorious words of the Holy Qur'ān. By having true belief in the words of Allāh, true righteousness knows no barriers of time or social confinement. As long as one is firm in his belief in the Almighty and is steadfast to his obedience to the Khilâfât of the time, the angels will stand in defense of the believers. Once again, the words of the Almighty have come true before our eyes and once again His truthfulness has been displayed for the world to witness. This common bond of persecution unites us today with the prophets of the past and their blessed companions but there is no greater honor in this world or the next than to be counted as the true companions of the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad of Arabia (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him).

This is our greatest joy which we will continue to hold onto with righteousness, patience, and fortitude.
so that when we stand before the Almighty, we will be able to raise our flag high and be counted among those whom Allāh had told His greatest love (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), his mirror image Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad Qādīānī (may peace be on him), love and obey Khilāfat, and remember, honor, and cherish the names and memories of those who have willingly given their last breath for the sake of Islām and the remembrance of the One True God, past, present, and future! Insha’Allah!

Propagating the Message of Islām and Aḥmadiyyat

Syed Sajid Ahmad, Qa‘id Tabligh

Many members ask how they can contribute to propagation of Islām and Aḥmadiyyat individually all by themselves. Following are some suggestions to choose from. If you need any assistance or if you have any questions, please contact Qa‘id Tabligh at qaid.tabligh@ansarusa.org.

- Meet your representative and tell them about Aḥmadiyya Community’s peace and fidelity perspective.
- Invite representatives to visit your mosque.
- Meet your favorite sports player or the team.
- Invite your favorite sports player or team to your mosque.
- Establish a regular weekly bookstall at a busy place to distribute free literature, sell books and make contacts to invite them to your mosque.
- Participate in book fairs.
- Give a talk in a class at a school. Many presentations are available online.
- Attend the City’s open meeting to tell everyone about Aḥmadiyya Community’s peace and fidelity perspective.
- Send an email to a representative, a church leader, a professor or others and introduce Islām to them. Their email addresses are available online.
- Establish an interfaith group.
- Start a seminar.
- Place books in a library.
- Have libraries subscribe to the Muslim Sunrise. Take a couple of copies with you to show them.
- Monitor media and respond to anti-Islām propaganda.
- Start a video program on the public access channel on the cable network in your area.
- Call into a radio show and acquaint audience with Islāmic perspective on the issue under discussion.
- Write a letter or an article in the newspaper.
- Post a comment online.
- Distribute leaflets.
- Volunteer to keep your mosque open for Prayers and visitors.
- Share with Qa‘id Tabligh if you have any suggestions to improve and enhance propagation activities in the U.S.
- Report your activity every month so that it is recorded and becomes an example for the rest of the Community to follow.
- Write a summary of your activities to Khalifatul-Masīh (may Allāh be his helper) every month for his prayers for the success of your efforts.
- Pray daily for the success of Islām in your area and around the world.

Write for the Al-Nahl

Members of Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA are urged to write for the Al-Nahl. Send your articles at al-nahl@ansarusa.org

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Vol. 24 No. 3
One Hundred Years of Āhmadiyyat in Bangladesh

Soud Choudhury, New York

Sometime in 1902, a package containing Hakimi Halwa (a medicated food paste) arrived by mail in Brahmanbaria, Bangladesh (formerly known as East Bengal) from Lahore. It also contained an Urdu leaflet titled “Tafsīr Sūrah Jumu‘ah” written by Ḥadrat Maulawi Nuruddin (may Allah be pleased with him), who later became the first successor of the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him).

Daulat Ahmad Khan, the addressee, received the package and brought the leaflet to Maulānā Syed Mohammad Abdul Wahed to read it for him. The Maulānā who was already researching to find out the Mujaddid of the 14th Hijrī Century, read that the leaflet brought the gospel. The gospel was the holy advent of the Mujaddid in the person of Ḥadrat Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad Qādiānī (may peace be on him). This pleasant surprise initiated the communication and correspondence between Maulānā Abdul Wahed and the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him). So deep was their correspondence that the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) answered Maulānā Abdul Wahed’s question in one book. Subsequently, on November 8, 1912, Maulānā Abdul Wahed took the Bai‘at at the hands of the First Khalīfah, Ḥadrat Maulawi Nuruddin (may Allah be pleased with him) in Qādiān. Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I (may Allah be pleased with him) sent his prominent companion, Ḥadrat Muftī Muḥammad Šādiq (may peace be on him) to guide the inauguration of Brahmanbaria Anjuman Āhmadiyya in 1913. It is noteworthy, that Ḥadrat Muftī Muhammad Šādiq (may peace be on him) is the same holy companion of the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) who established Āhmadiyya Movement in Islam in USA as the first Muslim Organization of USA.

2013 is the centennial anniversary of the foundation of the Āhmadiyya Jamā’at in Bangladesh. The Jamā’at, with the consent of Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ V (may Allah be his helper) has decided to solemnize the anniversary with profound dignity on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of February 2013. The venue was chosen outside Dhaka City in order to accommodate the larger gathering of local individuals and international guests. Accordingly, all arrangements were made by the Bangladesh Jamā’at including inviting many Foreign Delegates.

As a new Āhmadi of Bangladesh origin, I was very excited to attend the auspicious event. I wrote a letter to Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ V (may Allah be his helper) and began fastening my belt. On February 6, 2013, my wife and I arrived at Ḥadrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. I was warmly received by A Khādīm, Saber Ahmed, who also happens to be the president of the local chapter. Delegates from Malaysia and Jordan arrived at the same time and we were introduced.

Upon my inquiry about the preparations of the event, Saber Ahmed calmly informed me that the Mullahs already attacked and set fire to the venue. I later came to learn that the Mullahs also snatched the food and groceries intended to feed the anticipated attendees. Moreover, the Mullahs assaulted a senior member of the Jamā’at and kidnapped one volunteer who was later released from a local Police Station. After completing their violent and mischievous deeds, the Mullahs performed two Raka‘at Nafl Prayer blocking the highway!

Despite the Mullahs’ cruel efforts, the conference was not canceled. It was relocated to the Āhmadiyya Headquarters at 4 Bakshi Bazar in Dhaka City. The evening of my arrival to Bangladesh, I accompanied by MTA Chairman, Ahmad Tabshir Choudhury to the new venue. To my great surprise, I found out that members had already prepared the place into the shape of a Jalsah Gāh. The members of the Jamā’at were operating at super speeds while maintaining their smiles and unbroken spirits. Alhamdulillah!

Jalsah commenced on February 8, 2013, after Jumu‘ah Prayer with a recitation from the Holy Qur’ān. The inaugural speaker was Ḥudūr’s (may Allah be his helper) representative, respected Maulānā Mahmud Ahmad Bengali, Amir Jamā’at Australia. He spoke on the “Existence of Allah and His Manifestation.” The three day conference also included various lectures and seminars on subjects of general interest. The topics discussed included the following:

- Life and Ideals of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him)
- Ḥadrat Imām Mahdī’s (may peace be on him) Love and Dedication for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him)
- The Greatness and Excellence of the Holy Qur’ān
- Khilāfāt, the only means of Muslim Unity
- Prayers, Our Only Weapon
- Prospect of Celebration of the Centenary of Āhmadiyyat in Bangladesh
- 100 Years of Āhmadiyyat in Bangladesh—Opposition and Cooperation
- Journey of 100 Years—Contribution and Attainment
- Āhmadiyyat in Assam and West Bengal
- Feelings and Views about the Bengali Society
- Āhmadiyyat in Germany

The three-day Celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of Āhmadiyyat in Bangladesh ended peacefully. It concluded with a live broadcast on MTA of the conference’s closing address by Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ V (may Allah be his helper) via satellite from London followed by a silent prayer. All attendees and foreign guests from fourteen countries thoroughly enjoyed the auspicious event. All praise belongs to Allah.
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220 pages, 42 color and B&W pictures. $3.

Words of Wisdom
A collection of sayings and traditions of the Holy Prophet, Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) dealing with daily life. Arabic text with English transliteration and Urdu and English translations. Includes a discussion of types of Ḥadīth, books of Ḥadīth, and their compilers. Important dates and events in the life of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) have also been included. Two colors inside, size 7 in. x 8.5 in. on fine paper, softcover, 320 pages. $5.

Forty Gems of Beauty
A collection of forty traditions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), with introduction to the knowledge of Ḥadīth. Ḥadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad (may Allāh be pleased with him)
Published by Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA
Soft cover, 182 pages. $2

Conditions of Baiʿat
(Initiation into the Ahmadiyya Community)
Pocket-Size Edition
Free
Why Islām is My Choice
Nooruddin Anwar Noori, Willingboro, NJ

Islām is my choice for the reason that it does not compel me to accept all those matters the sum total of which is called religion merely on authority, but furnishes convincing arguments in support of its doctrines—the existence of Allāh and the nature of His attributes, angels, prayers, and its effects, Divine decrees and their sphere, worship and its need, Divine law and its benefits, revelation and its importance, resurrection and life after death, heaven and hell. Islām has given detailed explanation and has established their truth with strong arguments to the satisfaction of the human mind.

Islām, therefore, furnishes us not only with faith, but also with the certainty of knowledge, which satisfies our intellect and compels it to admit the need of religion. The central doctrine of Islām is the existence of one supernatural power, who created the universe, called Allāh in Qurānic language and Islām declared the relationship between the creator and creation, and the truth of faith is surely a sufficient reason for believing in this doctrine. (Al-Baqarah, verse 29, Al-‘A‘rāf verse 173)

Islām claims that the creator of this universe is a living God and that He reveals Himself to His creatures in this age in the same manner in which He used to reveal Himself in the past ages. This claim can be tested in two ways. God may either manifest His signs directly to a seeker after Him or the seeker may come to believe in Allāh by studying the life of a person to whom God has revealed himself. (Al-‘Shūrā verse 52, As-Sajdah verse 31-32)

The one basic attraction in Islāmic doctrine is totally different from all other religions and faiths established in human societies and that is to invite everybody for personal experience. Islām does not base itself upon the experience of people who have passed away, but invites everybody for personal experience of that which Islām teaches, claims, and guarantees. Islām claims that every truth can in some manner or the other be put to the test in this world and it thus satisfies the reason. (Al-Mu’mín verse 61)

Islām teaches that there can be no conflict between the word of Allāh and the work of Allāh and thus resolves the supposed conflict between science and religion. Islām does not ask to ignore the laws of nature and to believe in things, which are contrary to them. Islām exhorts us to study the laws of nature and derive benefits from them. Islām teaches us that revelations come from God and that He is the creator of the universe, therefore there can be no conflict between that which He does and that which He says. God invites us, therefore—in order for us to understand His revelation—to study His work and in order to realize the significance of His work, to study His word and thus satisfy our intellectual curiosity.

Islām does not seek to cherish our natural desires, but guides them along the right channels. Islām does not altogether crush our desire and reduces us to stone, nor does it by leaving them uncontrolled and unrestrained, reduces us to an animal, but like an expert irrigation engineer who harnesses uncontrolled waters and makes them run into irrigation channels, thereby bringing prosperity to waste and barren areas and lands. Islām converts our natural desires by proper control and guidance into high moral qualities.

Almighty Allāh gives us a loving heart and Islām never forbids us to select a life companion or that He has endowed us with the sense of taste and capacity to appreciate good food, but has forbidden to eat such foods. On the contrary, Islām teaches us to love in proper way, which would ensure through our progeny, the perpetuation of all our good resolves. Islām permits us to eat good food, but within proper limits, lest we should eat our fill and our neighbor should go hungry. By thus correcting our natural desires into high moral qualities, it satisfies my humanity.

Islām deals fairly and lovingly not only with its followers, but also with the whole world. Islām teaches us not to discharge our duties only toward ourselves, but insists upon our dealing fairly with every other person.

Islāmic divine constitution, the Holy Qurān, draws attention to the rights of parents and the duties that children owe to their parents. It is one of the best teachings of Islām that admonishes children to behave obediently and tenderly towards their parents. On the other hand, Islām enjoins love and affection upon parents for their children and imposes upon them the duty of bringing up their children well, training them in good qualities, and looking after their health and also make them heirs to their parents. (Al-‘Ankabūt verse 9, Al-Aqāf verse 16, Luqāmān verse 15, Bāni Isrā‘il verse 24-5, Ibrāhīm verse 42, Nūr verse 29)

Similarly, Islām enjoins the best relationship between husband and wife, requiring each to have due consideration for the needs and desires of the other and that they should behave affectionately towards each other. This was shown beautifully by the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) when he said that a person who mistreats his wife during the day and loves her at night acts on complete contradiction to the beauty of human nature. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) also said that the best among you are those who treat their wives best. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) also said that woman is fragile, like glass, and a man should therefore treat a woman with delicacy and tenderness as one should handle an article made of glass.

Islām has laid special emphasis upon the education and training of girls. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) said: “A person who brings his daughters up well and gives her a good training and education thereby earns paradise.” Islām has made daughters the heirs of their parents along with
the sons. (Al-Zumar verse 10, Al-Fāṭir verse 29, Al-Mujādilah verse 12, Al-Taubah verse 122)

Islam has laid down fair rules for the guidance of ruler and the ruled. Islam says to the rulers that the authority vested in them is not their private property, but it is a trust and they should discharge the obligation of that trust to the utmost, like upright and honest people and should carry on government in consultation with the people. Islam says to the ruled, the power to choose your rulers has been bestowed upon you as a gift from Allah and you should therefore be careful to invest only such persons with governing authority as they fully deserve it. And after vesting this authority in them, you should give them your fullest cooperation and should not rebel against them, for if you do so you are merely seeking to demolish that which your own hands have built. (Al-Naḥl verse 91, Al-An'am verse 153, Al-Mā‘īdah verse 9)

Islam has also regulated the rights and duties of the employer and employee. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said: “Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries.” (Tirmidhi and Ibn Mājah) Islam also instructs employers to treat subordinates properly whose care has been entrusted to them. Islam also says to the workers to discharge their obligations honestly and with due care and diligence.

Islam says to those who have been endowed with abundance of physical health and strength that they should not behave oppressively towards the weak, nor treat contemptuously those who suffer from some physical defect of blemish.

Islam says to the wealthy: you have been charged with the duty of looking after the poor and you must set aside 1/14th of your substance every year so that it may be employed in relief of poverty and distress and for the advancement of those who lack the means of advancement. Islam teaches us not to enhance the disabilities of the poor by lending money to them on interest, but to help them with free gifts and free loans, pointing out that wealth is not given to a man that he may spend his life in luxury and riotous living, but that he should use it for the advancement for the whole humanity and should thus deserve the best reward here and the hereafter. (Al-Baqarah 196, 206, Al-Anfal verse 4, Al-Taghābun verse 17)
Back Pain
Dr. Amir S. Malik, Houston

Where Back Pain Begins

Back pain is the body's natural response to injury or degenerative conditions of the spine. Usually, it is resolved by time and non-surgical treatment, but it is also important to know which conditions warrant a call to the doctor.

The back is one of our most important anatomic structures, providing support and facilitating mobility and balance for the entire body, as well as protecting the spinal cord. Because of the loads placed on it each and every day, it is no surprise this well-designed structure, consisting of bones (vertebrae), discs, muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves, is particularly susceptible to injury and other conditions that may have you reaching for the heating pad—or your doctor's phone number.

When you feel pain, it is your body's natural reaction to signals transmitted from the pain source, which travel through the nerves in the spinal cord and up to the brain, where they are perceived as pain.

Acute Pain vs. Chronic Pain

Many sudden attacks of acute back pain are the result of overstretched muscles (strains) or ligaments (sprains). The pain may be most severe immediately after injury, or it may worsen gradually over a few hours. In most instances, back pain as a result of strain or sprain can be resolved following a conservative course of treatment—usually within two to six weeks—provided there are no serious underlying medical conditions.

Common causes of strains and sprains that can trigger acute back pain include:

- Poor sitting or standing posture
- Bending forward too long
- Hiking your shoulder to hold the phone receiver to your ear
- Carrying a heavy purse, briefcase or backpack
- Stress and muscle tension

Physical conditions that can possibly contribute to the onset of acute back pain include:

- Lack of muscle tone
- Excess weight
- Pregnancy

Other causes of back pain include:

Mechanical Disorders

Many people who suffer from back problems are experiencing mechanical pain, which means that a specific part of their spine, such as an intervertebral disc, a ligament, or a joint is damaged and is not working correctly. Examples of spinal mechanical disorders include degenerative disc disease, herniated disc, spondylolysis/spondylolysthesis, arthritis and spinal stenosis.

Developmental Disorders

Developmental disorders of the lower back are caused by abnormalities in the formation and growth of the skeleton. Although, the treatment for many of these conditions is conservative, surgery may be required to keep some disorders from worsening, and in order to prevent long-term disability and or deformity. Scoliosis and kyphosis are examples of developmental disorders of the spine.

Inflammatory and Infectious Disorders

Infections of the spinal column are not common, but they are important because they are difficult to diagnose and there are serious consequences in the delay of an accurate diagnosis.

Tumors

Cancers and tumors of the spine and spinal cord are relatively rare. The most common symptom that patients with a spinal tumor have is pain. Because back pain is very common, it is also not a specific symptom of any one disease or medical condition.

Trauma

Trauma to the spine refers to injury that has occurred to the bony elements, soft tissues and/or neurological structures, resulting in instability of the vertebral column and actual or potential neurological injury.

When Should I See My Doctor?

When your back hurts, the first step is to assess the severity and cause of your back pain to determine whether you need to see a physician. Consult a physician immediately if you:

- are experiencing back pain as a result of a physical trauma involving your spine, such as a fall or car accident
- are experiencing numbness in, or having difficulty moving, your extremities
- experience bladder control loss or impairment
- develop a fever or severe headache
- are over 60 and have been taking steroids for a long period of time
- experience chest pain or pain in the left arm
- are pregnant
- in instances of acute back pain, do not experience any improvement after 72 hours of self-treatment at home
- have experienced chronic back pain for more than 6 weeks
If you are experiencing back pain, talk to your doctor about appropriate treatment options. Identifying the cause of your back pain, alleviating the pain—either at home or with your physician’s help—and avoiding re-injury are key to the healing process.

**Diagnosis**

What’s causing my back or neck pain? It is a common question, and a visit to your doctor is an important first step to get an answer.

You should know that the diagnosis of back, neck, leg or arm pain is not always easy. The human spine is very complex, so it can be difficult for your doctor to pinpoint the exact cause of low back pain or other symptoms. Below are some common spinal conditions.

The history of the pain and any activities that may have triggered your symptoms are important factors in diagnosis and treatment.

**What Is a Herniated Disc?**

A herniated disc, also called a bulging disc, ruptured disc or slipped disc, occurs when the inner core of the spinal disc pushes out through the outer layer of the disc. Herniation describes an abnormality of the intervertebral disc that is also known as a “slipped,” “ruptured,” or “bulging” disc. This process occurs when the inner core (nucleus pulposus) of the intervertebral disc bulges out through the outer layer of ligaments that surround the disc (annulus fibrosis). This tear in the annulus fibrosis causes pain in the back at the point of herniation. If the protruding disc presses on a spinal nerve, the pain may spread to the area of the body that is served by that nerve.

**What Are the Symptoms of a Herniated Disc?**

Usually, the main symptom is sharp, acute pain. In some cases, there may be a previous history of localized low back pain, with pain also extending down the leg served by the affected nerve. This pain is usually described as a deep, sharp pain, which gets worse as it moves down the affected leg. The onset of pain with a herniated disc may occur suddenly or it may be preceded by a tearing or snapping sensation in the spine, which may be attributed to a sudden rupture in the annulus fibrosis.

**How Is a Herniated Disc Diagnosed?**

A patient with a herniated disc will usually complain of low back pain that may or may not radiate into different parts of the body, such as the leg. They will often demonstrate a limitation in range of motion when asked to bend forward or lean backwards, and they may lean to one side as they try to bend forward. Patients will sometimes walk with a painful gait, flexing the affected leg so as not to put too much weight on the side of the body that hurts. Straight leg raising may be a positive indication of tension on the nerve root.

Abnormalities in the strength and sensation of particular parts of the body that are found with a neurological examination performed by a doctor provide the most objective evidence of nerve root compression. An MRI is the test of choice for diagnosis of a herniated disc, but a CT scan (CAT scan) also may be helpful because it provides better visualization of the bony anatomy of the spinal column that indicates where the source of pressure on the nerve root is located.

**How Is a Herniated Disc Treated?**

Treatment for the vast majority of patients with a herniated disc does not normally include surgery. Most patients will respond to conservative therapy, such as medication, rest, and physical therapy. Treatment is most effective when a patient and a doctor have a good relationship and the patient understands the rationale behind the prescribed treatment.

The primary element of conservative treatment is controlled physical activity. Usually, treatment will begin with a modification of activity and then a gradual return to protected activities. Sitting, bending, lifting, and twisting are not beneficial for this condition because they put a large amount of stress and pressure on the lumbar spine, which may increase the pressure on the affected nerve root. The appropriate use of medication is an important part of conservative treatment. This can include anti-inflammatory drugs, analgesics and muscle relaxants. Your doctor also may recommend an anti-inflammatory spinal injection for the area of the affected nerve root to lessen swelling and irritation caused by the damaged disc.

Surgery is typically recommended only after physical therapy, rest, and medications have failed to adequately relieve the symptoms of pain, numbness, and weakness over a significant period of time.

The benefits of spine surgery, however, must be weighed against the risks. Your surgeon will be able to discuss the risks and benefits of surgery with you, and the likely results of operative versus non-operative treatment.

Reference: amirsmalikmd.com

For info on İslâm, visit

www.alislam.org

Watch or Listen to Live Muslim Television Aḥmadiyya (MTA) Broadcast
Guidelines for Group Photos

Syed Sajid Ahmad

When taking group photos at events such as local and regional Ijtima’āt, the following protocol should be followed to ensure that the group photos are in line with the guidelines provided by the Publication department of Majlis Anşarullâh, USA.

For local Ijtima’

Front row should have odd number of chairs—5, 7, 9, 11, etc. (if no chairs are being used then odd number of standing people). Nâzîm (if attending) otherwise Za‘îm should be seated/standing in the middle; local President, if present, on the right, then right to the local President should be Nâ‘îb Za‘îm Şaf Dom; Nâ‘îb Za‘îm Şaf Awwal on the left to the Za‘îm, then Muntazîm ‘Umûmî. After that other ‘Âmilah members or elders can be seated.

For regional Ijtima’

Front row should have odd number of chairs—5, 7, 9, 11, etc. (if no chairs are being used then odd number of standing people). Representative of National ‘Âmilah should be seated/standing in the middle; regional Nâzîn on the right, host Majlis’ Za‘îm on the left. Zu‘amâ of other Majâlis should then be on either side to fill the chairs and then elders. If a missionary is present, he should be seated right to the person sitting in the center (Za‘îm, regional Nâzîm, or National Representative). The protocol should also be followed for group photos taken at Majlis’ other programs—such as general meetings.

Sulţânul-Qalam Awards

Department of Publication offers the following awards for promoting and defending Islâm in print and online media. Awards are for the members of Majlis Anşarullâh, USA in good standing. The material must be published outside the Jamâ‘at.

1. Up to $500 for a book publication by an independent renowned non-Ahmadi publisher. To seek the award, the writer will send one copy of the publication to the Şadr and one to Qâ’îd Publication. The award will depend upon the content and quality of the publication.

2. Top three writers will be awarded $300, $200, and $100 awards for publishing in newspapers and periodicals. The circulation of the newspapers and periodicals will be a factor in the determination of the awards. To enter the competition, please submit the original publications to Qâ’îd Publication or submit their scans (150 dpi minimum) at http://ansarusa.org/content/submission-msq-award.

Top three writers will be awarded $200, $150, and $100 awards for publishing on websites. The reputation and popularity of the sites will be a factor in determining the winners. To enter the competition please submit the links to your writings at the above-mentioned link.

For further information, contact Qâ’îd Publication at qaid.publication@ansarusa.org.

Precautionary Measures in Light of Financial Crisis

Discussing the probable worsening of the global financial crisis, Ḥadrat Khalîfatul Masîh Al-Khâmîs (may Allâh be his helper), in his Friday sermon of November 4, 2011, said, “There is no telling where the financial crisis will lead and how intense it will get. While there is no need to panic, Aḥmâdis should definitely stock dry food supply at home at all times as a precautionary measure.” Ḥuḍûr (may Allâh be his helper) also explained, “Underdeveloped countries are used to such situations and people make some provision or the other but here [in the West] people do not know what such a crisis entails. The last crisis they faced was in WWII and their new generation has no idea of what can come to pass.” Ḥuḍûr (may Allâh be his helper) advised, “While taking the precautionary step of stocking some food supply, we should also pray that may Allâh enable the world to recognize their Creator and is saved from chastisement.”

Members are urged to heed the advise of Ḥuḍûr (may Allâh be his helper) and take the suggested precautionary measures and pray to Almighty Allâh for His Mercy.

Guidelines provided for group photos must be followed at Majlis’ events. Any group photo submitted which does not conform to these guidelines will not be published in Anşâr publications.
### Anşar Publications Price List

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<tr>
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<td>Al-Naḥl—Special issue on Dr. Abdus Salām</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
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<td>Approaching the West</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Letter to a Dear One</td>
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<td>Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) in the Bible (Free for Tablīgh Purposes)</td>
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<td>Salāt Poster. 18x24” Color, Arabic with transliteration and translation (Soft copy of the poster can be downloaded for free at: <a href="http://ansarusa.org/sites/default/files/SalatPoster.jpg">http://ansarusa.org/sites/default/files/SalatPoster.jpg</a>)</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Audio Cassette: Resolution of controversial issues</td>
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### Ordering Anşar Publications

1. Place order at [www.amibookstore.us](http://www.amibookstore.us)
2. Send payment check to: Anşar Books, Majlis Anşarullāh, USA, Ahmadiyya Movement in Islām, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, USA
Website of Majlis Anšārullāh, USA

The website of Majlis Anšārullāh, USA can be accessed at www.ansarusa.org. This portal has a wealth of information about activities of the Majlis at both National and local levels. The main page of the website features a menu at the top that makes it easier to navigate the website and to locate pertinent information. The website also offers keyword-based search functionality that can be used to quickly search the information on the website. Anšār are encouraged to regularly visit the website to benefit from the information and services provided. Following are some of the features offered by the website.

- Upcoming Events
- Calendar of Events
- Anšār recent publications and archives
- Videos of recent events and departmental presentations
- Online Ta’līm Test
- Holy Qur’ān learning tools
- Majālis’ reports submission and repository (accessible to Anšār Officers)
- Reports and photos of special projects
- Important information such as:
  - Muslim Funeral and Burial Services
  - Importance of Creating a Will
  - Majālis’ Current Publications and Archives
  - Dictionary and Notes for translators and writers
- Online forms to submit information such as:
  - Chanda Calculator
  - Tajnīd Update
  - Sulṭānul-Qalam Awards information
  - Information about Deceased Members

The Review of Religions Subscription

Ḥaḍrat Khalifatul Masīḥ V (may Allāh be his helper) has stressed the need to increase the subscription of the Review of Religions magazine. Ḥuḍūr (may Allāh be his helper) mentioned the low subscription of this very useful publication and advised to increase the number of subscribers.

The Promised Messiah (peace be on him) himself started this magazine in 1902 that has covered religion, history, philosophy, law, economics, latest scientific discoveries, and many more subjects for over 100 years. The Promised Messiah (peace be on him) expressed the purpose of the magazine as follows:

“As the members of our Jamā’at are already aware that the principle purpose of my advent is to remove all the fallacies and the misconception which have been caused by Christianity, and to invite people to the true Islām. This objective has also been described by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) in such words that the Messiah will “break the cross.” To fulfill this very mission this magazine (the Review of Religions) has been started.” (Al-Ḥakam, Sept 30th, 1903)

The cost of the annual subscription for this quarterly publication is $30. Anšār are urged to say Labbaik to the call of our beloved Ḥuḍūr (may Allāh be his helper) by subscribing to the Review of Religions. Anšār can also subscribe to the publication for a neighbor, colleague, professor, student, family member, friend, workplace or local library.

Members can subscribe to the Review of Religions in one of the following two ways:

- Mail check/money order to Aḥmadiyya Movement in Islām, 188-15 McLaughlin Ave, Holliswood, NY 11423
- On the Web, by visiting the Jamā’at’s online book store at http://store.allIslam.org/revofrel.html
Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA

Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA, is an auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc. USA, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, USA. It consists of Ahmadi Muslim men above the age of 40. The Arabic expression Anṣārullāh literally means 'helpers of God' and is taken from the Holy Qur’ān (61 [Al-Ṣaf]:15, 3 [Al’ Imrān]:53).

Anṣār Pledge

Ash-hadu • allā ilāh • illallāhu • wahdahū • lā sharika lahū • wa ash-hadu • anna muḥammadan • ‘abdulrahmān • ‘amīr • ‘arif • ‘ālam • ‘ilāhī • ‘amīn

(I bear witness that • there is none worthy of worship • except Allāh. • He is One • (and) has no partner, • and I bear witness • that Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) • is His servant and messenger.)

I solemnly pledge that • I shall endeavor • throughout my life • for the propagation • and consolidation • of Ahmadiyyat in Islām, • and shall stand guard • in defense of • the institution of Khilāfat. • I shall not hesitate • to offer any sacrifice • in this regard. • Moreover, • I shall exhort my children • to always remain dedicated • and devoted to Khilāfat. • Inshā’āllāh.

National Majlis-i-‘Āmilah, Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA

2012-2013

Ṣadr: ................................................................. Waiee Bajwa
Nā’īb Ṣadr Ṣaf Dom ................................................................. Imran Hayee

2013

Nā’īb Ṣadr Awwal: ................................................................. Khaled Ahmad Ata
Mu‘āwīn Ṣadr (Information Technology): .............................................. Naseem Ahmed Waseem
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Al-Nahl
Published by Majlis Anşarullah, USA,
An Auxiliary of The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islām, USA
15000 Good Hope Rd, Siver Spring, MD 20905
Printed at the Fazl-i-Umar Press.
Postmaster: Send address changes to
P.O. Box 226, Chauncey, OH 45719