

THE FIRST ISLAMIC MISSION IN THE U.K. ESTABLISHED 1913 C.E. AS THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (U.K.)

Dar-us-Salaam, 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, HA0 4JQ, U.K.

Imam & Head of Mission 020 8903 2689 President 020 8524 8212

Secretary 01753 692654 Book Depot 020 8903 2689

Fax 0870 131 9340 E-mail aaii@saziz.globalnet.co.uk

www.islamic-book-depot.org.uk and www.aaii.org/uk

Next Meeting

Assalamu alaikum

Venue: *Dar-us-Salaam*

Date: Sunday, 1st August 2004

Time: 3 pm

Speaker: Dr Zahid Aziz

Please make every effort to attend and be on time.

Regular Activities

Dars-i Quran/Hadith: Every Friday at 2:30 pm.

Meeting of the Executive: First Sunday of every month at 2 pm.

Meeting of the Jamaat: First Sunday of every month at 3 pm.

Contents

News Page 1

Sanctity of Human Life

By Ms Sarah Ahmad Page 2

Promotion & Interpretation of the Holy Quran & the Ahmadiyya Movement By

Maulana Kamal Hydel Page 3

Message from Hazrat Ameer

Professor Dr Abdul Karim Saeed

"Say: If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you, and grant you protection from your sins. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger; but if they turn back, Allah surely loves not the disbelievers" (Holy Quran 3: 31-32).

Dear Members of the Jama'at,

Assalamu 'Alaikum.

The verses cited above emphasise that to love or get closer to Allah one has to obey the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). Obeying the Holy Prophet is

following the word of Allah and the practice of the religion in the truest spirit. This practice helps develop a bond between the human soul and its Creator. The lives of all the companions of the Holy Prophet show how their devotion and love transformed their lives and they rose to great spiritual heights and nearness to Allah. Such a transformation was also experienced by the Reformer of the present times, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani. By devoting his life to the teachings of Islam and showering all his love upon the Holy Prophet, he attained the spiritual height where Allah chose him to be the Reformer of the fourteenth century as well as the Promised Messiah and the Promised Mahdi.

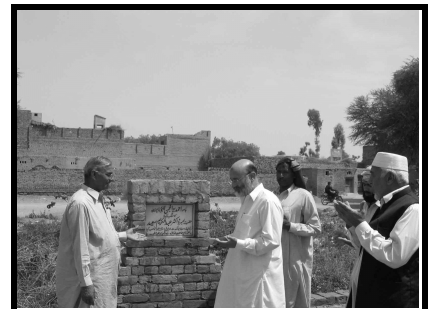
This year, Muslims all over the world celebrate the birth of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) in the month of May. Through this message I would like to remind readers that in the life of the Holy Prophet there is the perfect example for us to follow; and in the life of the Reformer we have an example of how Allah showers His love and blessings upon anyone

who loves and follows the Holy Prophet. Let us all resolve to draw nigh to Allah by obeying the Holy Prophet and adhering to his teachings, and renew our resolve to spread the light of Islam to the corners of the world.

The Centre

A Worthy Achievement of the Okara Jama'at

The hub of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Jama'at of Okara, Pakistan is the Toka family. The founder of the family, Hafiz Mohammad Bakhsh, visited Qadian at a very young age



Hazrat Amir, Prof. Aziz, Secretary General, and others saying prayers after dedicating the land donated to the Central Anjuman.

and took the *bai'at* [pledge] at the hand of the Promised Messiah. The family originally belonged to Jalandhar in India but moved to the Okara area in 1914 as settlers to develop the new canal-irrigated colonies. The family had a very close association with the family of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali. The Toka family has always been involved in the activities of the *Jama'at*. Scions of the family include Professor Aziz Ahmad, Central Anjuman's General Secretary, and Chaudhry Riaz Ahmad, the present *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque, Germany.

11 April 2004 will go down as a red-letter day in the history of the Okara *Jama'at*. Hazrat Ameer Dr Abdul Karim Saeed, together with six delegates, including three ladies, visited the *Jama'at* to solemnise two auspicious events – completion of ***hifz-i-Quran* by Amna Hayee and dedication of two kanals (about 1,200 sq yards) of land to the Central Anjuman.**

Amna Hayee, daughter of Chaudhry Abdul Hayee, is the great-grandniece of Hafiz Mohammad Bakhsh. She suspended her regular studies in class 5 to take up *hifz-i-Quran* (memorisation of the Holy Quran). *Masha Allah*, she has memorised the whole of the Holy Quran in a short period of three years. She is only 14 years old. A large number of family and *Jama'at* members had gathered to celebrate the occasion. Hazrat Ameer lauded the efforts of the young *Hafizah* and prayed for her success and happiness in life. This is indeed a mighty achievement and a source of pride for her family and all members of the *Jama'at*. May Allah *Ta'ala* grant her the wisdom to understand the Quran and act upon its teachings. *Ameen*.

The Toka family has dedicated two *kanals* of land to the Central Anjuman for the future development of the *Jama'at's* institutions there. A boundary wall has been built around the area to demarcate and protect it. Hazrat Ameer laid the foundation stone of a *Jamia Ahmadiyya* which will, *Insha Allah*, be built there at an appropriate time in the future. Hazrat

Ameer thanked the family for their generous donation and prayed for Allah's blessings on them. He also hoped and prayed that the Okara *Jama'at* may one day become a vicegerent for the propagation of Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Dr Simon Valentine visits the Central Anjuman

Dr Simon Valentine, a researcher and lecturer at the University of Bradford, UK. is currently studying the Ahmadiyya Movement and plans to write a book on the subject. He visited the *Jama'at's* headquarters in Lahore and stayed from 26 to 28 April 2004. He held very useful discussions with Hazrat Ameer and other members of the *Jama'at*. He later went to Rabwah, Qadian and to Srinagar to visit the tomb of Jesus Christ. On his way back, he was with us again for an evening for further discussions. We are looking forward to Dr Valentine's book and hope and pray that it will help clear misunderstandings about the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Weddings

Fareeha Hafeez (Laado), daughter of the late Mr Hafeez-ur-Rahman, was married to Jawad Nazir, son of Mr Nazir Ahmad and Mrs Shahida Nazir. The wedding ceremony was held at Darus Salaam, Lahore on 28 April 2004. The bride has left for the UK to join her husband. We wish the bride and groom a happy and prosperous life in their new home.

The Islamic View on...

The Sanctity of Human Life

Compiled by Sarah Ahmad

Holy Qur'an

"For this reason We prescribed to the Children of Israel that whoever kills a person, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he had killed all men. And whoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved the lives of all men. And certainly Our messengers came to them with clear arguments, but even after that many

of them commit excesses in the land." (Holy Quran, 5:32).

Hadith

In his Last Sermon, delivered on the ninth day of Dhul Hijjah 10 A.H in the Uranah Valley of Mount Arafat, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. ... You know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal. Nobody has superiority over another except by piety and good action."

Sayings of the Promised Messiah

Upon hearing the news that a cruel Pathan in Peshawar had killed two innocent British persons, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad delivered the following speech in a gathering:

"Was this killing of two Britons supposed to be an act of *jihad*? It is such worthless persons that have given Islam a bad name. A better course of action would have been for him to serve these people so devotedly and conduct himself towards them so admirably that, impressed by the excellence of his morals and behaviour, they also become Muslims. A true believer tramples on his egotism. It is related that during a fight with a *kafir* (disbeliever), Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) had felled his opponent and was about to slit his abdomen when the man spat in his face. Hazrat Ali climbed off his chest. The *kafir* was amazed and asked: 'O Ali! How is this?' He replied: 'My war against you was for the sake of Allah. But when you spat in my face, part of my egotism became involved in it too, whereupon I let you go.' Hazrat Ali's action greatly impressed the man.

Whenever I hear such reports, I am extremely grieved that people have strayed so far from the Holy Qur'an to consider the killing of innocent souls a virtuous deed" (Al-Hakam, vol. 4, no. 14. pp. 10-11, 17 April 1900).

PROMOTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE HOLY QUR'AN AND THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

(Text of the Friday Sermon delivered by Maulana Mustafa Kamal Hydai, Religious head of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i Islam Trinidad and Tobago at the headquarter of the UK branch at Stanley Avenue, Wembley, on 11th June, 2004.)

"The Beneficent taught the Qur'an. He created man, taught him expression. The sun and the moon follow a reckoning, and the herbs and the trees adore Him. And the Heaven, He raised it high, and He set up the measure, that you may not exceed the measure, and keep up the balance with equity, nor fall short in the measure. And the earth, He has set it for (His) creatures; therein is fruit and palms having sheathed clusters, and the grain with (its) husk and fragrance. Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?" (55:1-13)

"I bear witness first of all. There is one supreme God, Allah. I also bear testimony to the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the Last and Final Messenger of Allah after whom no prophet old or new will come. And I begin in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful."

When the Holy Qur'an was revealed during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and onwards, it became traditional to read and study the Holy Qur'an by means of dividing it into 30 parts, sections, and other kinds of divisions. Later on the Holy Qur'an became a book that was numbered in accordance with the various verses in a particular order in the chapters. And then later

on when the Holy Qur'an was translated into other languages it became customary to study the Holy Qur'an by means of chapters and verses, so that references in the Holy Qur'an would be towards the chapters and verses of the Holy Qur'an. And we have now commentaries that tell us about the various chapters, sections, and verses.

We will see now that in the new millennium there needs to be a new approach to understanding the Holy Qur'an. And that foresight of approaching the Holy Qur'an from a new perspective, was harnessed and promoted by our late Maulana S. M. Tufail 40 years ago*, when he started compiling the "Dictionary and Concordance of the Holy Qur'an". And now that this has been published as the first really scholarly work in the Western Hemisphere, produced entirely by persons who are not Arabs and Muslims entirely from the West, we must understand the role and importance of this work in the study of the Holy Qur'an. For it is designed to encourage people to study the Holy Qur'an, not from the verses, not from the chapters, but from understanding its each word.

So we should look at a word of the Holy Qur'an and try to understand its meaning in the context of other verses. Indeed one can look at the Holy Qur'an as a web page in which you will find certain words or certain subject matters, and if you were to click on it, if the Qur'an were to be designed in a web page format, you would be able to get information further and further in different chapters, in different places and see the use of that particular word in different contexts.

So this can really indeed solve lot of the problems in the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. Just to give you an illustration. In my recent visit to Holland, there was a lady who formerly was a Muslim and has now become a member of parliament and was very critical of Islam and its teachings and even of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And one of the

objections she raised against Islam was the fact that Islam encourages wife-beating, that a husband could beat his wife in certain circumstances. And reference was made to chapter 4 verse 34 of the Holy Qur'an where a word *wadribu-hunna* derived from the Arabic word *daraba*, that means to strike or beat is used in its imperative form, to indicate that husbands could beat their wives..

Of course the translation of *wadribu-hunna* is that they should be chastised. But we have an additional problem here in that when Maulana Muhammad Ali 50 years ago translated the word *to chastise* at that time it had a different meaning. It meant to chasten, to purify. However, today the word chastisement has come to mean punishment and punishment even with violence. So the change in meaning of the word has caused some problems in the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. This problem was solved when we looked at the verse and the word *Daraba* in the context of its use at other places in the Holy Qur'an and I showed it to the people in Holland. So if you look at the word in the "Dictionary and Concordance of the Holy Qur'an" you will see that the word is used in different places in the Qur'an, and you would be able to get a meaning appropriate to the context. In this the word in that particular context does not advocate that husbands should beat their wives, but speaks about how husbands should protect their wives and their rights in times of dispute and difficulty. And in chapter 18 verse 11 of the Holy Qur'an a derivative of this word *daraba*, *darabna* is used and there the word is used in the context of *strike them on their ears*. And no commentator or translator of the Holy Qur'an, takes this in the literal sense. The translation given is "to prevent them from hearing". So the word *daraba* can be translated as prevention, reprimand for example, rather than chastisement. And having come to understand this word in the Holy Qur'an in a different place and in a different context the problem of understanding the verse of the Holy Qur'an that deals with the alleged wife beating, was resolved.

There are other instances in the Holy Qur'an. For example. The punishment for theft is often classified as cutting off the hands. Again if one were to look and consult the "Dictionary and Concordance of the Holy Qur'an" by Maulana S. M. Tufail and see the use of this word in various contexts, we would see that there has been a problem among Muslim jurists as to whether when a person steals, he or she should have his hand amputated? What does cutting off the hands mean? A similar expression is used in chapter 12 verse 31 of the Holy Qur'an, where it is said, as the story has been invented that women were looking at Prophet Joseph and he was so beautiful that they in amazement, just dropped their oranges or whatever it was and cut their hands. No one interprets that particular verse of the Holy Qur'an to mean that the women amputated their hands or cut it off completely. So cutting off the hands does not mean amputation. We have to find what it means with reference to its use in other places in the Holy Qur'an. And that was the purpose of the course that I ran in Holland.

But my dear sisters and brothers! I have read to you verses from a very well known chapter of the Holy Qur'an entitled *Ar-Rahman*. It is an important chapter because it is beautiful in its diction, in its poetry, and most important in its meaning and especially because of its relevance to our day to day living. Now as members of the Ahmadiyya Movement, we believe and we promote, that in understanding the Holy Qur'an every chapter of the Holy Qur'an is connected to the other chapter, the one before and the one after it. Every section is connection in some way, and so every verse is connected with the one before and after it. And looking at this principle we would see that the chapter that comes before chapter 55 which is entitled *Al-Qamar* (The Moon), is an indication to us that the moon is that object in the sky which reflects light. It reflects the light of the sun.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as it is well-known has been called *Siraj-an munira* i.e. the light-giving sun, and the Reformers

or *Mujaddidin* in the Muslim Ummah were raised to emit the light of teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but equally his followers or Muslims are required to be like the moon, reflecting the light that has come from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Now how can we do that? We do that by following the traditions and practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Again there is a problem within the Muslim community as to what exactly is the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). To many people the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is what we read in the books of Bukhari or Muslim and other collections of *Sihah Sitta* (Six authentic collections of Tradition recognised among the Sunnis), and no doubt they have excellent records of the practices of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). But the fact remains that all these books are not accepted by other Muslims; or are not followed like, for example, by the Shias. Again some sections of the Muslims give preference to particular collection of Tradition and some give importance to others. But whether you look at the sources and records of the Holy Prophet's practices within the Sunni community or within the Shia community, or the books of Bukhari and Muslim and the Shia books of Traditions, one thing we will note, that the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was that he would use his intelligence in interpreting the Holy Qur'an in a particular situation. As the Qur'an itself says *afa-laa ya'qilun*, why don't you use your reason.

So the actual Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was to give a comprehensive look at the Holy Qur'an, analyse the circumstances and then apply it in his own age and time. And it is our responsibility and duty to follow that Sunnah, that is to use our minds to study the Holy Qur'an, to understand it and to put it into practice. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'an also

teaches us that Allah has revealed the Qur'an to an Ummi Prophet, an unlettered, illiterate individual. This is an indication to us that you don't have to be a rocket scientist, you don't have to be a Ph.D., you don't have to be a scholar in order to understand the Holy Qur'an. The simplest illiterate individual with common sense can understand the Holy Qur'an because it's a book from God and God can transcend any obstacles in human beings' understanding. Except one condition, the Qur'an says, we must use our reason. If we don't use our reason then we are just like cattle - deaf, dumb and blind (The Qur'an 8:22).

So let us look at this chapter of the Holy Qur'an and we will see that inasmuch as we are to be like the moon reflecting the light of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), how did the Holy Prophet actually get his light? It came about from the Holy Qur'an itself. So the Qur'an tells us that it is in this chapter, *Ar-Rahman 'al-lamal Qur'an* that is, Allah has been so beneficent to us to give us the Holy Qur'an.

Khalaqal insana 'al-lamahul bayan i.e. He created man and taught the Qur'an. Now one of the things that we have to understand is that Allah has been revealing His Divine scriptures from time immemorial. He has given scriptures to other prophets, other people and other nations, and we are required to believe and accept these. But if we ask ourselves the question: what are the reasons or the circumstances for which revelation from Allah became necessary? Or what were the reasons, for example, that the Bible was revealed, or what were the reasons that the Geeta was revealed or for that matter any other Divine scripture. Do they tell us what is the purpose of these revelation? It is only the Holy Qur'an that indicates to us that human beings have hidden faculties and hidden qualities which God has created in us to manifest. And that is why the Qur'an says, *Khalaqal insana 'allahul bayan*. And in order for the human being to be perfect, to purify himself, he has to manifest these qualities within him. So again if we were to refer to the "Dictionary and Concordance of

the Qur'an" you will see *Bayan* means a manifestation or disclosure of the state of something, an expression of something that is speech, writing, explanation, commentary, achievements, a means of expressing ourselves. How do you know what is in an individual except that individual's expression, either facial expression or expression in thought or expression in art or culture or poetry etc. We cannot know what is in an individual unless that individual expresses himself to others. So we cannot know of nations of the past unless we see the expression in their architecture, in their language or literature that they have left behind.

Now one of the things that we must clearly understand is, in order to know the mind of an individual, to read the thoughts of that individual. And that individual must express his thoughts. If you want to know how Shakespeare thought of some subject of history or whatever, you read the writings of Shakespeare. If you want to know how Einstein thought you read his theories and his books. If you want to know how Allah thinks we read His book, the Holy Qur'an. So the Qur'an is an expression of the thought of God, how God thinks, how He wants us to understand Himself, how He wants us to understand the world in which we live, how He wants us to understand our own selves, how He wants us to understand our relationships with one another.

So the Holy Qur'an is pointing out to us, when it tells us that Allah is *Ar-Rahman*. The word *Rahman* comes from *raham* which means the womb. And there is an indication here in this particular chapter of the Holy Qur'an that a human being is created from *raham*, not the physical *raham* or womb, but the spiritual *raham*, in other words the womb of the Holy Qur'an. It is by studying the Holy Qur'an that we can grow and develop, that we can express ourselves truly. Our best expressions are the expressions in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. And this is what the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did. This was his Sunnah, and that is why when his wife Hazrat Ayesha was asked about the Prophet Muhammad (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him), she said: You read the Holy Qur'an. It is the best expression of the perfect man, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Just as we cannot know the past of any nation except through their expressions, as I said, in history and archaeology etc., similarly we cannot know the expression of an individual except through his emotions of love and hate. So we will know how they think and how they function. Similarly we too cannot convey our thoughts, our ideas, our abilities and so on to someone else except through expression. So the Qur'an is telling us the importance of expression, *khalaqal insana 'allahahul bayan*. Our expression can be violent or non violent, and this is where we see nations express their power or their weakness by virtue of war, terrorism, fighting or sometimes through negotiation, through peaceful talks, trying to come to a common understanding. And expression is also important in husband and wife relationship, in parent/child relationship. Teachers can convey their ideas through expression in the classroom. We have a multimedia format of expression now. We have the internet in which we can express so much of information all over the world in so many different languages and in so many different formats.

So the Holy Qur'an is pointing out to us that we cannot benefit from one another's knowledge or be guided by one another's words, or follow one another's practices unless they are expressed. And so it is the responsibility of Muslims not merely to have the Holy Qur'an and be a Muslim, but to express the teachings of the Holy Qur'an in our daily lives. In fact this is how Islam was spread in the Eastern world. Not by armies that went from Arabia or Syria or Iraq, but by traders, by people who lived Islam in their lives and communicated with people. That is how it spread in Indonesia and in China. So the Holy Qur'an is pointing out to us, when it says "He created man and taught him expression", it is speaking about the creation of man

through expression. Human beings create other group of human beings through communication and expression. And this is one of the tasks we expect to achieve by means of the publication of the "Dictionary and Concordance of the Holy Qur'an" in that we will be creating a group of people who will now study the Holy Qur'an by means of the words of the Qur'an, to look at the use of these words in various places in the Holy Qur'an, rather than just looking at it from subject matter and saying, I want to look up Jihad, or I want to look at the subject of divorce or polygamy or marriage or fasting etc. They will try to study the Holy Qur'an through a new format now, which is the format of the words of the Holy Qur'an as they have been used and what meanings they conveyed at various stages of human development and history.

So the Holy Qur'an is indicating to us in this particular chapter that in order for Allah to produce the perfect human being he communicates Himself through the Holy Qur'an, which is the most perfect expression of Divinity. No other Divine scripture gives us the mind of God. So Allah has expressed His will to mankind through the Holy Qur'an. So the purpose of the Holy Qur'an is to manifest the perfect nature of the human being through its guidance. It has been given as *hudal lin-nasi wa bayyinat-i minal huda* i.e. "Guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance", indeed a guidance for humanity. And when we examine and we see through the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), we find him as the perfect expression of the Holy Qur'an in action, in thought and in behaviour.

Now in order to create ourselves as good human beings we must know that there are certain laws at work. Everything works in accordance with laws. Without laws human beings cannot really function. And so the Holy Qur'an says: *ash-shamsu wal-qamaru bi-husban, wan-najmu wash-shajaru yasjudan* i.e. "The sun and the moon follow a reckoning, and the herbs and trees adore Him." (vv.5,6). Look at the sun and the moon, look at the vegetation that we see around us and we will see certain realities dawning upon our mind. The Holy Qur'an speaks about *al-laa tatghaw*

fil mizan wa aqimul wazna bil-qisti wa laa tukhsirul mizaan. i.e. “That you may not exceed the measure. And keep up the balance with equity, nor fall short in the measure.” (vv.8,9). It speaks of the measure and the standards. We know that no society can live without laws. If they do not follow the law of God they invent their own laws via constitution. Even the United Nations has got its charter and its laws. All human beings have to function in accordance with some set of laws. No one wants to live in a lawless society, so the Qur’an is telling us even long before law came in as an integral part of the society, that laws are necessary for the welfare of humanity.

But law requires certain standards. If you want to put up a building you have to follow the law, you have to get certain permission, you have to know the locality and other construction requirements. There are certain distances you have to keep from the road and there are certain restrictions with regards to the size and the height of the building relative to the land, and so many other things. Then there are also standards. The kind of material you use in the structure of the building is important. If you fall short of the standards then the building can collapse as perhaps may have been the reason why a wing of the airport in Paris collapsed some time ago. We see today that mankind is searching for standards - international standards. Everything has to be standardised. All our products should maintain certain standard and quality, because standards are important. We have to measure these standards. So the Holy Qur’an indicates to us that if you look at the sun and the moon we find our entire existence is dependent upon the laws of the lunar and solar system. The planting of crops, for example, are done at particular seasons and all the laws of nature are necessary for us.

But then the Qur’an tells us: “And the herbs and the trees adore Him” (v.6). *Najm (herbs)* is that kind of vegetation that does not have trunk, for example vines, and it depends on others for support. The *shajar* (trees) is a tree or vegetation that can stand on its own. And the Holy Qur’an is indicating to us here

that for growth and development sometimes we need to have different seasons, different occasions in which we can express our thoughts and our ideas. There will be times of peace, for example, there will be times of war, how do we manifest best the excellence of our personality and character in these situations? What kind of environment should be in our home with our children or parents, or neighbourhood or at our workplace. Should it be hostile or peaceful and amicable? We see the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s life being manifested in all facets of life - a time of war and a time of peace. How did he conduct himself? So the Holy Qur’an is indicating to us here the different seasons in our lives, different environmental conditions that will require our personality development depending upon these kinds of conditions, whether they are positive or negative.

But at the same time, sometimes we depend upon others, and sometimes others depend upon us, so we should stand on our own two feet. And that is where the likeness to the *Najm* and the *Shajar* is indicated in the Holy Qur’an. The Qur’an wants us to understand also that if we exceed the law we can run into problems. Let us look “at the sun and the moon for “a reckoning” or a measure. The sun and earth stay at a certain fixed distance apart, of course, because of the turning of the earth. Some parts of the earth are a little nearer to the sun at certain times of the year and it can be extremely hot or extremely cold. But if the earth were to move a couple of degrees more towards the sun or away from the sun, we will have everything either burnt and scorched or we will have everything extremely cold, another ice age coming upon us. So if anything affects our ozone layer, for example, we will find greater heat of the sun coming. And the Holy Qur’an has given us this indication. It’s a very modern book in the sense that it tells us that our life is dependent upon the laws of nature at work. And if we exceed the measure, if we exceed the laws, we can suffer certain consequences.

We find that in life also we have among human beings, independent and dependent people. You have the rich and you have the poor, you have the rulers and you have those who

depend upon them. You have the employer and you have the employee. You have the leader and you have the followers. Just as *najm* and *shajar*, the vine also depends upon a tree for its survival, similarly the tree provides a function for birds and for others who depend upon it, and for human beings who depend upon the fruits of that tree. So the Qur’an is pointing out to us here, *Aqimul wazna*, we must keep up this balance, we must keep up this measure.

There are many people who look at this measure and this balance in the literal sense, especially when it comes to the behaviour of a person in this life, in relation to the Day of Judgement, when we will have a scale and we will be accountable for our deeds. Somehow they think that good deeds will perhaps be on one side, and bad deeds on the other side, and that kind of balance and scale. This is the concept they have of balance. But the Holy Qur’an is telling us something different. It is indicating to us that everything in life has a measure. And dependent upon the thing that you are measuring the scale would be different. There are different measurements. You don’t measure hours or time by means of kilometres. You don’t measure temperature by means of grams. So everything that you have has a particular measure, has a scale. If you are measuring time you use hours and minutes. If you are measuring distance you use yards and feet or metres as the case may be. If you are measuring weight it is different, if you are measuring heat and cold it is different. So everything has its different measure.

When it comes to our behaviour, the Holy Qur’an says there is also a measure, and that measure is simply put in the Holy Qur’an that if you do one good deed it counts as if there are 10, or in some cases the action maybe such that it counts as 100 or even more than that. But if you perform one evil deed the measure is the like of it. So the Holy Qur’an is indicating to us, yes, when you perform one evil deed, the measure of it is the same, but when you perform one good deed the measure is that it has an action that goes on and on and that can multiply.

So the Qur'an indicates to us that things function in relation to one another. And we find that things are dependent upon relationships. We have family relationships, we have Jama'at relationships, we have social relationships, we have international relationships. We have relationships between human beings and animals and the rest of it. But the Qur'an tells us that *was-sama' rafa'a-ha* i.e. the heaven We have raised it up. And this is a very important message for each and every one of us. When Allah tells us that He has raised the heaven high for us it's something that we should think about, because when we look at the earth that is under the control of human beings and we see the kind of problems human beings have on earth, we say, thank God, heavens have not, at least not yet, been under the control of human beings. On earth we find that human beings are fighting one another, there is antagonism, there are restrictions, there is monopoly and manipulation of affairs. The world has never been without some kind of war and killing, and all the advantages that we have developed, we have also not really lived in peace and harmony except on times when Allah has sent His prophets and messengers who have to involve themselves in very difficult circumstances to establish peace on earth.

So the Qur'an is indicating to us that growth and development in nature is uniformly predictable because there is a balance in nature, because uniform laws are working in it. And now scientists are recognising what the Qur'an has said here 1500 years ago, that in equality there is a balance, and if you upset that balance, if you damage the range of forests, if you get rid of all the wild animals – they perform a function and if you just destroy them then you're going to destroy your own selves. So human beings are now coming to establish the fact of the truth of the Holy Qur'an. Likewise the Qur'an is indicating to us that the growth and development of human beings in any nation, in any country, there has to be standards and measurement and a balance. There is poverty, there is freedom, there are people who are in prison, there are people who are diseased, there are people who are very rich, extremely rich. But human beings have always

progressed because of standards. And as we have standards in the material world we need to have moral standards as well as spiritual standards, which is something the world has really not attempted to focus on.

So in this particular chapter of the Holy Qur'an, every word has a very important meaning and a lesson for us. We can glean certain things, we can come to certain conclusions, and what are these conclusions, the Holy Qur'an indicates to us quite clearly and says: *fee-haa faakihatun wannakhlu zaa-tul akmam* (v.11) that in His creatures, especially human beings there are fruits and there are palms with cluster and seeds with husk and musk – that is fragrance – and quality. It says to us *'asf-i war-rayhan* (v.12) i.e. husk and fragrance. In other words it is telling us that it is the intention of Allah that through the Holy Qur'an human beings can really have standards of morality and spirituality, and can develop themselves to be excellent human beings, as was said by Prophet Jesus before the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), that "by their fruits you shall know them." How we can know human beings, we look at the fruit of their actions. Now we see that in the world we have different kinds of trees and different kinds of fruits. You have palms for example growing in desert and sandy or barren soil, but they are so useful in so many other ways. Then there are other trees whose fruits are useful but the leaves and trunks are useless, they perhaps are just thrown away, discarded or used as fodder for animals. Then you have banana, for example; it has a sweet fruit, but then the stalk and everything is just thrown away or destroyed. Every year you have to cut it. So the Holy Qur'an is pointing out to us that as there are certain types of trees, similarly there are certain types of human beings who provide certain fruits. And not only the fruits of their actions are beneficial but their entire life, their whole surroundings are also beneficial. And there are some people who may perhaps give an action or two that is beneficial, and the rest of their life you cannot see any kind of contribution that they are making to humanity.

Here the Qur'an tells us about *akmam*. It means the fruit covering, the skin, a bunch or pulp of a fruit. It also speaks of *'asf*, which means cut leaves or straw, or dried vegetation. In chapter 105 verse 5 the word *'asf* again is used. And this is how we can use the "Dictionary and the Concordance of the Holy Qur'an", and can look at these words and their meanings at different places in the Holy Qur'an. But the Qur'an speaks of *rayhan*, which means fragrance as well as provision, and this word is also used in chapter 56 verse 89, the very next chapter in sequence. The Qur'an describes fruits as also having husk, the seed covering as it were, and also musk, that is the fragrance that comes. So it is indicating to us here that human beings should possess these two qualities, that is husk and musk. Husk meaning that there must be some harvest in human beings. You must see firmness in the way in which they follow the laws, not that they are overtly strict, but that there must be some standing on principles. There must be certainly principles that we stand by. But at the same time you cannot be so harsh in your principles, so rigid that no one likes you, they think you are a terrorist, they think you are a dictator, so there must be some kind of musk or fragrance. Fragrance is a perfume that attracts others, that appeals others. So the Qur'an is telling us here that in the development of human personality there must be firmness but there must also be attractiveness. We must act in a manner that people will be drawn to us, that people will be attracted to us, not merely that we should be so strict to the letter of the law that people are turned away from us.

And that is one of the beauties that we have, one of the best ways of the development of human personality which the Holy Qur'an has given to us, and that is *Salah* or the prayer. And in the prayer, which plays an essential part in the human development - moral and spiritual development - we see that Allah has given us certain principles. These principles are very significant. When a Muslim prays, first and foremost, he or she stands erect in the position of *Qiyaam* and that is a reminder to us that we must always stand upright in our lives. We must

always stand on principles, we must always be firm. The Holy Qur'an, says in another place that the right religion is standing firm and standing upright. But then we can be so upright that we refuse to look at the views of other people. And so we have the position of *Ruku'* which shows that at times we have to bend a little. We have to be a little flexible. We can't just impose the letter of the law. And sometimes we have not only to be merely flexible but we have to be submissive. We have to give some of our rights and privileges, for the sake of peace and harmony, and this is what the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did as we do in our position of *sajdah*. It indicates our utmost surrender and humility, making ourselves extremely small rather than being arrogant and swell headed. And we see that in the case of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he signed the Truce of Hudaibiyya. He signed a treaty in which it was disgraceful to the Muslims, but for the sake of peace he signed it. This is why this man has been called *Rahmatul lil-'alamin*, a mercy for all the religions and all the nations of the world. And so we find in a position of *qa'da*, even though the word is translated in English as sit, but *Qa'da* really means to abase oneself. In other words we have to stand on certain principles. In English we don't say to sit on principle, but to stand on principle. That is we are rigid, we are firm, we are operative, yes, but we are flexible, we are humble, but at the same time that is the base of our religion, that is righteousness. And base of all of this is *assalamu 'alaikum wa Rahmatullah* i.e. peace and blessings on the right; *assalamu 'alaikum wa Rahmatullah* or peace and blessings on the left, that is we foster peace for every one by means of this kind of attitude.

So the attitude of Muslims must not be that of hostility and belligerence, that is always wanting to fight for religion using certain violent methods, or sometimes using violence not by means of bombs and guns, but even in their intolerant attitude showing hostility by calling others *kafirs* (disbelievers) and so on. All of this is against Islam because

Islam is a religion of peace. So whenever we pray we must always remember that we need to stand upright, we need to be flexible, we need to be humble, but at the same time all of this is for the sake of peace. We address the world for the sake of peace. To the right we look at the world and say I am at peace with you, and to the left, I wish you all peace.

At the end I would just like to thank the Jama'at here for inviting me to deliver the Friday sermon. My stay here is very short and I was very grateful for the opportunity to meet all of you, many of my old friends and to re-establish relations with other members of the Jama'at here. As you know I have just come from a visit to Holland where I conducted a course and several other lectures, radio programmes, interviews and so on to promote Islam in these challenging times. And I look forward to every opportunity that I am given by the resources of our Jama'at all over the world to present Islam in a way that the world will accept it and bring human beings nearer to Almighty Allah and to a better understanding of the Holy Qur'an. Because this is the mission of the Ahmadiyya Movement. So once again I wish to thank you all, those of you I've met individually, and if I have not met you yet I wish that Allah may continue to bless you and give you the courage to support the cause of the Ahmadiyya Movement because it is to your benefit and to the benefit of the world. It is to our own individual benefit because I have seen there is no other organisation that enhances our intelligence and understanding of the religion of Islam.

I especially want to urge you that the Dictionary and Concordance of the Holy Qur'an was produced by a former Imam of this Jama'at here in England and there's a need for it, and I hope and pray that some of you will purchase it and donate it to libraries and to scholars. I think every library should have a copy of this Dictionary to encourage people to study the Holy Qur'an. Because we see there is so much misunderstanding. And we cannot have missionaries going into every school and every institution and on every occasion. And even though we have the Qur'an

we can't say, just read the Qur'an and you will understand it, Muslims themselves read the Qur'an and find difficulty in understanding it, because there is so much quibbling and quarrelling about what this means and what that one means, and how to interpret this. So we need to provide appropriate guidance to study the Holy Qur'an, and this "Dictionary and Concordance of the Holy Qur'an" will *Inshallah* prove to be a great tool in the study and understanding of the Holy Qur'an. So may Allah bless you and reward you with the resources that you may contribute generously in this noble cause of the propagation of Islam.

(*Note: It is fact that main thrust of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was to meet objections against the Qur'an, the criticism of the opponents of Islam and challenges of the present times from the Holy Qur'an itself. In the translation and interpretation of the Qur'an he did not strictly followed the traditional way of going to the time of the revelation and examining the circumstances when that particular verse or verses were revealed, but he also explored the meaning and spirit of the word used at different places in the Qur'an and examined its meaning with reference to the context. Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din, Founder's close associate and a well-known scholar of Indo-Pakistan fame, further promoted this approach in his exposition of the Qur'an which are available in the form of notes of his Dars-i Qur'an. This is how the Founder and his learned associates exploded the so-called theory of abrogation, punishment for apostasy, and issues relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, death of Jesus and baseless charges levelled against the characters of prophets such as Prophet Abraham, Prophet Joseph, Prophet Lot and even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

The credit of introducing this new approach in the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an to the world, especially the English knowing West, goes to Maulana Muhammad Ali, whose English and Urdu translations and commentaries were trend-setters in this regard. - Nasir Ahmad)