

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

AN NUSRAT

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ۔

I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. He is One and has no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad (saw) is His servant and His Messenger. I affirm that I shall always be ready to sacrifice my life, property, time and children for the cause of faith and nation. I shall always adhere to truth and shall always be prepared to make every sacrifice for the perpetuation of the Ahmadiyya Khilafat, InshAllah.

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GUIDANCE FROM HOLY QURAN



ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ
لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

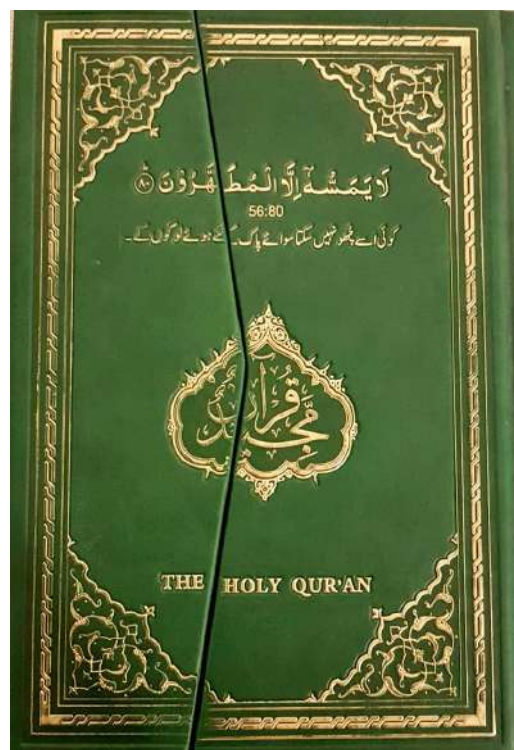
Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what men's hands have wrought, that He may make them taste *the fruit of some of their doings*, so that they may turn back *from evil*.

Holy Quran 30:42¹

COMMENTARY

The main theme of the foregoing verses consisted in engendering and instilling in man belief in an Almighty and All-Powerful God, Who creates, regulates and guides all life. In the present verse we are told that when darkness enshrouds the face of the earth and man consigns God to oblivion and gives himself up to the worship of the false gods of his own

conception and creation, God raises a Prophet to bring back **"the erring flock into the Master's fold."** Such was the condition of mankind when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, humanity's greatest Teacher, made his appearance. The following quotations support this contention: The beginning of the seventh century was an epoch of disintegration—national and social—and religion had become extinct as a moral force and had become reduced to mere ritual and ceremony and the great Faiths of the world had ceased to exert any healthy influence on the lives of their followers. The holy flames kindled by Zoroaster, Moses and Jesus had been quenched in the blood of man...Incessant war for supremacy, perpetual internecine strife, combined with the ceaseless wrangling of creeds and sects, had sucked the lifeblood out of the hearts of nations, and people of the earth, trodden under the iron heels of a lifeless sacerdotalism, were crying to God to deliver them from the misdeeds of their masters. Never in the history of the world was the need so great, the time so ripe for the appearance of a Deliverer (**"Spirit of Islam"**).



In the fifth and sixth Centuries the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos. It seemed that the great civilization that it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe and sect was against the next and law and order were unknown. . .It was a time fraught with tragedy. Civilization like a gigantic tree whose foliage had overarched the world and whose branches had borne the golden fruits of art and science and literature, stood tottering, its trunk no longer alive with the flowing sap of devotion and reverence, but rotten to the core (**"Emotion as the Basis of Civilization"**).

The words **"land and sea,"** may signify: **(a)** such nations as had no experience of Divine revelation and those that believed in heavenly Scriptures; or **(b)** nations whose cultures and civilizations were based purely on reason and collective human experience and those whose cultures and civilizations were based on Divine revelation; **(c)** peoples living on the continents and those living in the islands. The verse means to say that the nations of the world had become corrupt to the very core—politically, socially and morally, and their corruption was the result of **"what their hands had wrought."**

Maulwi Sher Ali (ra) (2015). *The Holy Qur'an - Arabic Text and English Translation*. Islamabad, Tilford: Islam International Publications Limited. Chapter 30, verse 42 (Page 473).

<https://www.alislam.org/quran/five-vol/Five-Volume-Commentary-Vol-4.pdf>

The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary Volume 4 p. 2513



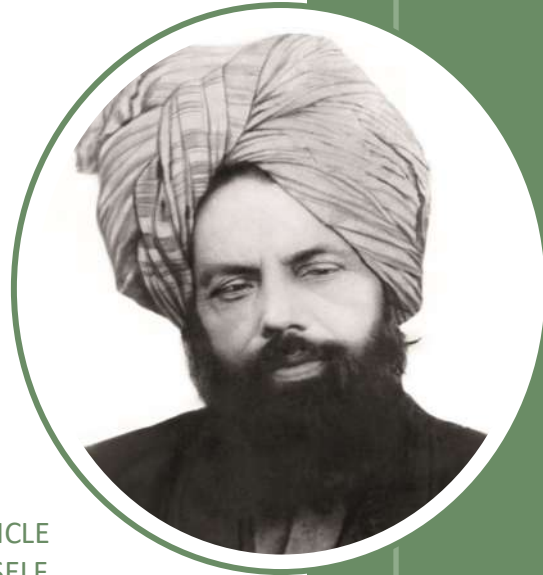
The Decline of Islam

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
لِيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى أُمَّتِي مَا أَتَى عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ حَدُّو النَّعْلِ، حَتَّىٰ إِنْ
كَانَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَتَى أُمَّهُ عَلَانِيَةً لَكَانَ فِي أُمَّتِي مَنْ يَصْنَعُ ذَلِكَ، وَإِنْ
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً، وَتَفَتَّرِقُ أُمَّتِي
عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً، كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مِلَّةً وَاحِدَةً، قَالُوا وَمَنْ
هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

Abdullah bin 'Amr, God be pleased with him, relates that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "Surely things will happen to my people as happened earlier to the Israelites. They will resemble each other like one shoe in a pair resembles the other to the extent that if anyone among the Israelites had openly committed adultery with his mother, there will be some who would do this in my ummah (people) as well. Verily, the Israelites were divided into 72 sects, but my people will be divided into 73 sects. All of them will be in the Fire except one.' The Companions asked, 'Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?' The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: They are the people who will follow my practice and that of my companions." (Tirmidhi)

<https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Selected-Sayings-of-Holy-Prophet.pdf> p.61

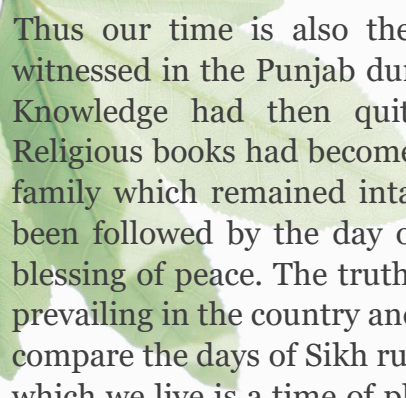
My Claim to Promised Messiahship



THE FOLLOWING ARE EXTRACTS FROM AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY THE PROMISED MESSIAH(AS) HIMSELF AND TAKEN FROM THE SEPTEMBER 1904 ISSUE OF THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS (VOL.3, NO.9).

Gentlemen, I would now say something about my own claims, which I have published in this country. Reason and history bear witness to the fact that when the darkness of sin overshadows the earth, when all sorts of transgressions prevail in the world and evil is supreme, when the spiritual sensibilities are deadened, when the earth is growing impure with immoral practices and the love of God being numbed in the hearts of men, a poisonous wind begins to blow, the mercy of God then ordains that life should again be breathed into dead hearts and the earth should be quickened afresh. As there are changes of seasons in the physical world, so there are revolutions in the spiritual world.

In autumn the trees lose their verdure and freshness, and are stripped of their leaves and branches, and look like a man who being in the last stage of consumption loses all his flesh and blood, or like a leper whose face is disfigured by the effects of leprosy and whose limbs have dropped down. But they are not left in this state. Another period comes, and autumn is followed by spring when a new life is given to the dead plants and they sprout forth into fresh leaves. Similar to these changes in the physical world, there are changes and revolutions in the spiritual world and periods of light and darkness follow each other successively like day and night. At certain stages of the history of the world, men are stripped of spiritual excellences and the perfection of manhood like trees in the autumn, while at others a wind blows from heaven which breathes life afresh into their hearts.



Thus our time is also the beginning of a spring. The deadness of autumn was witnessed in the Punjab during the days when this country was under the Sikh sway. Knowledge had then quite disappeared and ignorance had become prevalent. Religious books had become so rare that they could not be found except in some high family which remained intact from Sikh oppression. The night of the Sikh rule has been followed by the day of British dominion which has brought us the invaluable blessing of peace. The truth is that if regard is had, to the general peace and security prevailing in the country and to the comforts which we can and do enjoy, it is unjust to compare the days of Sikh rule with even the nights of British Government. The time in which we live is a time of physical as well as spiritual blessings, and what has already appeared is a sign of the richness of the harvest that we may yet reap.

It is true, however, that being the commencement of a new age, this period presents varying faces. Some faces are hideous because they go against righteousness and the true knowledge of God, while others present attractive features and there is a lustre of righteousness in them. There is no doubt, however, that the British Government has taken great pains to spread learning in the country and to advance the cause of science and knowledge. Printing presses have multiplied copies of books to an extent unknown in any previous age and placed them within the reach of all. This vast spread of knowledge has brought to light many hidden libraries and cast the light of publication upon many rare manuscripts, and thus it has changed the whole appearance of society within a few years.

Side-by-side with the growth of learning and spread of knowledge spoken of here, there has been a continual falling off from the standard of purity in practice, and the plant of atheism has struck a deep root in most hearts. There is no doubt about the benefits and blessings which the British rule has brought to us, nor can anyone question the unparalleled peace and liberty which it has established in this country, but most people have not made a right use of this liberty and peace. Instead of being thankful to God for His great obligation in placing us under the benign rule of such a peaceful and kind Government, most people have become utterly neglectful of and stolidly indifferent to God and have wholly given themselves up to the pursuits and cares of this world, so wholly indeed as if this world were their permanent abode and they were not under the control of any Higher power or under any obligation to Him. As happens generally, with peace transgression has become more flagrant, and on account of daily increasing hard-heartedness and indifference, the country is now in a very dangerous condition. Ignorant people commit the most brutal and heinous deeds like savages, and every grade of society is more or less involved in some sort of evil. Public houses are much more frequented than other shops, and professions involving open immorality are daily increasing, while places of worship are only used for the performance of ceremonials devoid of life and inner worth. In short a violent outburst of evil and iniquity has taken place, and as a flood destroys all embankments and sweeps away whole villages before it in a single night, so the flood of passions is sweeping away all barriers to sin before it. Cimmerian darkness has spread over the world, and it has reached the point at which it must either be regenerated and receive

a light from heaven or be utterly destroyed and brought to naught. But the prophetic utterings give us to understand that the end is yet a thousand years off. Moreover, the new physical order of this world which has been brought about by the numerous discoveries and inventions of the last and the present century, is clearly indicative of a similar change for the better in the spiritual system of the world. There is a pressing necessity for such spiritual reform, for spiritually the world stands on the brink of destruction and is so depraved that the wrath of heaven must be kindled against it. The force of passions is growing too strong while the spiritual tendencies have been utterly weakened and the light of faith has been extinguished. A light must, therefore, be kindled from heaven to shatter the clouds of darkness which over-hang this world, for, as we see daily, the gloom, of night is not dispelled until the heavenly light makes its appearance. As there is a heavenly light which lightens the corners of the earth, so there is also a heavenly light which illuminates the corners of the heart, and the truth of both these laws is manifest.

Since God created man, it has been His unchangeable law that He sheds His light upon mankind through one of their own number, so that there may be a unity and oneness among them. The person who is thus chosen, receives the light of perfect Divine knowledge from God, drinks deep at the fountain of His perfect love, is spoken to by Him, made to walk in the path of His perfect pleasure and granted a deep-seated zeal to draw others to the light, the knowledge and the love which have been granted him. Thus drawn by him and sharing in his knowledge because of their close connection with him, other people are also kept back from sins and guided to the path of piety and righteousness.

In accordance with this time-honoured law, Almighty God prophesied by the mouth of His prophets that after nearly six thousand years from the time of Adam(as) when great darkness would prevail upon earth and an irresistible flood of passions would make the love of God wane and iniquity predominate, God would breathe into a man the soul of truth and love and knowledge spiritually after the likeness of Adam(as), and he would be called the Messiah, because God would Himself anoint his soul with the ointment of His love. This Messiah who on account of the promise of God concerning his appearance is called the Promised Messiah in sacred books, would, it is foretold, be made to stand against Satan, and between him and the evil one there would be a mighty struggle, the final struggle between good and evil. For this spiritual fight Satan would bring all his hosts into the field and gather together all his power and make use of all his resources. Never shall a fight like this have occurred between good and evil before, for on that day the tricks of Satan, and the means by which he can mislead people, would all be exhausted. After a heavy fight, the Messiah of God would drive back the powers of darkness, and the glory, majesty, unity and holiness of God would be proclaimed upon earth and would continue to be declared for a thousand years, the seventh day of the Holy Books of God. Then will be the end. I am that Messiah: let him who will, accept me.

<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/1599/my%E2%80%88claim-to-promised-messiahship/>

EDITORIAL



Dear readers. Assalamo Alaikum

In this issue of An-Nusrat, we have included the inspiring guidance given to Lajna Ima'illah by Hazrat Khalifat-ul Massih V (may Allah be his Helper). It is a reminder of the great responsibility that lies on our shoulders as those who have accepted the reformer of the age; The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). Huzoor (peace be upon him) states, ***“Faith does not mean the simple verbal utterance that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. Faith is deep, profound and subtle; it is a state of belief that steers away passions of the self and creates an inner strength that burns away sin.” (i.e. a state to burn down sin is generated). (Malfuzat, vol 5, p 561)***

As Ahmadi Muslim women, we should constantly be self-reflecting and looking for ways to please Allah. This starts and ends with the question, are we striving to fulfill all the commandments of Allah to the best of our abilities? The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) said in his book, 'Noah's Ark': ***“So beware and do not take a single step contrary to the teaching of God and the guidance of the Qur'ān. I tell you truly that anyone who disregards even a small injunction of the seven hundred commandments of the Qur'ān, shuts upon himself the door of salvation.” (Noah's Ark— An Invitation to Faith; pg. 44).*** We hope this address is a reminder to our readers and leads them to reflect on the issues that Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) has highlighted.

In this issue, we also included a range of articles which we hope will inspire and interest our readers. This consists of a lovely account about Hazrat Maimuna (may Allah be pleased with her), wife of the

Holy prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) . We felt our readers would benefit from learning from her example.

Furthermore, we have included the personal account of the ups and downs of online teaching through the eyes of a teacher. The article sheds light on the responsibilities that educators have and at the same time, is a reminder of how hard teachers worked during the pandemic.

On the theme of education, there is an article on the wonders of science and how important it is in this day and age that our girls study the sciences and be of benefit to humanity and Islam.

The bond and love we should all have with our Khalifah is highlighted and beautifully presented in the article, 'Letters to the Khalifah- A unique kind of love'. We hope that our readers are reminded to write to Huzoor and always maintain their connection with our beloved Khalifah (may Allah be his Helper).

Our recipe and Health Matters page are a popular feature with our readers and in this issue, we are looking at the benefits of honey and how to make a delicious Oreo cake.

I hope and pray that you will find this issue useful and it will spiritually reinvigorate and enlighten you.

Please remember our magazine is online now and available to view on Lajna.org.uk. We humbly welcome any comments and suggestions which can be sent to secretary Isha'at UK. We hope these articles also inspire our readers to write their own articles so that we are able to publish them in future issues.

Jazakallah

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THE IMA'ILLAH



Hazrat Khalifatul – Masih V (may Allah strengthen his hand)

Address to the Ladies at

Jalsa Salana UK 2009

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ

نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿٧﴾ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ

عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٨﴾

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) writes in one of his books:

‘I have been sent to strengthen the faith of people and to prove the existence of God Almighty to them, because the faith of the people of every nation has become weak, and life after death is perceived as merely a myth. The conduct of every individual clearly shows that people have a great deal of faith and conviction in worldly means and resources, and nowhere near as much faith and conviction in God and the hereafter. Tongues profess much, but hearts are suffused with the love of

the world.’

(Kitab-ul-Bariyyah, Ruhani Khaza’in, vol. 13, pp. 291-292, footnote – Essence of Islam, vol. IV, p.110)

At the time of advent of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), the state of the world was that every God-fearing person who had even an iota of compassion for Islam in his/her heart, was praying for someone to take courage, arise, and save the sinking ship of Islam. Whenever the condition of the world declines to such a level, Allah sends His messengers, so that they can try and make people recognise their Creator. The Holy Qur’an has

described this situation:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ

‘Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what men’s hands have wrought...’ (30:42).

This means that the deeds of people have created disorder in the land and the sea. It was a time of chaos, great chaos indeed, which had engulfed the entire earth, when Allah the Exalted sent that Great Prophet [the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him] for the entire humankind, to put right the immense turmoil. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) has explained the words ‘sea and land’, ‘This signifies that People of the Book as well as those not given any Book, all had gone astray. All sorts of disorder and immoralities were common among them.’ (Malfuzat, vol 4, p 578)

Thus, the advent of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) occurred in such an era, and the world soon witnessed a great revolution brought about by him. Those who were at the utmost limit of associating partners with God became true worshippers of the One and Only God. Those with the lowest moral values became models of morality; those who had exceeded all limits of selfishness became perfect examples of sacrifice and champions of human rights. The violators of women’s rights transformed into defenders of women’s rights. The girl whose birth would turn the father ashen-faced, and whose arrival was considered shameful for the

family, - the father would be on the outlook for an opportunity to bury her alive - that very daughter became the glad - tiding of Heaven and was respected and cherished. The beneficiaries of this revolution included idol worshippers, Jews and Christians.

Their lives transformed completely after receiving this beneficence. The flag of Islam continued to fly high for as long as Muslims sought the true blessings of this teaching and performed good works, however, when they disregarded these teachings, then the inevitable decline ensued. Once again there was disorder in the world. The fate of the other religions was destined for annihilation anyhow, because their teachings had become out-dated and had been considerably altered. Even the Muslims were engaged in overt and covert Shirk (associating partners with Allah). As I have already said, it is the law of Allah the Exalted that when ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ

‘Corruption has appeared on land and sea...’ He raises His special people. Allah the Exalted sent the true servant of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to reform the world, and [sent him] to execute his role of ‘Allah’s champion’ and revive the glory and greatness of this religion for which our master and leader (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent to this world. Thus, as the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) declares in this statement, he was sent by Allah as a servant (subordinate) of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to complete the duties for which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent. The

Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) has himself explained the reasons for his advent. He said that he was sent to strengthen faith; to prove the existence of God to people; thirdly, [he was sent] to clarify the reality of the hereafter; fourthly, to turn the world to the worship of Allah instead of the worship of this world; fifthly, to eradicate the difference between words and actions, and sixthly, to draw attention towards performing good works.

These are the aspects that the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) has described in this quotation. When these aspects are generated one can identify with the purpose of one's creation. Only then can one be part of the true revolution that took place fourteen/fifteen hundred years ago from today, and which had revived those who had been [spiritually] dead for centuries. We Ahmadis are fortunate, that by accepting the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), and by taking his Bai'at (oath of allegiance), we declare to be amongst those who bring about the true spiritual revolution. Thus, today, we have a great responsibility to examine ourselves; that are we paying full attention towards fulfilling the objectives for which the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) was sent; and do we try to live our lives according to the teachings of Allah the Exalted brought to us by His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and which were comprehensively explained in this age by the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace)?

Thus come, and first of all, let us ascertain how strong our faith is. In reality, it is faith alone that brings

about nearness to Allah, instils belief in the hereafter and draws attention to discharge all the dues of Allah the Exalted and the dues towards His creatures. It motivates us to excel others in acts of virtuousness. It is not enough to imagine that, as we have believed in the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), and have accepted the Promised Mahdi, we are among the believers. This state of belief is explained in the Qur'an as قُولُوا أَسَلْنَا

... say, we have accepted Islam ...' (49:15) that you say that we have submitted to some extent, but faith is a step further than obedience. Faith develops when there is complete submission and man takes every action to seek the pleasure of Allah the Exalted. So, Allah the Exalted says indeed you say that you **'have accepted Islam'**, but Allah Almighty, Who knows the secrets of the hearts declares **'You have not believed yet'** (49:15), you have yet to pass through the various stages and levels of obedience and submission. Allah the Almighty states:

... for the true belief has not yet entered into your hearts ...' (49:15).

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) states, "Faith does not mean the simple verbal utterance that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. Faith is deep, profound and subtle; it is a state of belief that steers away passions of the self and creates an inner strength that burns away sin." (i.e. a state to burn down sin is generated).

(Malfuzat, vol 5, p 561)

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) states elsewhere:

‘There are only two signs of faith. The first degree is that man gives up sins and attains a state of mind in which sin appears equal to burning in fire or is [like] putting one’s finger in the mouth of a venomous snake, or is equal to drinking a hazardous bowl of poison. And (secondly), [one] becomes resolute on doing virtue with conviction of heart.’

(Malfuzat, vol 5, pp. 561-562)

What does doing something virtuous with conviction of heart entail? It is doing deeds that are in accordance with the commandments of Allah the Exalted and in concordance with the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Hence, this is the level of faith that the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) expects of us. Now, ponder and contemplate, read the Holy Qur’an and study what the commandments of Allah are.

In today’s society, due to worldly influences, some young men and young women feel that living in a constant religious ambience, and always listening to matters of Allah and His Prophet, is a monotony from which they should sometimes escape. They perceive it as fun, and entertainment that is necessary to relieve them of their tiredness; and such thoughts are becoming quite common. No doubt, recreation is important to relieve mental tiredness. However, if the entertainment is in stark contrast with the clear commandments of Allah the Exalted, then it is not ‘fun’. Rather, as explained by the Promised Messiah (on

whom be peace), it is like jumping in fire, or putting one’s finger in the mouth of a snake or drinking a bowl of poison.

Always bear in mind that faith in Allah the Exalted can only grow strong when one has firm belief that Allah is watching one all the time. Some ills take root because the perpetrator imagines that no one is watching over him/her and temporarily forgets that Allah the Exalted states

وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ •
‘... And Allah sees what you do.’ (2:266).

Therefore, the essence of faith in Allah the Exalted is that one performs every action with the fear of Allah in his/her heart. Take the example of the commandment of *pardah*. This commandment was not made so that it is only adhered to when attending Jalsa, or when coming to the mosque to attend other Community functions; neither was this commandment meant only for the occasion of *mula’qat* with me. Rather, Allah the Exalted has clearly stated and commanded the wives of believers:

‘...and the women of the believers that they should draw close to them portions of their loose outer coverings...’ (33:60).

This is the identity of the wives of believing men, and the wives of believing men are also believers. In matrimonial commandments, Allah the Exalted enjoins believing men to marry believing women, and to believing women it is commanded to marry believing men. Therefore, the commandment of *pardah* is not limited to any specific occasion.

On the contrary, *purdah* is an obligatory directive for every woman who has reached puberty, and who calls herself a believing woman, claims to obey Allah the Exalted and His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and who regards herself as a part of the Community of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace). Therein is also an instruction for men who ask their wives to remove their *purdah* because they are embarrassed to step out in society, lest they are considered backward for making their wives adhere to strict *purdah*. Here, in Europe, a furore is raised against *purdah* from time to time, with France being the main stage, from where most of these campaigns originate. In reaction, *purdah*-observing Muslims take to the streets in rallies. Most of the participants of these rallies, who appear with their faces covered, would often otherwise be seen walking around with their faces uncovered, and even dressed in immodest clothing; this is because they have no guidance. Theirs is a temporary zeal and passion, which is reactionary and only emerges as a response to the limitations imposed on the observance of *purdah*.

However, an Ahmadi woman and an Ahmadi girl, who has reached the age of *purdah*, must always remember that *purdah* is a part of her faith. This is one of the commandments of the Holy Qur'an. With the grace of Allah, most young Ahmadi women understand this reality. During the recent anti-*purdah* movement in France, an Ahmadi Waqfe Nau girl, who is studying for her Masters in journalism, wrote to a newspaper; that on the one hand Europe 'champions' personal and religious freedom, and on other hand, restrictions are called for on *purdah*,

which is a commandment of our religion. She explained that we, the *purdah*-observing women, accept it happily and consider it necessary to practice [*purdah*] in accordance with the commandment of God; she argued that this proves that the claims for personal freedom are only empty slogans and nothing more. A majority of Muslims do not observe *purdah* these days. Nowadays, even their clothes have become so revealing that at times it is embarrassing to watch certain television programmes; and these are women who are referred to as Muslims. This is what is meant by 'corruption on land and sea', that Muslims today are devoid of faith and devoid of Islam, but are still called Muslims.

However, an Ahmadi woman who has accepted the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) must always remember that she should not accept Ahmadiyyat merely for the sake of her parents' honour, or she must not feel that she has to be labelled an Ahmadi because she had the good fortune to be born in an Ahmadi household, and therefore she has no other choice but to declare herself an Ahmadi merely because her family is Ahmadi. Always be mindful that an Ahmadi woman must be aware of the teachings of Ahmadiyyat, she must understand the concept of the strengthening of faith. The mark of distinction of Ahmadis is that after accepting the *Bai'at* of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), they should strengthen their belief so much so that no worldly desire may deviate them from their faith, or lower their faith. It is the task of Ahmadi mothers to train their children in a manner that their foremost preference becomes to make every effort to have perfect belief in Allah the

Exalted and to seek His approval. This cannot happen until Ahmadi mothers also strive to raise their own belief to the highest of standards. The significance of 'Paradise lying beneath the feet of mothers', is that as long as the faith and fear of God in mothers is at its peak, and with their devout training, the faith of their children also remains progressive; otherwise, not every mother can be the 'glad-tiding of Paradise'. So, always remember that the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said, 'I have been sent to strengthen the faith'.

I gave this one example of *purdah* because the environment here affects young girls. In addition to this, there are numerous other examples. By 'here', I do not just mean women and girls in the UK, but also those living in Europe, America, Canada, as well as those in Africa and Asia. Whoever acts against the clear teachings and clear commandments of the Holy Qur'an, and is influenced by the Western environment or inappropriate and unrestrained society, demonstrates weak faith. Indeed, I now receive complaints even from Pakistan, that in some cities the attire of young girls is not such that they may be called Ahmadi. With the grace of Allah, the vast majority of people follow the laws of *Shariah*, but some girls from good Ahmadi families have not only discarded *Hijab*, but, at times, their clothing is also inappropriate.

By the grace of God, messages now reach the whole world directly through MTA. Therefore, whatever I say at a major event, I say with the Ahmadi from all over the world in mind. Always remember that it is a most erroneous

approach to think that because we have verbally asserted belief in all parts of our faith, no one can stop us from calling ourselves believers. This kind of thinking is absolutely wrong. Always remember that Satan first lures a person to minor fallacies and then leads him/her to bigger sins. Some young boys and girls think that there is no need to be concerned about lapses, such as boys and girls, who are outside the 'prescribed limits' for each other, roaming around shops alone together, or boys and girls arranging music and dance gatherings, and many other such vices; that these are trivial matters, and should not be stressed. They also think that because the Ahmadi environment disapproves of these matters, the Community is too strict about them.

Remember, these are all immoral acts that Islam categorically forbids. However, if they think in this manner, that because the Ahmadi environment disapproves of it, they may continue; and because no Ahmadi who would disapprove of such things can see them, and if no office-holder from whom there is a risk of a complaint being lodged, or any such person from whom there is a risk that he may complain, cannot see them, then continue to do whatever you like. This is the influence of the Western culture that a wrong, no matter how immoral, if done by consent and if it does not harm anyone else, does not matter. As I have said, if one believes in Allah the Exalted, to prove Whose existence the advent of Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) took place, then one can never think like this. As Allah the Exalted states, "I am watching over everything you do."

If before starting anything, however

small you may deem that task to be, you keep in mind that whatever you are about to do will be observed by Allah – and on the one hand, you claim to be an Ahmadi and on the other, you are thinking of doing something that the Ahmadi environment disapproves – certainly such things are forbidden in Islam and that is why they are disapproved of – if you think on these lines, then you will develop an aversion to immorality and will be attracted to do good works.

On the one hand the young people living in this so-called enlightened society of today claim that they are truthful and they do not hesitate from saying the truth; and on the other hand, they do not properly fulfil their *Bai'at*; what sort of truthfulness is this? Every young [Ahmadi] woman and man, and man and woman, proclaims that they will give precedence to faith over worldly matters, but then [conveniently] forget the teachings of their religion when it comes to joining in the unsavoury amusements and pastimes of the society. In some instances the whole family, together, young and old, including pre-adolescents, watch vulgar and frivolous programmes and movies on TV and the Internet, without appreciating that this is immoral. My analysis of marriage break-ups concludes that in the households where difficulties arise between boys and girls after marriage, the root cause of such marital difficulties is watching vulgar movies on the Internet and TV, and the free mixing and friendships between girls and boys. These activities lead to habits, which are incompatible with living a moral marital life. Therefore, a pious girl or boy, when married, and has to face such a situation, would seek

an end to the relationship.

Therefore, reflect and ponder, that on the one hand you claim to be an Ahmadi; you claim to have taken the *Bai'at* of the person who declared that he was sent to reform the world, who was sent to strengthen the faith, to connect people to God and to steer people towards good works; it is then very strange if someone performs deeds entirely contrary to this. Today, I am citing these matters particularly to women; to Lajna, because this is the responsibility of women, of those mothers who are nurturing children in their laps, that they make their children aware of what is good and bad from a very early age. Make your children understand from early childhood that we are Ahmadis, and why we are Ahmadis, and what the differences are between others and us.

Those who have not accepted the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) do not claim that they will turn mankind into God-worshipping people, or that they will gather them under the banner of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); but *we* claim that we will carry out this mission. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the young girls who are sitting in front of me not to let themselves become embroiled in worthless amusements, pastimes and filth. Save yourselves, as the responsibility of training the future generations will come upon you.

It is Allah's will that Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam, Insha'allah, will triumph in the world; this is the decree of Allah the Exalted and it is an unchangeable

decree. If you accept your responsibilities and aim to make a pious change in yourself and your progeny, then you will become a part of that destiny; and will be the recipients of heavens in this world and the hereafter. If not, other people will come forward to honour this responsibility.

In this connection, I also wish to remind parents, as I have done many times before, that they should continue to maintain a bond of love, affection and friendship with their children during adolescence as they do during their childhood. Daughters tend to be closer to their mothers; they should discuss everything with their mothers because they can. Mothers should cultivate so much confidence in their daughters that they can discuss anything with them.

Indeed, the responsibility of parents is to train and watch over both girls and boys; but paying greater emphasis on the training of girls has the benefit that it leads to better training of the future generations. I understand that, because of this, some girls have taken the wrong impression and have misgivings that their parents are more watchful over them and are lenient with the boys. If parents create this impression at home, then they are wrong. The training of boys is just as important for the future progress of the Community as is the training of girls. In certain matters, the training of boys requires input specifically from both the mother and the father, and that is how it should be; it is important. It was in light of the significance of the training of boys that the Promised Reformer (may Allah be pleased with him) had said that nations cannot be reformed without the

reformation of their youth. I believe that here both young men and young women are referred to. If fathers continue to relate religious matters in the house, the children stay focussed on religion. Many mothers bring to my attention that their sons are fine until the age of 14 or 15 and after that, they decline in their visits to the mosque and their other commitments to the Community also lessen. It is the job of fathers here to be watchful, but with love. The models of the parents themselves should be such that they make their children realise that the real life is what their parents are leading.

I say to those girls who feel that their parents are stricter and more watchful over them as compared to boys that they should always consider whether their parents are acting in their best interest or not. If you listen to what your parents say to you with this point of view, then apart from rare exceptions, most children will say that their parents have their best interest at heart; and this is borne out of the love that they have for their children.

Here, I would like to make one more point clear to young men, and I often say this to young people who forget their Islamic values, and especially Pakistani youth who forget their good cultural traditions; that they should cultivate confidence in themselves that Islamic teachings are indeed the best teachings, for as long as Muslims followed these teachings, they made progress in academia, and progressed in morals, and they ruled over the world; great governmental powers of the world were in awe of them. However, when they gave all this up,

they lost everything; knowledge, worldly respect and faith. This happened because they forgot the Islamic morals and values; they became embroiled in the vice of wine and women; they developed selfishness, deceit and duplicitousness. Women abandoned their honour and men stopped taking their responsibilities seriously. Allah has promised that the era of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) will bring about their reformation. It is the prophecy of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that there will be Khilafat after the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and with the system of Khilafat in place, the faith will also stay on the correct path. Allah has promised that He will establish the system of Khilafat among those who believe, and among those who do good works, are regular in Salat, pay Zakat, and obey the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, those who, out of some inferiority complex, will give up Islamic values to follow the wrong paths of the so-called progressive world, will belong neither to faith nor the material world.

Many men and women come to me having realised after some years that the worldly ways they had adopted, having thought that the freedom of this world was everything, had incurred them loss. They realise that they had been in the wrong and their cautioning elders had been right. So instead of realising it all at a later time, it is better that in line with God's commandments, His teachings are put in practice from now onwards. The teaching that resolved the disorder that had spread over land and sea 1500 years ago and according to Allah's promise will

resolve, and indeed is resolving the disorder in the latter-days.

The history of Ahmadiyyat is full of traditions where once they had accepted the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), drunkards and bribers reformed to become regular in five daily Prayers, in offering *Nawafil* (optional Prayers) and were ever on the lookout to do good works. It is the Grace of Allah the Exalted that today also, a vast majority of our Community is regular in their pursuit of such acts of virtue. I draw your attention to these matters, just like the *Khulafa* before me did, with the perspective that there should not remain a single person associated with the Community who, instead of developing virtues, is becoming more sinful. If I stress on a few matters rigorously, or am strict with some individuals, it is not because of any anger or infuriation; this is only and only because Allah the Exalted has made it one of my duties, that out of concern, I save every follower of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) from going into the mouth of snake, and [that I should] make an effort for this with heart-felt compassion. Now that we have found the era of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), [I am duty bound] to repeatedly remind everyone to tread those paths that, having joined his Community, honour the promise of *Bai'at*, so that we may gain the approval of Allah the Exalted.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) took the *Bai'at* of even an ordinary Ahmadi on the condition that '...he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only...' It is the requisite of sympathy that each

Ahmadi is sympathetic to the other Ahmadi, whereas this obligation is applicable the most on me. This is why I admonish you and pray that every Ahmadi woman, man, child and youth fulfils the expectations of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace).

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) stated, ‘The significance of a true community is not in simply doing *Bai’at* by placing one’s hand on another hand. Rather, a community is worthy of being called a true community when it puts the reality of *Bai’at* in practice. Truly, a pious change is generated in them and their life is completely purified from the contamination of sin. Having escaped the snare of satanic temptation and base desires they are utterly absorbed in the pleasure of God...having negated their own wishes, plans and longings they become God’s...’

He states, ‘Certainly, realise this that if there are no distinguishing factors between the people of the Community and the others, then no one is a relative of God. What could be the reason that they should be granted honour and are kept in all manner of protection and the others are disgraced and are seized in chastisement? *إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ* -

‘...Allah accepts only from the righteous’. (5:28). It is their sacrifices that are accepted, it is their prayers that are accepted. He states, ‘Those alone are the righteous who, out of fear of God, give up those matters which are against the will of God, who consider the self, base desires and the world and all that is in it naught compared to Allah the Exalted.’ He states, ‘Belief is identified at the time of

contending’.

(Malfuzat, vol 5, pp. 454-455)

Thus, we need to examine what the standards of our belief are; are the worldly customs overpowering our belief? Are the worldly pastimes and all the amusements which we consider fun influencing our belief? Are our claims and verbal assertions different from our practices? We, who consider ourselves adorned with worldly education and [maintain] that we call what is correct, correct and what is wrong, wrong, and do not hesitate from saying so; do we, in reality also put this into practice?

Thus, when the practice of examining oneself is formed, attention will also be drawn towards reformation.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) stated, “The people of our Community should be exemplary. If, after *Bai’at* one’s life is the same old impure and filthy life as before the *Bai’at* and a person who, having joined our Community, demonstrates a poor model or demonstrates weakness in practice and in belief, then he is a transgressor because he brings the entire Community in disrepute and also makes me a target for objection. A bad example causes hatred in others and a good example engenders inclination in people.”

(Malufuzat, vol 5, p 455)

Thus, this address of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) is for every person of the Community; every man, woman, young, old and child. Women should not perceive that only men are being addressed here. To

establish a pure society, women should try to work harder than men because they are the guardians of their husbands' homes; they are the hub of the training of the next generation and are the trustees of the trust of the Community in the form of children under their care. Therefore, I say to women that they should honour their dues as the guardians of their homes, honour the dues of the next generation rightly and honour the dues of being the trustees of the trust of the Community. These dues can be honoured only if they strive to fulfil the *Bai'at* of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and comprehend the real objective of his *Bai'at*.

Similarly, I say to girls, who having passed the age of fifteen years, are influenced by this society, which is surrounded by confusion, [and who] forget their individuality, forget their status and forget their sanctity; understand your status and sanctity. The model of the Waaqfat e Nau should be excellent as they have offered themselves for the service of their faith. The girls who are not Waaqfat e Nau should not think that the Community ignores them. Each girl of the Community has sanctity and it is your duty to uphold it.

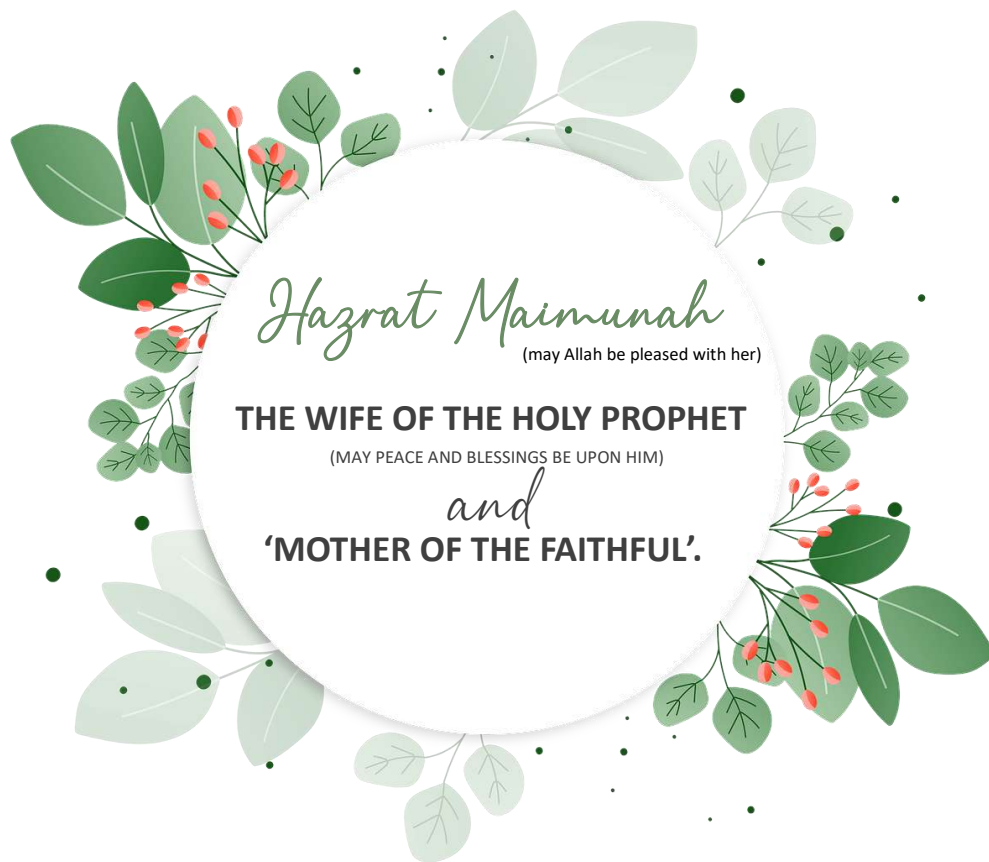
Thus, each Ahmadi girl has a status and each Ahmadi should recognise this status. Due to the pious example of many Ahmadi girls who understand this fact, other Muslim and Non-Muslim girls from their peer-groups, who have a bond with them, in turn develop a connection with the

Community and eventually join the Community by doing *Bai'at*. So, understand the reality that this alone will gain you Allah's pleasure. Instead of running after worldly desires, try to attain the pleasure of Allah the Exalted and continue to strengthen your bond with Him. Also, pray profusely that you are granted good fortune and that you may stay firm on performing virtuous deeds. If you develop a special bond with Allah the Exalted, Allah grants acceptance, so that the next generation that is nurtured by you may also have a special bond with Allah the Exalted. This upbringing and bond with Allah will be a source of opening up the doors of Paradise for both mothers and children. May Allah enable us all to bring about pious changes in ourselves and do good works, so that we may continue to be the recipients of Allah's Paradise.



Address from: Responsibilities of Ahmadi women.
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BY MUNAVARA GHAURI - BOURNEMOUTH

Each and every wife of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) demonstrated an exemplary and virtuous character which set them apart from other women. Indeed, they were known as the *Ummahatul Momineen* or 'Mothers of the Faithful', as they were spiritual role models for the believing women who courageously accepted Islam at its inception. All the wives chose a life of austerity and sometimes great hardship above a life of luxury. In Ch.33 Vs.29 -30 of the Holy Quran, an incident is mentioned in which the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave his wives a choice between 'a life of this world' in which case he would divorce them and send them away handsomely with material assets or else a life of self-sacrifice, one in which they would please their Creator, His Messenger and would gain the 'Home of the

Hereafter'. All the wives chose to relinquish the material joys of this world and to stay with the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Hazrat Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the youngest wife of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), has related the extreme simplicity of their lives:

*'Each one amongst us (the wives of the Holy Prophet) did not have more than one (pair) of clothes.'*¹

This illustrates the exceedingly high moral and spiritual levels of all the *Ummahatul Momineen*. Now, I would like to reflect upon Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her), the last wife of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and perhaps a less well-known

personality from the early Islamic era. Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) was the daughter of Hind bint Auf and Harith and belonged to the Banu Hilal branch of the Quraish tribe.² She was one of eight sisters. Her mother became widely respected for being blessed with the unique distinction of incredibly honourable and virtuous sons-in-law. They were to include not only the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but also Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him), the first spiritual successor (khalifa) of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The two uncles of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) - Hazrat Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) and Hazrat Hamzah (may peace be upon him) and the Holy Prophet's (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) two cousins, Hazrat Jaffar (may peace be upon him) and Hazrat Ali (may peace be upon him) also became her sons-in-law.³ Furthermore, Hazrat Maimunah's (may Allah be pleased with her) sister, Lababa al Sughra, was blessed to be the mother of Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed (may Allah be pleased with him), who became the esteemed Commander of the Muslim army.⁴

Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) married the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in March 629 (7 AH) at the age of 26. They married at a place called Sarif, 7 miles outside of Mecca. Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) had already been married twice previously. Her first husband, Masud bin Umair, divorced her, whilst her second husband, Abu

Ruham bin Abdul Uzza, passed away. Hazrat Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), the brother-in-law of Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her), approached the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and expressed his concern for his widowed sister-in-law. Hazrat Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) was also the paternal uncle of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) graciously accepted his uncle's suggestion to marry Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her).⁵

Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) belonged to the Banu Hilal tribe of Ahl Najd who were fierce opponents of Islam. They had ruthlessly killed 70 Muslim Haffaz⁶ whom they had requested to be sent to their tribe under false pretences.⁷ Hazrat Maimunah's (may Allah be pleased with her) sister was married in the family of the chief of this tribe. Thus, by this marriage with the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) a great blessing occurred as relations between this tribe and the Muslims became peaceable.

Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) received her name from the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) after marriage. Previously, she had been called Barraah.⁸ After the wedding, she came to live in one of the rooms of Masjid Nabwi in Medina, where the Holy Prophet's (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) other wives also resided. Here, Hazrat Maimunah lived a very blessed and

simple life. None of the wives of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) owned any significant jewellery.

In the Holy Quran, the *'Mothers of the Faithful'* were warned by Allah the Almighty that because of their unique positions, they would be doubly punished (Ch.33 V.31).

Likewise, if they obeyed Allah and the Prophet of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), they would be doubly rewarded:

'But whoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Messenger and does good works, We shall give her her reward twice over; and WE have prepared for her an honourable provision.'

(Ch.33 V.32)

Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) was an embodiment of such dignity and virtue. She prayed a great deal. She had heard from the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that it was very meritable to pray in Masjid Nabwi, so she endeavoured to pray there regularly and she also encouraged other ladies to do so⁹. She especially cared for the poor and needy and would even take loans to help them. Once, someone in her household commented negatively about this practice of hers and she responded with the words of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that she had heard:

'When a Muslim takes a loan and he has full trust that Allah will repay it, then Allah Almighty organises for it to be paid through His heavenly treasures.'¹⁰

Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) also loved to free slaves. On one occasion, when she freed a female slave the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed for her saying, *'May Allah reward you for this.'*¹¹

Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) had a sharp memory and related 76 Ahadith. She experienced the blessed company of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as his wife, for the final 3 years of his life. She described the beautiful conduct of this 'excellent model'¹² of Islam, as a man who showed great love and kindness, who overlooked the small faults of others and who attempted to reform his family in a soft manner.¹³ A testimony to the fact that the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) were a close and loving couple is that during her final illness, Hazrat

Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) requested to be buried where she had first met and married the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) more than four decades earlier, at Sarif on the outskirts of Mecca.

The piety of Hazrat Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) was beautifully and candidly expressed by Hazrat Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) in a tribute to her after her passing:

‘By God, Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) has departed from this world. Of all of us she was the most God-fearing and the best at fulfilling the rights of her relatives.’¹⁴

May Allah Almighty exalt the station of this inspirational lady in Paradise and help us to follow the virtuous ways of the *Ummahatul Momineen*.

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Tolerance in Islam **AS COMPARED TO WESTERN BELIEFS**

BY NABEELA SOHAIL - ROEHAMPTON VALE

As the UN's International Day of Tolerance is annually marked on the 16th of November, this article compares the western secular views of tolerance as compared to the Islamic viewpoint and that of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Islam.

The dictionary definition of tolerance suggests that it is *'the ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behaviours that one dislikes or disagrees with.'*¹ The United Nations is adamant to improve the levels of tolerance throughout the world to fit in with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nation's Charter. The importance of educating the population about tolerance is now even more important due to the rise in terrorism, extremism, racism, and violence globally. UNESCO's Declaration of Principles on Tolerance states that *'tolerance is respect and appreciation of the rich variety of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and our ways of being human.'*² Thus, tolerance in secular terms is considered trying to increase the awareness of all cultures, to reduce the amount of hate that many minorities experience on a daily basis and to increase the acceptance of all cultures, races and religions.

The Islamic view of tolerance is very similar to this new secular western viewpoint, despite all the negative media coverage suggesting that Islam is an oppressive and highly intolerant religion. To begin understanding the Islamic viewpoint on tolerance, one must understand the true fundamentals of the religion. The word 'Islam' in Arabic translates to 'peace'. So, a religion that is fundamentally built on the principal idea of peace, should be expected to uphold values of tolerance and acceptance, and should not encourage racist, negative mindsets towards other cultures and religions. This is the true Islamic concept, despite a small minority of radical and extremist people who are using Islam to shield the truth about their personal intolerant, violent and unacceptable beliefs. Sadly, the media coverage focuses on these small minorities and uses them to label Islam as non-tolerant without understanding the true beliefs and fundamental concepts of this peaceful religion.

In Islamic history, there are many examples of its tolerant values, but the greatest example was the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. This was demonstrated in his Farewell Sermon, which was the final sermon that he delivered before his death. In 632AD, the Holy Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) preached ***‘Allah has made you brethren one to another, so be not divided. An Arab has no preference over a non- Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; nor is a white one to be preferred to a dark one, nor a dark one to a white one.’***³

In a time when tolerance was not even a concept, the messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is seen to be preaching values that are especially applicable to the modern world today. It illustrates how forward-thinking the religion of Islam truly was. In his Farewell Sermon, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) clearly states that Islam is not a religion for racist, non-tolerant views and that no man, regardless of their culture, race or religion, is superior to any other. These Islamic views are spreading the same message of tolerance and acceptance just as the UN has been promoting this message from its foundation in 1945, when these concepts were not common in all nations. Islam teaches its followers to be more openminded and accepting of all religions and cultures, rather than discriminating against others of different beliefs, UNESCO’s Declaration of Principles on Tolerance has mirrored these principles which were already part of the teaching of Islam.⁴

Additionally, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper), the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, regularly expresses and highlights that Ahmadi Muslims should demonstrate tolerance, acceptance and forgiveness in their everyday lives. In his Address at the Foundation Stone Ceremony of Baitul Mujeeb Mosque in Brussels (2011) Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) said, ***‘All the religions of the world are in need of religious harmony, and all the people of the world need a spirit of love, affection and brotherhood to be created.’***⁵ This clearly illustrates that the true Islam as expounded by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, is a religion of peace, acceptance and tolerance and its views have been adopted by secular, western beliefs of tolerance.

The world is in a state of despair and is in dire need of empathic people now more than ever. Tolerance is something that we can all incorporate into our lives to become more accepting and benevolent people and to break down the barriers of prejudice and to make the world a brighter place.

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Saved by My belief

BY RIZWANA LONE - GILLINGHAM

I'm in my bed alone and crying,
Why do I feel like I'm slowly dying?

Slowly, slowly ever so slowly,
I feel like this feeling is breaking me.

A wave of sadness sweeps over my body,
Enveloping me entirely not letting me be.

Suddenly, I get this voice in my head,
My child you are not alone, get out of bed.

So I get up, slowly but surely,
One step at a time but moving barely.

I must stay strong I know I can do this,
All the negativity inside me do I dismiss.

I splash the water while I perform ablution,
Oh voice inside me is the solution?

I prostrate before Him, cry and pray,
And what seems like an eternity in sajda I stay.

Then it comes, the overwhelming feeling of relief,
I'm so glad, so lucky I have my belief.

O Allah protect me and make me stronger,
As I cannot go on like this any longer.

So my message to all you beautiful sisters today
Is, no matter how hard things get, never forget to pray!



MY REMOTE LEARNING JOURNEY

A Teacher's Perspective

BY WAJEEHA BAJWAH - BIRMINGHAM

A few months before the full force of the pandemic hit the UK, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be his Helper) gave an inspiring address at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, in which he highlighted the significant role education plays in the betterment of society.¹ Huzoor's awe-inspiring words were a reminder that it was Islam that had brought about, not just a spiritual revolution, but also a period of intellectual enlightenment. The key factor in this was education. Huzoor explained: "The Holy Quran itself has signified the importance of education by teaching the prayer: 'O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.' Where this prayer is a source of great help to Muslims, it also inspires them towards learning and advancing the cause of human knowledge."²

Indeed, the first instruction from Allah to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was "Iqra" (read) emphasising the central role learning was going to have in the world.³

Huzoor's (may Allah be his Helper) words couldn't have been more timely as it was a reminder to educators of the vital role they play in



their communities, especially as the world of education was about to change so drastically.

In early spring 2020, the UK government took the unprecedented action of closing schools in order to control the spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus. This represented a huge pedagogical change for educators across the country. Teaching, as we knew it, had to be altered. It was imperative that the education of children continued, but the approach had to be radically different. Whilst children of key workers were permitted to attend school, the large majority of children were now going to have to learn from their homes. Teachers were suddenly thrust into an unknown world of Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom, thus beginning the uncharted journey of remote learning for children and students across all age ranges.

Following this announcement, it was incredulous that many people believed that teachers were getting extra holidays! I recall a visit to my local butchers. Knowing that I am a primary school teacher, the butcher remarked, "Schools are closed again, you must be enjoying the break." I was stunned - nothing could be further from the truth!

Teaching was in no way at a halt and teachers were in no way in holiday mode. On the contrary, they were digesting and learning new skills as schools approached remote teaching in different ways. Some schools, concerned about the amount of screen time virtual learning would entail, opted to email work daily or send paper-based learning through the post. Others expected teachers to provide online lessons, the regularity of which varied from school to school. Online teaching could involve either posting pre-recorded lessons for children to utilise in their own time or providing live online lessons.

As a Reception teacher, I am responsible for the education of thirty 4-5 year-olds. Initially the teachers at my establishment were expected to post pre-recorded material, after which we moved on to daily live online lessons. This was indeed a challenging time for educators. Younger, more tech-savvy teachers were at an advantage as their grasp of technology was evidently superior. But many of these teachers provided much needed support to their less confident counterparts, whilst also supporting the now strained school IT department. This 'in it together' attitude went a long way in supporting the

mental health and wellbeing of the teachers.

The pressures teachers faced was not just because they had to very quickly acquire new digital skills, the style of teaching had to change too. The importance of eye-contact with students or encouraging peer learning and physical social interaction, had to be shelved. This was particularly challenging for my year group as the Early Years classroom relies heavily on play-based learning and developing these physical social interactions. Needless to say, teachers recognised that learning would now be a lonely affair which would naturally affect the motivation and engagement of children.



The sudden shift from the physical to virtual classroom meant that teachers had to effectively 'learn on the job.' This was definitely another challenging aspect of online teaching as, it was not just children that were now participating in the virtual lessons, but parents too were observing and even contributing to what and how their children were being taught. Consequently many educators found the prospect of parents in their classroom daunting, feeling that they were being put on display and their teaching was under scrutiny - a job not too dissimilar to that of a YouTuber or TV presenter.

Despite this, many educators rose to the challenge, including parents in their virtual classrooms and took the opportunity to strengthen teacher-parent relationships. Furthermore, parents no longer needed to ask "What did you do at school today?" They could now see for themselves. Alongside this, was the newfound appreciation of the teaching profession as parents realised the amount of work that goes into planning and delivering a lesson, particularly in the Early Years, which is largely deemed to be a babysitting service where 'all they do is play.'

This online journey had its highs and lows. Sometimes there was frustration that not all children were being reached, either due to lack of engagement by parents, online learning just not being suitable for children's learning styles or simply because children did not have access to laptops or the internet. However, at other times, there was joy

when children were showing improvement and the online lessons were still imparting the teaching and learning that they required.

On many occasions, I was comforted by the saying of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon on him) that it is a fine act of charity when a Muslim seeks knowledge and then teaches it to another Muslim, and that when people have knowledge of something they should impart it to others and if they do not know about something they should say; '*Allaho Alam*', that is to say Allah knows all.⁴

There were also times when, despite being given every support possible, parents were not supporting their children and the lack of engagement of some children filled me with frustration, but I recalled these words from the Holy Qur'an:

And it is by the *great* mercy of Allah that thou art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough *and* hard-hearted, they would surely have dispersed from around thee.

(Ch 3:160)⁵

Keeping these guidelines in mind, I persevered and endeavored to do my job with positivity and cheerfulness knowing that through kindness and tenderness I could build strong relationships with both children and parents. I was determined to use my God-given abilities to be of service to humanity as stipulated in the ninth condition of Ba'ait:

***'That he shall have sympathy for all of God's creatures, and devote his talents to their welfare.'*⁶**

Next time I visit my butcher, I might just need to elaborate on my year of online teaching and tell him how hard teachers have worked to continue educating the children of the community, and who have had many a sleepless night worrying about whether their class is continuing to get the education that they deserve and need. When schools reopened in March, I was overjoyed to have my class back and see them face to face, and hear their laughter and their chatter. Hearing from the parents that the connection with teachers during lockdown through online teaching was invaluable, has made everything seem worthwhile.

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Health Benefits of Honey



"And thy Lord has inspired the bee, saying, 'Make thou houses in the hills and the trees and in the trellises which they build...' 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." (16:69-70)

Several studies have shown that honey may improve your cholesterol levels. It reduces total and "bad" LDL cholesterol while significantly raising "good" HDL cholesterol.

Honey has been used to heal burns and wounds since ancient Egypt. A review of 26 studies on honey and wound care found honey most effective at healing partial-thickness burns and wounds that have become infected after surgery.

Research has shown that raw honey can kill unwanted bacteria and fungus. It naturally contains hydrogen peroxide, an antiseptic.

In general, the darker the honey, the better its antibacterial and antioxidant power.

Studies show that Manuka honey can boost healing time and reduce infection. Manuka honey is used in medical settings to treat wounds because it's been found to be an effective germ killer and also aids in tissue regeneration.

Honey can help suppress coughs in children. One study found that honey reduced cough symptoms and improved sleep more than cough medication. However, researchers advise that honey is not suitable for children under the age of one years old.

High-quality honey contains many important antioxidants, which have been linked to reduced risk of heart attacks, strokes and some types of cancer.

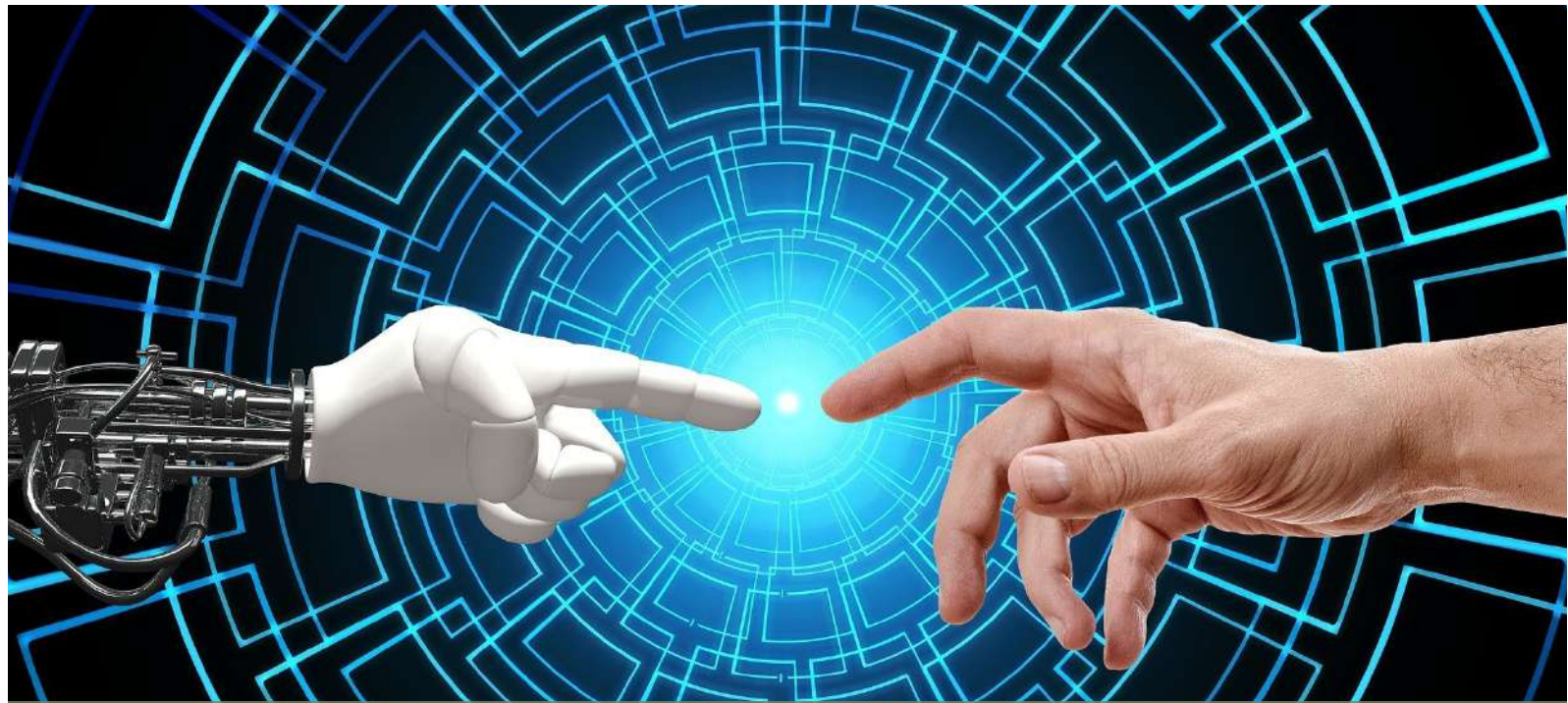


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Curiouser & Curiouser

THE QUEST FOR SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

BY FARIDA AHMED - SURBITON

IN the 21st Century, rapid advancements in science and technology continue to transform the world in unimaginable ways, so that things that previously belonged to the realms of science fiction have now seamlessly blended into our everyday lives; think bar codes, mobile phones, silicon chips, electric cars, satellites. Room sized computers of the 1970's have been transformed beyond belief and pocket sized phones, smaller than the once innovative Sinclair pocket calculator, can do the work of a phone, computer, camera and television combined, and still be taken anywhere! Much of this goes unnoticed, given that the younger generations have a propensity to take to new technology like a duck to water, and probably give little thought to how all this became possible.

The last 30 years has seen the coding of the human genome, giant strides in artificial technology and medical research, deep space exploration and a digital revolution. Vintage science fiction stories that envision manned missions to Mars begin to appear tantalizingly within grasp, while the Mars Rover, 'Perseverance' has recently landed on the red planet after a seven month voyage, and is currently transmitting extraordinary images back from the surface!

All these advancements have come at a cost and, with the rapid globalization and innovations over the past decades, young people face a myriad of problems that will impact their very near future. Many of these are science related; whether it is the depletion of resources including water, the deleterious effects of climate change on sea levels, weather and world agriculture, the imminent threat of war, or even as we are witnessing currently, the proliferation of new and deadly viruses (which have been linked to depletion of habitat). Ironically at the same time science is expected to come up with solutions for just about everything!

In this advanced scientific age, it is tempting to imagine that large numbers of young people will be drawn to studying science, delving into its mysteries and helping to solve world problems. Unfortunately, evidence suggests otherwise; while primary school children are reported to find science enjoyable and fun, interest in the subject seems to drop off in secondary school. Ironically, this is happening at a time when science skills are increasingly required on a national level, and universities profess concern over the falling uptake of certain science subjects and a lack of science and technical skills in future generations.¹ If we look a little deeper, sciences have the reputation of being ‘hard’ or academic, and even inaccessible.

In other circles the so called ‘rift’ between religion and science is also highlighted for other reasons, mainly to promote atheism as an alternative to religion. For certain people religion is simply a toxic force that cannot tolerate the rational inspection of science.² However, if we look towards Islam it is clear there is no contradiction between Islam and science; according to the Holy Quran and hadith, the search and acquisition of knowledge, both spiritual and secular, is the obligation of every Muslim man and woman.³

In his book, (Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth, 1998), the fourth Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) has completely refuted any claim of conflict in religion and science. For example Huzoor (may Allah have mercy on him) outlines the Quranic account of the origin of life and its consequent evolution, and explains that all of the verses are supported by scientific evidence; he invites the reader to contemplate the verses, saying

“We believe this will lead the reader to a world of wonders, far more intriguing than the story of Alice in wonderland... It is a real land of wonders and mysteries of the creation of God, the Unique, the Peerless.”⁴

Similarly, Professor Abdus Salam, an Ahmadi Muslim and the first Muslim Nobel laureate (Physics, 1979), states;

“As a scientist, the Quran speaks to me in that it emphasizes reflection on the Laws of Nature, with examples drawn from cosmology, physics, biology and medicine, as signs for all men.”⁵

Despite such clear Quranic teachings and glorious scientific achievements of the golden era of Islam, the Muslim world has suffered centuries of neglect in science and is lagging sadly behind. Speaking of this, Jim Al –Khalili writes;

“Muslim countries also have fewer than 10 scientists, engineers and technicians per 1000 of the population, compared with the world average of 40, and 140 for the developed world.”⁶

However, as Ahmadi Muslims, we are incredibly fortunate. Our beloved Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) has repeatedly emphasised the role of education for both girls and boys, (UNESCO, 2019).⁷

Additionally, Huzoor (may Allah be his helper) has outlined a clear objective for Ahmadi girls; to pursue academic excellence and achieve the highest stations in science and research; for the noble cause of serving mankind:

“If we produce the best scientists in various fields, then the world will not only turn to Ahmadis to seek religious knowledge, but Ahmadis will also be in the forefront of secular knowledge.”⁸

On reflection it is a truly exciting time for Ahmadi girls to study science, with amazing possibilities ahead! It is true that entry into the world of science may seem challenging, but it is an entry into a very privileged world; complete with sub atomic particles, waves, cells, enzymes, stellar evolution, black holes; fantastical shapes and colours, and amazing instruments that allow us to see things that no human eye ever saw before. All such marvels can bring students of science closer to their Creator, when they ponder over His signs, and help in their noble cause to serve mankind!

“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding; Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and *lying* on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: “Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; *nay*, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.”⁹

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Letters to the Khalifa



A UNIQUE KIND OF LOVE

BY FEZIA HAQ - FAZAL MOSQUE

“The revival of Islam demands a ransom from us.” In his book ‘Victory of Islam’, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) outlined 5 ways in which he had been propagating the teachings of Islam as well as attempting to reform mankind. He explored the state of the world, religion and the spread of Christianity. In doing so, he explained what needed to be done to revive Islam. As such, the fourth branch of his grand task for this purpose was correspondence through letters. Huzoor (peace be upon him) wrote:



“It is estimated that during the past years, over ninety-thousand letters must have been received and duly responded to...This work also continues unabated.”¹

Reading this, I felt amazed at how much time and effort the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and subsequently his Khulafa, have put into being readily available for us ordinary humans. Alongside leading prayers, the publication of books and leaflets, meeting members of the Jamaat, answering queries and initiating outreach tasks amongst other laborious activities, they have taken precious time out of their days to respond to our letters.

Our spiritual and divinely-inspired leaders have truly sacrificed a great deal for the sake of our spiritual, moral and personal wellbeing, and in turn, the state of Islam.

The Second Khalifah of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) - Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) stated regarding the relationship which a Khalifah has with his followers:



“You have someone who has true sympathy for you; who truly loves you; who considers your pain and sufferings to be his own; and who is always praying to Allah for you.”²



It is hard to imagine what life would be like if we could not communicate with our Khalifah, our guide, through these letters. To this day, Ahmadi Muslims all over the world partake in the age-old tradition of letter-writing, at a time when emails and text messages are increasingly superseding this practice.

As a community which has members all over the globe, meeting the Khalifah is not always a possibility for everyone. Issues with finance, transport, health, laws and more recently, the global pandemic, have hindered physical contact. However, the blessed system of writing letters to the Khalifah continues despite our Khalifah's (may Allah be his Helper) unceasing tasks. We can communicate with him by notating a letter, whether typed or handwritten, personally or by someone on our behalf. Any response received from the Khalifah is cherished by millions, and has a deep and lasting impact.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) noted the importance of staying in touch

with the pious – something which is evident from the relationships between past Prophets and their companions. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) said:



“At times it is as if the prayer is not being accepted; there is one thing that can be done on such occasions. One should ask some very pious person to pray and then he himself should pray to God that He may hear the prayer of that pious person...I have experienced it myself and it has been happening in the case of many people before me, as well.”³

Writing letters has been around for centuries, from the time when ink was used on Papyrus in Egypt. However, no such activity can compare to writing letters to our spiritual father (may Allah be his Helper), who is the representative of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), who himself was the representative of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In writing these letters, we preserve some very precious memories and acquire great gems of wisdom.

Maybe because of the benefits which such letter-writing has, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) considered such correspondence to be essential for the community, both on a personal and a societal level.

This is one out of a myriad of blessings that Allah Almighty has given to the members of this Jamaat. It is an opportunity allowing us to practice a traditional form of communion that makes distances shorter and difficulties easier. May Allah Almighty continue to help and strengthen the hand of our beloved Imam who works tirelessly, and enable us to meet and exceed his expectations. Āmīn

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RECIPE

Chocolate OREO Cake

BY SAJEDA ZAFAR WANDSWORTH TOWN

TIPS

- ⇒ For best results, use room temperature ingredients.
- ⇒ For added decoration, melt some dark chocolate and drizzle over the top or to make a drip.
- ⇒ You can crush some Oreos for decoration and to add a crunch.

INGREDIENTS

1. Margarine 225g
2. Granulated sugar 225g
3. Eggs 4
4. Self-raising flour 175g
5. Cocoa powder 50g
6. Butter 250g
7. Icing sugar 500g
8. Vanilla extract 1 tsp
9. Oreo biscuits 1 packet

METHOD

1. Pre heat the oven to 150°C
2. Using an electric whisk, beat the margarine and granulated sugar together.
3. Once fully combined, add the eggs and mix again.
4. Finally add the flour and mix until fully incorporated and smooth.
5. Line two 8" baking pans with parchment paper and divide the batter between the two pans.
6. Smooth the tops and place in the oven in the middle shelf and bake for 30 minutes.
7. Once baked, place them onto a cooling rack to cool completely.
8. To make the buttercream, it is best to use a stand mixer, but a hand-held electric whisk will also work.
9. Place the soft room temperature butter into the mixer and whisk for about 2 minutes until pale in colour and smooth.
10. Add the icing sugar and vanilla and begin mixing on a slow speed at first, then turn up the speed.
11. If the icing seems too stiff, add milk, one table spoon at a time until you reach the desired consistency
12. This buttercream is enough to fill and cover the cake as well as having some left over for piping designs on the top.
13. The Oreo biscuits are for decoration on the top. They can also be added on top of the buttercream between the two sponge layers.

This recipe will make a two layered 8" round cake

THE WORN HAT

Thousands of people are seen in every age who attained the nearness of God Almighty by following the Holy Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and benefited others from their blessings.

Once, during the time of Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the Caesar developed a severe headache. Despite all kinds of treatments, he was not cured. Someone advised him to write his situation to Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and ask him for benediction and have some relic brought.



He will pray for you and will also send you benediction,” he was advised. “You will certainly be cured by his prayer.

Caesar sent his ambassador to Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) thought,



These are haughty people. He would not have come to me, but now that he has a problem, he has sent his ambassador to me. If I send something of significance, he may not use it thinking it to be inferior. So I should send him something which may be used as a benediction but which would also remove his haughtiness.

He therefore sent him one of his old hats as benediction. The hat had marks on it and was discoloured due to weathering.

When Caesar saw the cap, he felt uncomfortable and he did not wear the hat. But Allah, the Exalted, wanted to show him that at that time he could attain blessings only through Muḥammad, the Prophet of God, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.) He had such a severe headache that he asked his servants to bring the

hat sent by Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) so that he could put it on his head. He put the hat on his head and his headache went away. He used to have the headache every few days. So it became usual for him to sit in the court donning that soiled hat of Hazrat Umar, (may Allah be pleased with him).

This sign, which Allah, the Almighty, showed him, had another matter hidden in it. A companion of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was imprisoned by Caesar. He gave orders that he should be fed pig-meat. The companion however, accepted starvation and did not go near the bacon. After many days of fasting, when he was about to die, Caesar gave him bread. When he had gained some strength, he again ordered him to be fed pig-meat. He neither let him die nor live.

Someone said to him,



You have this headache because you have imprisoned that Muslim. Its remedy is that you request Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) to pray for you and send for benediction from him.

When Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) sent him the hat and his headache subsided; he was so impressed that he released that companion of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Now observe that a Caesar hurts a companion, and Allah, the Exalted, initiates pain in his head as a punishment. Someone else advises him to send for benediction from Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and requests him to pray. Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) sends the benediction, and the headache goes away.

In this way, Allah, the Almighty, creates circumstances for the release of the Companion and manifests the truth of Muḥammad, Prophet of God (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).



Points to Ponder-Stories and Anecdotes

Related by Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad (1889-1965), The Promised Reformer

Collected by: 'Aṭā'ullāh

Translated into English by: Syed Sājid Aḥmad