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EDITED & PUBLISHED

by

MIAN MUHAMMAD IBRAHIM
637 Randolph Street
Dayton Ohio 45408
513/268-5512

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 at Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat the current of religious philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call of their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his forefathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world, and that he had come instead as the Promised Messiah.

The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslim and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers, and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din as Khalifa-tul-Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifa-tul-Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifa-tul-Masih II organized world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named, with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifa-tul-Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquires may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or to The Review of Religions Rabwah, Pakistan.

THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

The Temple of Understanding is an internationally known organization dedicated to the mission of striving toward unity of mankind. It enjoys great prestige and reputation in many parts of the world.

As a part of its important activities, it initiated, some years ago, holding an annual conference to which religious leaders and intellectual thinkers of the major faiths of the world are invited to discuss the contemporary problems of mankind. These meetings of some of the most eminent spiritual personalities have been called, with substantial justification, as "Spiritual Conferences" by the Temple of Understanding organizers.

The "Fifth Spiritual Summit" was held on October 19 through 24, 1975, in New York City. Some of its sessions were convened in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations Headquarters. Spiritual leaders representing Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and many other faiths were invited for the creation of a common plea, representing 2,700,000,000 peoples, to the leaders of the United Nations.

The Spiritual Summit V, divided in various panels, deliberated upon such fundamental problems as the Unity of the Human Community, Ecology and the Spiritual Environment, and Creating the Future Community. Among those who were invited to address the Spiritual Summit was Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan former Foreign Minister of Pakistan and President of the International Court of Justice.

Sir Zafrulla, in his illuminating and inspiring address, emphasized the total unity of religion irrespective of geographical location or cultural background. "Despite the diversity of creeds and beliefs which divides mankind, Islam seeks to promote understanding and accord on the basis of a mutually acceptable fundamental," was the main theme of his address. He declared that "the unity of the human spirit derives from the unity of the creator of the universe." A complete text of this extremely valuable address is reproduced here for the benefit of the readers of The Muslim Sunrise.

(Khalil Ahmad Nasir, Co-Editor)

One is the Human Spirit

In the Islamic concept, the unity of the human spirit derives from the Unity of the Creator of the universe.

The very first chapter of the Holy Quran, the scripture of Islam, opens with the declaration: الحمد لله رب العالمين . That is to say: The worthiness of the highest praise belongs to God alone Who has created the universe and sustains and nourishes it and leads it stage by stage towards perfection.

Jealousies and rivalries that divide the human spirit are generated by our setting up a multiplicity of gods, under varying denominations, race, color, blood, wealth, culture, standard of living, etc. The unifying force must be our consciousness that every human being is a creature of the same God Who created us and that his welfare is as dear to Him as our own. It is our relationship through Him that brings about unity and fosters a spirit of brotherhood. Everything else is divisive and unless it is controlled and regulated by that consciousness would lead to ruin.

We have been admonished; O mankind, be mindful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the two created and spread large numbers of men and women (4.2).

The diversity of our pursuits and interests should not impel us into situations of hostile and aggressive competition, we must regulate our relationship and seek adjustment and co-ordination through beneficent co-operation, as we have been directed: Assist one another in piety and rectitude and assist not one another in sin and transgression; and be mindful of your duty to God; surely God's punishment is severe (5.3).

We have been warned against hostility and division and have been urged to unite on the basis of our common allegiance to our Maker: Take fast hold, all together, of the rope of God, and be not divided. Call to mind the favour of God which he bestowed upon you when you were at enmity with each other and He united your hearts in love so that by His Grace you became as brethren. You were on the brink of a pit of fire and He rescued you from it. Thus does God expound to you His commandments that you may be guided (3.104).

The message of Islam is universal; it is addressed to the whole of mankind. It is not confined to any particular people. Nor is any people excluded from it. The Quran affirms: Proclaim, O Prophet: O mankind, verily I am God's Messenger to you all. To Him belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but He. He bestows life and He causes death (7.159). There is no room here for a god who bestows life, for another who maintains it and for a third who destroys it.

The beneficence of the Prophet of Islam was not confined to a particular people. It was unequivocally announced: We have sent thee as a mercy for the entire universe (21.108).

On the occasion of the Pilgrimage the Holy Prophet proclaimed: There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non Arab over an Arab; nor is a white one to be preferred over a coloured one, nor a coloured one over a white one. You are all equal as brothers.

That is why in Islam there has at no time been any distinction on the basis of race, colour or blood. Islam is colour blind.

There is no privilege in Islam. There is no church, no church hierarchy, no ordination, no priesthood. The whole emphasis is on righteousness. That is the sole badge of honour. The Holy Quran has announced: O mankind, We have created you from male and female, and We have divided you into nations and tribes for greater facility of intercourse. Verily, the most honoured among you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, God is All-Knowing, All-Awake (49.14).

The Quran recognises that God sent His revelation to every people and that every people has had its Prophet: Thou art but a Warner; and every people has had its guide (13.8). We have sent thee with enduring truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and as a Warner. There is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent (35.25).

It goes much further and requires belief in the truth of all Prophets and all revealed books. For instance: Affirm: We believe in God and in that which has been sent down to us and that which was sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and his children and that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and that which was given to all other Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them and to Him do we wholly submit ourselves (2.137).

And again: The Messenger has full faith in that which has been sent down to him from his Lord and so have the believers: all of them believe in God, and in His angels and in His Books and in His Messengers, affirming: We make no distinction between any of His Messengers (2.286).

This secures reverence for all Prophets and revealed books and promotes and fosters the unity of the human spirit.

Despite the diversity of creeds and beliefs which divides mankind Islam seeks to promote understanding and accord on the basis of a mutually acceptable fundamental. The Holy Quran lays down the directive: Say to the People of the Book: Let us agree upon one matter which is the same for you and for us, that we worship none but God, and that we associate no partner with Him, and that some of us take not others for lords beside God. Then, if they turn away, say to them, Fear Ye witness that we have submitted to God (2.65).

It is the Unity of the Godhead alone that can safeguard the unity of the human spirit.

The children of Adam who started on the Unity of the Godhead soon began to fall away from it and proceeded to fashion various types of gods and even goddesses for themselves. A whole succession of Prophets and divine Messengers were from time to time raised among them in every part of the earth to wean them away from the worship of false gods and to win them back to the worship of the One True God.

The history of man presents a panorama of this struggle between the divinely inspired yearning of the human spirit to reach out to the Unity of the Creator and man's tendency to sink into the worship of false deities of every description. Every falling away was inspired by or imported in its wake the exploitation of man by his fellow man which imposed or involved a division or degradation of the human spirit.

It is not my purpose, nor would time permit, a detailed exposition of the various types of such exploitation. We have had occasion to encounter it, and even to suffer from it, in one form or other, in our own times and lives and persons. Twice within a lifetime has the spirit of division pushed large sectors of humanity into conflict of a type which brought them to the brink of destruction. This realisation led to the establishment of the United Nations.

The Preamble to the Charter of the United recites that the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends to practice toleration and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and to unite their strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, had resolved to combine their efforts to accomplish these aims.

This went a long way towards the recognition and affirmation of the unity of the human spirit.

The United Nations was established thirty years ago with a membership of fifty states. To-day it has a membership of one hundred and forty two states, a large majority of which were still seeking independence at the inception of the United Nations. The organisation is by now well within sight of universality. It is a very satisfactory consummation.

The United Nations has a good record in several other respects; yet though much has been achieved a great deal still remains to be accomplished. It might, however, be hopefully affirmed that the past of the organisation constitutes a good augury for its future.

Among the purposes of the United Nations it is to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace; and to be a center for harmonising the actions of nations in the attainment of their common ends.

One method of promoting such harmony is the provision for the settlement of international disputes of a justiciable character through judicial determination by the International Court of Justice. The Court is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and functions in accordance with its statute which forms an integral part of the Charter of the United Nations. It may also give an advisory opinion on any legal question which may be submitted to it by the General Assembly or the Security Council, or any other organ of the United Nations or a specialised agency, which may at any time be so authorised by the General Assembly.

It will thus be seen that the Court performs a crucial function in the set up of the United Nations. It is much to be regretted, however, that it has not been availed of to the degree to which could have been wished.

All members of the United Nations are parties to the Statute of the Court, but they are not thereby rendered amenable to the jurisdiction of the Court. Less than 40 percent of them have filed declarations under Article 36 (2) of the Statute accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court, and most of these declarations are hedged round with escape clauses which operate to render the declaration nugatory.

In my humble opinion the cause of international justice will not be adequately served till the membership of the United Nations carries with it the obligation of compulsory submission to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

The Court has made a very valuable contribution towards the promotion of the purposes of the United Nations through its advisory opinions on a variety of legal questions. Reference might be made, by way of illustration, to its opinions on different aspects of South Africa's mandate over the territory of South West Africa, and its latest opinion given four days back, on the status of the territory of Spanish Sahara.

"THE GOLDEN DEEDS OF THE PRESENT KHALIFA"

Being the text of a highly informative and inspiring address delivered by Imam B. A. Rafiq of the London Mosque, at the last Annual Ijtima held at Copenhagen, Denmark. ————Ed.

It is well known that it is God Almighty Who appoints a Khalifa, who establishes for his followers their religion and who brings them in exchange of fear, security and peace. The appointment of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih III was predicted by numerous prophecies revealed to his predecessor, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih the Second, father of the present spiritual head. I cite here only a few examples:

It was disclosed to him that from the year 1965, shall start a new era which indeed would relate to the Third Khalifa.

The Alfazal of 8th April, 1915 carried a prediction: 'God has also told me that He shall grant me a son who shall be the "NASIR-I- DIN" (i.e. supporter of the Faith and every-ready to serve Islam).

It must be remembered that the ministries of the First, Second and Third Khalifas are an extension of the predicted ministry of the Promised Messiah.

At the Annual Gathering of 1956, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II said, "Whenever the election of the next Khalifa takes place and whoever is duly elected, I wish to give him the glad tidings that God shall favour him with His support and whosoever stands in opposition to him, whether a great man or small, shall face humiliation and ignominy and is bound to suffer ruin and disgrace; because the next Khalifa shall, indeed, walk in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet and in the footsteps of the Promised Messiah; and shall uphold and establish the institution of the Islamic Khilafat. Therefore, I give glad tidings now to him who will be elected the Third Successor in my place, that even if the governments of the world oppose him, these shall be shattered into pieces."

(Khilafat -i- Haqqa Islam, pp. 17-18)

On the 8th of November, 1965, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih the Second passed away and he was succeeded by Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, duly elected by the Ahmadiyya Community as the Third Successor. In his own words he was "a humble servant of Almighty Allah." This simplicity hides the fact that he was a Hafiz of the Holy Quran, had done his Master of Arts at Oxford and for several years had been the Principal of the Talimul Islam College beside occupying several other offices in the Community. Yet, those who really know him, appreciate that compared with his late father he did not have the same gift of eloquence and public speaking at the time of his appointment, but shortly afterwards, he established himself as a highly knowledgeable public speaker. This metamorphosis was another gift from Almighty God.

Very early in his Khilafat, Hazrat Khalifatul - Masih Third was given the glad tidings that Allah would bestow upon him such abundance as would satisfy him. Many Ahmadis living abroad have had the privilege of private audience with this great spiritual leader and will proudly testify to the fact, that in this world today, a more self-less, loving, beloved, dimple and kind-hearted person than Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad does not exist. His interests and his knowledge display a deep understanding of religion, naturally, and of all worldly subjects ranging from science, economics, politics to geography and history.

The very first international scheme he launched at Rabwah was the Fazl - i - Umar Foundation which was charged with several types of activities. One of its more ambitious programmes was the institution of scholarships and research awards bestowed annually for outstanding research. Starting with a small fund, this Foundation has now become a prominent feature of our Community, but considerations of time forbid me from going into the details of the present programme undertaken by the Foundation, which includes the building of a commodious guest house at Rabwah.

Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad is the first Khalifa who has travelled widely outside the sub-continent of India. This travelling has bridged the gap and has knit the community together into one unit under a strong Centre. He has made three trips to Europe — in 1967, 1970 and 1973.

During his West African tour in 1970, at Gambia, Almighty God instilled into his mind another grand scheme. The people of Africa had for centuries suffered persecution under the yoke of colonialism and it was time to liberate them by illuminating the Dark Continent through the divine light of Islam. The Scheme, known as the Nusrat Jehan Fund, was launched through an announcement made in the Mahmud Hall in London and was directed towards the establishment of schools, hospitals, clinics and broadcasting station in Africa. I still distinctly remember when Hazrat asked me personally to ensure, that before he left the United Kingdom, a week later, a sum of £. 10,000 should be deposited in a separate bank account. Knowing intimately the financial position of the U.K. community, I frankly admitted the hopelessness of the mammoth task and said that I felt, that the target could not be achieved. Hazur told me that this was a divine mission and that God would ensure its success. Anyway, I made my modest efforts and lo and behold those poor people of whose financial sacrifices I had little doubt, began to pay in their contributions. By the end of the week, and before Hazur departed, I reported to Hazur that the sum to £. 10,000 had been deposited in the bank. This three-year scheme went on to an accumulated fund of more than £. 50,000, with the greater part of the sum pledged by the U.K. community. Numerous schools, colleges, clinics and hospitals have been opened in Africa and several qualified teachers, doctors and dentists are operating in this continent under Nusrat Jehan Scheme.

The other day, the High Commissioner of the Gambia in the U.K. openly admitted the success of the Nusrat Jehan Scheme and said that the day was drawing near when the whole of the country would have received some benefit from this scheme and would have turned towards Ahmadiyyat. Al - hamdolillah!

The financial resources of the community were to be further tested. At the 11st Annual Conference of the community held at Rabwah in 1973, Hazrat Khalifatul - Masih announced another grand project which would set in motion a programme of the progressive development of all the branches of the Movement, speed up the propagation of Islam in all parts of the world and bring closer the prevalence of Islam throughout. The fifteen year scheme known as the Ahmadiyya Centenary Celebration is charged with establishing more missionary centres in various countries, including Denmark, the translation and publication of the Holy Quran and other Islamic literature in diverse languages, and amateur-radio and telex communications.

It is fairly easy to draw up a consolidated balance sheet of such grand projects but if the youth of today are to learn anything from the life of their spiritual head, then they need to look at the personality that has caused this new era to draw upon them. I have been personally fortunate to have worked as Private Secretary to Hazur during my stay in Pakistan and I can present a glimpse of his busy life. Some of his attributes I have already mentioned.

His normal day begins very early in the morning when he prays and studies. Then he reads all his mail, making note for replies, with some letters being answered in his own writing. He then examines reports and issues fresh instructions on multifarious community matters. In addition to this he grants audience to those who come to see him and also leads the prayers in the Mosque. The sheer size of his daily mail is staggering and having attended to all this personally in addition to other duties would exhaust any other human being. But the Khalifa cherishes this devoted labour and cheerfully bears the burden of leading a very large community.

It would be difficult to conceive that he would have any time left over for any other interest. Yet Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad has great enthusiasm for sports. Under his auspices is run the All Pakistan Nasir Basketball Competition. On numerous occasions he has urged members to take interest in cycling, horse-riding, catapult-shooting, rowing and swimming. He is such a keen lover of horses that even equestrians have expressed amazement at his knowledge of breeding and other matters connected with horses. Hazur is also a keen amateur photographer and in this field too he could match his knowledge about cameras and photography with experts.

Anyone who loves God, loves nature's creation. Hazur is no exception, or perhaps, in a way, because he is simply obsessed with nature, with natural phenomena and with the laws of nature. Delivering a discourse on nature comes naturally to him. He knows details about the bee and its activities which a honey collector would cherish. In his modest home, there is a duck pond and he is also a keen gardener. His talks and his sermons abound with scientific knowledge and he is the first one to draw attention to God Almighty's immense bounties. He has instituted the giving of an award on research in nature. He encourages the inhabitants of Rabwah to take early morning strolls. Not surprising therefore is the fact that medical research has proved that the poor people of Rabwah are amongst the healthiest in the country.

Above all, Hazur is a masterly scholar on the teachings of the Holy Quran. His speeches are acclaimed as rivers of knowledge overflowing their banks. He could take a simple verse from the Holy Quran and explain it so lucidly that the audience is left aghast at the tremendous knowledge that has been spread before them.

Such is your spiritual leader; a man under whom anyone would be proud to serve. During the recent Pakistan crisis he has been a source of great comfort and has held the helm of the ark steady. The serenity with which he endures the barrage of abuse hurled at him by his opponents proves that he is no ordinary man, but is indeed God's humble and protected servant.

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Supplementary

Under 'Notes and Comments' as Editor of "The Muslim Herald", Iman Rafiq observes in the October (1975) issue of the said journal:

At 11:15 a.m. (local time) on 27 September, 1975 Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih III, laid the foundation stone of the first Ahmadiyya Muslim Mosque in Sweden at Gottenburg.

The Mosque at Gottenburg is the first one to be built under the auspices of the Ahmadiyya Centenary Fund. This fund was launched at the 1973 Annual Conference in Rabwah with an ambitious project as its main objective.

Earlier Hazur had said that for the propagation of Islam, five Mosques should be built in Europe under the Ahmadiyya Centenary Fund. The Swedish Mosque is the first such Mosque now being built.

"We herald the construction of this Mosque and pray that the Mosque may win the hearts of non-Muslims to Islam in that part of the world." It is gratifying to note that America has been included among the three countries which will share the cost of the construction of the said Mosque. Let us now contribute generously to this project. ————— Editor

