

“In the name of ALLAH, the BENEFICENT, the MERCIFUL”

NOOR-I-ISLAM

(INTERNATIONAL)

AHMADIYAH ANJUMAN ISH'AT-I-ISLAM (LAHORE), CANADA

SEPTEMBER - 2003

TEACHINGS OF ISLAM

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him)
REFORMER OF THE 14TH CENTURY

LIFE AFTER DEATH

“and We have made every man’s actions to cling to his neck, and We shall bring forth to him on the day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open” (Qur’an 17:13)

What is the teaching of the Qur’an as to the state of man in his life after death, is the question which offers itself for solution.

Representation by images

The state after death is not altogether a new state; it is in fact a complete representation, a full image of our spiritual state in the present life. Here the good or bad conditions of the deeds or beliefs of a man are latent within him and their poison or panacea casts its influence upon him secretly, but in the life to come they shall become manifest and clear as daylight. An idea of it, although a very imperfect one, may be had from the manner in which a person sees in a dream the embodiment of whatever is predominant in his temperament. When he is due for an attack of fever, he may see in a dream flames of burning fire, whereas he may find himself in floods of water when his is about to catch a cold.

When the body is prepared for a particular disease, a dream may often disclose the embodiment of the conditions giving rise to it. From the manner in which internal conditions are represented in physical forms, in dreams, we can have an idea of the embodiment of the spiritual conditions of this world in the life to come. After our earthly course is ended, we are translated to regions where our deeds and their

consequences assume a shape, and what is hidden in us in this world is there unrolled and laid open before us. These embodiments of spiritual facts are substantial realities, as even in dreams, though the sight soon vanishes away, yet so long as it is before our eyes it is taken to be reality. As this representation by images is a new and a perfect manifestation of the power of God, we may as well call it not a representation of certain facts, but a new creation brought about by the powerful hand of the Creator. With reference to this, Qur’an says:

“so no soul knows what refreshment of the eyes is hidden for them” (32:17)

Thus the Lord describes the heavenly blessings that the righteous shall enjoy in the next life as having been kept secret because, not being like anything contained in this world, no one knows aught about them. It is evident that the things of this world are not a secret to us; we not only know pomegranates, grapes, milk, etc., but frequently taste of them. Consequently, these things could not be called secrets. The fruits of paradise have, therefore, nothing in common with these except the name. He is indeed ignorant of the Holy Qur’an who takes paradise for a place where only the things of this world are provided in abundance.

It may be added here, in explanation of the verse quoted above, that Prophet Mohammed (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) said that heaven and its blessings are things which “the eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them.” But of the things of this world we cannot say that our eyes have not seen them, or that our ears have not heard them, or that our minds have not conceived of them. When God and His Prophet tell us of things in heaven which our senses are not cognizant of in this world, we should be guilty of cherishing doctrines against the teachings of the Qur’an if we supposed rivers flowing with the milk which we ordinarily drink here. Can we, moreover, consistently with the idea of heaven, suppose herds of cows and buffaloes reared in paradise and numerous honeycombs hanging on trees with countless bees busily engaged in collecting honey and hosts of angels busy day and night in milking these cows and getting honey and pouring them continuously into streams to keep them running? Are these ideas in keeping with the teachings of the verses which tell us that this world is a stranger to the blessings of the next world? Will these things illumine the soul or increase the knowledge of the Lord or afford spiritual food as the heavenly blessings are designed to do? It is, no doubt, true that these blessings are represented as material things, but we are also told that their source is spirituality and righteousness.

The following verse, which may ordinarily be misunderstood, is far from describing the

heavenly blessings as being identical with the worldly things:

“and give good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are Gardens in which rivers flow. Whenever they are given a portion of the fruit thereof, they will say: This is what was given to us before; and they are given the like of it”
(2:25)

Now the context clearly shows that the fruits which the righteous are said to have tasted here do, by no means, signify the fruits of trees or the things of this world. The verse in fact tells us that those who believe and do good works prepare a paradise with their own hands for themselves, with their faith for trees and their good deeds for fruits. It is of the fruits of this garden that they are spiritually made to taste here and of the fruits of the same will they eat in the next life; only the spiritual fruits of this life will be transformed into palpable and more delicious fruits in the next life. But, as they will have already tasted of them spiritually in this life, they will be able to identify the fruits of that life with those of this and, witnessing the close resemblance between the two, will cry out: “these are the fruits which were indeed given to us in the former life.”

(..... to be continued in next edition)

Translated by Maulana Mohammed Ali

**SAID THE
PROPHET**

----- (Peace be on him)

“When a person spends on his family and hopes for compensation from Allah, he is also seen by Allah to be giving charity.”

“Giving charity to the poor is charity, and giving to a relative amounts to two good deeds i.e. charity and benevolence to kinsmen.”

(The Holy Prophet gave these instructions because some people tend to spend money on others and keep forgetting to spend it on their own families)

All people agree that to be kind to one's parents is the proper attitude. All societies, including those where family ties have become too loose, agree that sons and daughters must always be kind to their parents. Perhaps no one needs to be told that parents sacrifice a great deal to bring up their children. They take pains to provide for them the happiest life they can achieve and afford. There is no denying that not all parents provide their children with the same standard of care and love. Some children are more fortunate than others in this respect. But in normal circumstances, however, parents do care for their children and look after them. In doing so, they have to work hard and sacrifice much of their time, effort, money and physical and mental rest. We hear from time to time about cases where a parent is very cruel to his or her children. Cases have been reported of parents who have killed their children, or at least caused them to die. These cases, however, are exceptions which do not invalidate the rule. If you examine any such case you will find that the person is far from normal. The healthier and more virtuous a society is, the less frequent and more far between such cases of perversion. The closer a society moves to Islamic life the more likely such cases become virtually non-existent.

It is because parents sacrifice a great deal in order to bring up their children that all religions tend to emphasize the virtue of being kind to parents. Islam requires such a kind treatment of parents as a personal duty of every son and daughter, allowing no exceptions whatsoever. A number of Qur'anic verses place kindness to parents as a universal requirement which is second only to believing in the Oneness of Allah. We read in the Qur'an such verses as:

“Say: come, let me tell you what Allah has really forbidden to you: ‘Do not ascribe divinity, in any way, to anything beside Him; and do not offend against but, rather,

do good to your parents; and do not kill your children for fear of poverty, for it is We who shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them; and do not commit any shameful deeds, be they open or secret; and do not take any human being's life ... otherwise than in the pursuit of justice ...”

(6:151)

We also have a large number of Hadiths by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which encourage, in all manners of persuasion and emphasis, kind treatment of parents and the need to overlook their short-comings.

We will be looking at some of these Hadiths in order to establish the value Islam attaches to this virtue. We will begin by quoting the Prophet as saying: **“One of the worst of all cardinal sins is for a person to curse his own parents.”** The Prophet's companions asked: **“How would anyone curse his parents?”** The Prophet explained: **“He curses a man and the man retaliates by cursing his father and mother.”** (related by Al-Bukhari)

In order to appreciate the significance of this Hadith, we have to remember that the Prophet was addressing an audience in a society which valued family and tribal relations as higher as and more important than any other relations. Although Islam has replaced tribal loyalty with one its own, i.e. loyalty to the Muslim community, it has never hesitated to express approval of any virtue which exists in any society. In the case of being kind to parents Islam simply emphasizes what is universally agreed to be good and puts it on a much higher level than other societies tend to do.

Those who heard this Hadith from the Prophet were obviously surprised at the way it has been phrased. They expressed their surprise by asking would anyone contemplate cursing his own parents. The Prophet's answer suggests that it is highly

unlikely that a person directly curses his own parents. Even when relations in the family are far from healthy, there always remains that lingering feeling of respect to one's own parents which prevents a person from abusing them verbally. There are certainly children who may be very unkind to their parents, but there is an intrinsic inhibition which makes verbal abuse of parents come at a later stage in a family where relations between parents and children are exceptionally bad. Hence, the surprise of the Prophet's audience was only to be expected.

The prophet's answer shows that kindness to parents must include a positive attempt to guard them against abuse by others, as a result of one's own actions. In other words, one must avoid any action and refrain from using any words which are likely to cause another person to abuse his parents. By cursing another man, we only invite him to retaliate by cursing us or cursing our parents. Hence, we must avoid that.

We know that the Prophet has employed this indirect manner in order to bring home to his audience the need to refrain from

abusing others. On this occasion, he does not simply counsel them against retaliation when abused; he is telling them that abusing others will only invite their retaliation. In other words, they bring on themselves and on their own parents the curses of others. This method is highly effective, as it makes everyone in the audience keen to understand how people may curse their own parents. The explanation given by the Prophet is very simple to understand. Moreover, it is very logical. Hence, it achieves the dual purpose of showing the need to refrain from abusing others since such abuse will only lead to more abuse and certain retaliation. When we refrain from verbally abusing others, this will only help promote good relations in society. Moreover, we are only doing a kindness to ourselves since we avoid other people's abuse of our parents.

The Prophet describes inviting other people's curses of our parents as one of the gravest of cardinal sins. Perhaps no other religion describes cruelty to parents in these terms. No other religion places kind treatment of parents as second only to its main article of faith.

“S A L A A T”

*Shahid Aziz
London*

“O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah, and seek means of nearness to Him, and strive hard in His way that you may be successful.” (the Holy Qur'an 5:35)

There is, in this short verse of the Holy Qur'an that I have quoted, a powerful message for Muslims. It starts with “O you who believe.” This is not because guidance is restricted to Muslims only. It is because, for those who do not believe in Allah, His messenger and His guidance, this message does not have potency. It also means, belief alone is not sufficient for salvation but that it needs to be followed by something more. What a believer must do to achieve salvation is given in the words that follow.

A believer must keep his duty to Allah. This does not only refer to the formalized prayer, fasting and other such

prescribed duties he is required to perform. To some degree by performing *salaat* and fasting and paying *zakaat*, he has done his duty to Allah but only partially. His duty to Allah will not be completed until he also fulfils his duty to everything around him. A Muslim has a duty to his relations (grand-parents, parents, wife, children, aunts, uncles and so on), his neighbors, his colleagues, animals, the land he lives on and the air that he breathes. He would not have done his duty to Allah fully unless he has fulfilled his duty to all these. The reason is that all lawful acts fall within the definition of being pious and good. This makes it incumbent upon a Muslim to care for all of God's creation, including the animals and the environment in which he lives.

Having set out the Divine Instruction that man is to keep his duty, the next thing we are told is that the first duty of a Muslim is to seek nearness to God. The foremost means of seeking nearness to Allah is salaah or prayer. The Holy Prophet Mohammed showed by his example that true and sincere prayer creates a bond between man and Allah. The message was lost in the mist of time. Glory in the world led Muslims to rely solely on material resources and to abandon reliance upon Allah. The prime purpose of the mission of the Promised Messiah was to create a group within the Muslims that fosters this link with God or *taaluq billah* and relies on none other than Allah.

As has been said already, the most important method of creating this link is the salaah. In the morning at the very time when one is asleep in a warm and comfortable bed and dreaming beautiful dreams, one hears the call "*Allah hu Akbar, Allah hu Akbar*". Calling one to arise from slumber because the pursuit of God is a greater objective than the comfort of bed. The crier is telling us to leave temporal comforts and turn to the means of everlasting the comfort.

Having reminded man of Glory of God, the crier then says "*Ash hadu un la illaha*" reminding us that there should be only one objective of our desires and that is God. He is the only thing we should be seeking to the exclusion of everything else. If you ignore the call to prayer you are denying God by your actions, although you may not have done so with the tongue. Human beings naturally wonder whether they can attain to the nearness being spoken of here. That is why the crier follows this with the words "*Ash ha du unna Mohammad ur Rasul Allah*." When we say we bear witness that the Holy Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) is the messenger of God, we are admitting that there was one person in this world who truly followed the Holy Qur'an and achieved the station of *fana-fillah* or subsuming his personality within that of Allah. We are told that we have a role model, a hero that we can follow. When reminded of the character of Holy Prophet (peace be on him) and his companions, people always say that fifteen hundred years have passed since those events took place, the world has changed and perhaps it is not possible to emulate them. If

we accept that the world and times have changed and that it is not longer possible to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) and to emulate his companions, what we are saying is this that the message of Islam is not for all people for all time but that, like other religions, it is restricted to a particular time and place. That is exactly why God raises mujaddids. They show the world by their example that the message of the Holy Qur'an is eternal. The mujaddid puts the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah in to practice and shows that whatever the time or the place, the message of Islam is still practicable.

The crier then makes it abundantly clear that he is calling you to the path of reformation and goodness. Having heard the cry and responded to it, the next step is to leave the comfort of your bed and to perform the wudhu. The first aspect of physical cleanliness is obvious. Also, having risen from sleep, washing helps to clear your mind and gets you ready for presentation to your maker. There is however, a spiritual aspect of this ritual ablution as well. When you wash your hands, you promise Allah that you will not perform any evil deeds with these hands. When you wash your mouth, you promise Allah that you will not utter anything evil. When you wash your face, you promise Allah that your eyes will not see any evil. When you wash your ears, you promise that you will not hear any evil. When you wash your feet, you promise that you will not go to any place where evil deeds take place and when you wash your head, you promise Allah that you are washing your mind of all impure thoughts and that you will only think pure thoughts from now on.

The ablution needs to be performed with the same seriousness as the prayer itself. How well did Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad illustrate this point by the following example! He said that when people have to go for an interview for a job or a promotion or some business deal, they take great care when they are getting ready. They get special hair cuts, bathe, put on their best clothes etc. However, when it is a question of performing the wudhu, they run in and just splash some water on their limbs without considering that they are going for an interview with the Lord and Master of the universe. What such people show by their actions is that they believe a human being is greater and more

powerful, and in a position to grant them more benefits than God himself!

Having prepared yourself for an audience with Allah, you stand before him in a posture of respect. This posture means that you stand ready to obey His smallest Command. You stand ready to make the greatest sacrifice at His Command. In this posture, you also pray to Allah to help you with strength to carry out His Commands. You then bow before Him to show that you will bow down to make what ever sacrifice He Commands you to make and you extol His Glory while doing so. Eventually, to show that you are a mere weak human being and that you may not be able to fulfill the promises you are making and to ask for forgiveness, you fall on the ground before Him to humble yourself.

Remember that a Muslim bows or prostrates before God only. He does not bow or prostrate before any one or anything else because that will mean that he is humiliating himself before things which are either his equal or even inferior to him. That is why it is completely forbidden to bow or prostrate before graves of even prophets. The other reason for bowing and prostrating before God is to recognize that there is a greater power which controls the universe. This is meant to crush human ego, pride and vanity and to make one humble. If your *ruku* or *sajda* does not have this effect on you then you need to put more effort in to your prayers. When you have finished your morning prayer, you have made a promise with Allah. You have promised that you have washed your body of worldly sins and purified it and you promise that you will not fall

prey to the temptation of those sins again. A Christian is baptized once in a lifetime. A Muslim is baptized many times a day. And just as a cloth which is washed over and over again can not possibly remain dirty, in the same way by sincerely cleaning yourself over and over again, you cannot possibly remain dirty in your spiritual life. Remember, that this cleansing must be performed consciously, thoroughly and so far as possible removing all the dirt and marks that you find.

You should make love of God the sole objective of your life so like blood it flows through your veins. And when you open your eyes, the first thing you want to do is to reach out and communicate with Him. You should get such intense pleasure from this communication with Him that you should not be able to think of anything else when you open your eyes and your first thought should be of Allah. A Muslim must learn from everyone he meets. The pious teach one what to do and the impious what to avoid. Indeed, even the impious can show you how to seek nearness to Allah.

This then is the start to the day for a true Muslim. Throughout the day he must keep in mind the promises he made to Allah. Other societies have new year resolution to do better annually, a Muslim society has daily resolutions that they will do better.

(Noor-i-Islam is extremely thankful to Shahid for this valuable article, May Allah bless you always and we expect more contributions, like this one, in future from him)

Dear Readers:

Due to limited space, we are unable to include "Editorial Page" and "Did you Know?" question and answer page in this edition. I personally felt that due to the fact that our children are getting back from holidays and starting a new school year, the articles included in this edition will be more important for them than the missing pages. I have some questions asked from different parts of the world and would include them in the next edition. May Allah be with you all, keep you all safe and grant you health and happiness Sadiq Noor, Regina

NOOR-I-ISLAM

(INTERNATIONAL)

AHMADIYAH ANJUMAN ISH'AT-I-ISLAM (LAHORE), CANADA

SEPTEMBER 2003 - VOL 1 : ISSUE 9

msnoor53@yahoo.com & jsmkw@hotmail.com