INTRODUCTION

Editor, The HOPE Bulletin

We have put our “Question & Answer” segment to practical use. Br Shabir Buksh, General Secretary AAIIL, New Zealand, needed some assistance and posed the following query:

“This Saturday 27th October, I am going to take dars at Br Hafizullah's residence. I have been told last minute to prepare and I am extremely flat out to search for material. I was wondering if you had any articles on ‘death’ or any other topic that would be appropriate to speak on. You may be aware that Br Hafizullah’s wife passed away last Wednesday in Hamilton. Your assistance will be most appreciated.”

In response to his query we provided him with the following answer:

“Please check out the Qura’nic verses on death and life hereafter which are listed as follow (researched by one of our panel members):


Also, please read Maulana Muhammad Ali’s commentaries given in the footnotes relevant to the verses on death and life hereafter listed above.”

Alhamdollillah! Br Shabir Buksh reported that his dars was inspirational and well received by the audience as, according to him:
“The dars went really well with the blessing and guidance of Almighty Allah. I spoke on ‘Life after Death’ for about 30 minutes. We had about 30 people present at the dars.

Dinner was provided by the host.”

This is not the first time we helped our New Zealand Jama’at. Br Abid Raza, President of AAIIL, NZ, raised a number of questions before and we promptly assisted with our response. Recently, they also received a satisfactory response from the Central Anjuman to one of their queries.

In this issue we have coined a question in our “Question & Answer” segment and obtained an answer from Dr. Zahid Aziz, Editor of The Light, U.K. Edition, and one of our panel members. Based on this exercise we urge our worldwide Jama’at members to pose their questions to be answered by one of our panel members.

JAMA‘AT NEWS

AAIIL, Paramaribo, Suriname
Br Abdul Majidkhan, President of SIV Suriname and Liaison Officer for the Caribbean region, reported:

“On Friday Nov. 2 the SIV Jamaat Suriname performed salat-e-janaza ghaibana for the late Br Shafi-Ud-Dean (also known as Sunny Dean), National President of AAIIL, Suva, Fiji.

On the coming week we are planning to perform salat-e-janaza ghaibana for the late sister Nazreen Zullah of Hamilton, New Zealand.

And we also made du’aa-e-shifa for Br. Mohammed Bashir.”

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations in our worldwide Jama’ats
From the reports and photographs received so far from many of our worldwide Jama’ats, we see that Eid-ul-Fitr was celebrated with great joy and spiritual serenity. Inshaa Allah, all these reports with photographs will be compiled into an Eid Supplement 2007 to depict the feeling that one Jama’at is giving a big hug to another. For those Jama’ats that have yet to submit their reports/photographs, please hurry so you could be part of this “great hug” of togetherness. May Allah (swt) bless you all. Aameen.

PRAYER & HEALTH NEWS

Brother Mohammad Bashir, Auckland, New Zealand
Mohammad Bashir Sahib, father-in-law of Br Shabir Buksh, General Secretary AAIIL, New Zealand, was rushed to an Auckland hospital for emergency treatment where he was interned for a few days.

Alhamdollillah! Thanks to your prayers, Br Mohammad Bashir has been discharged from hospital and is now recuperating at home. Please continue to pray for his complete shifa and recovery.
Jama'at members safe in California fire hazard

When we reported that Br Hamid Rahman and his family returned safely to their home, which was graciously spared by Allah from the hazard of fire, Hazrat Ameer Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha Sahib raised his hands in a fervent prayer and thanked Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful, for His kindness and blessings rendered to Br Hamid Rahman and his family on their safe return home without any further hardship or loss of property. All praise is due to Allah. Aameen.

Prayers for our departed ones

"Today, 12th October, is the anniversary of the death of Maulana Hafiz Sher Muhammad who passed away in 1990. Tomorrow, 13th October, is the anniversary of the death of Maulana Muhammad Ali, who died in 1951. On 14th October is the anniversary of the death of our last Ameer, Prof. Dr Asghar Hameed. So it is fitting that we pray for them and for our recently deceased brothers and sisters in the words of the Quran: “And those who come after them say: Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who had precedence of us in faith, and leave no spite in our hearts towards those who believe. Our Lord, surely You are Kind, Merciful.”- 59:10. [Reference: November 2007 issue of The Light, U.K. Edition.]

To our knowledge, during the month of October Begum Nazreen Zullah of Hamilton, New Zealand, the late Br Shafi Ud Dean, National President of AAIIL, Fiji, and Muballagh Razi ud din of Wazirabad, Pakistan, peacefully returned to Allah. Please include their names in the list of deceased given above for whom prayers are sought.

PUBLICATIONS

More Jama'at Books Online

We draw our readers’ attention to the November issue of The Light U.K. Edition, in which we learn that a number of our Jama'at’s books are available online as reported by the publisher:

“During September and October (till today 15th) a large number of Urdu publications, in particular, of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement during its history, have been made available on the www.aaiil.org Website. Many of these are quite rare in that these were now only available in the Central Lahore Ahmadiyya Library or privately with some individuals. In our last issue we mentioned the Urdu book entitled Mukalimat-i Milliyya by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, published in 1921, in which he has reported his religious discussions with prominent individuals, largely during his stays in England. The first of the discussions from that book was translated in our last issue ….”

We recommend the November issue of The Light, U.K. Edition which you can view at http://www.ahmadiyya.org/uk/ and read on page 5 a review of a pamphlet written by Maulana Muhammad Ali in 1925.

The publisher draws our attention to other books which can be accessed from their website:

“… There are many other greatly interesting books that have been added, including several works of Maulana Muhammad Ali, Dr Basharat Ahmad and Maulana Hafiz Sher Muhammad. A list is too long to be given here and we refer readers to the website itself for complete information: www.aaiil.org.”
FEATURE ARTICLE

THE PATH TO RIGHTEOUSNESS
By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

[This is the first of a two-part series of an article translated by Kalamazad Mohammed, BA. Dip. Ed., Editor, The Message. The second part will appear in the December issue of The HOPE Bulletin.]

The reward of faith is the Garden of Paradise and, as streams of water are required to keep the garden green and luscious; such “streams of flowing water” are the consequence of acts of goodness. The reality of this is that acts of goodness performed in this world will take on a symbolic resemblance to the flowing streams of water in the next world. In this world, too, we witness that the more a person progresses in his acts of goodness and the more he safeguards himself against deeds that may be acts of disobedience to God Almighty, and the more he abandons the practices that go outside the limits set by God, the greater is his faith. Every new act of goodness brings him greater satisfaction and he attains a deeper inner strength. The knowledge of God begins to give him pleasure until such time as a believer is granted by God’s grace, a state of love for God in which he becomes totally immersed. The light of God engulfs his heart completely and all types of darkness and hindrances are removed from his path. In this state, all difficulties and tribulations that are placed in the path towards God do not worry the seeker for one moment. Instead, facing tribulation in the path of God becomes a source of pleasure for such people. This is the final stage of belief.

There are seven aspects of belief and an additional, final, one that is granted through the love and grace of God. This is why there are seven doors of paradise and the eighth one is opened only through the special Grace of God. It is worth remembering that the heaven and hell that will be found in the next world will not be something entirely new. They are an image formed by a person’s faith and his actions and this is its true philosophy. It will not be something that will be given to a person from the outside – it is something that emanates from within a human being. For the true believer there is a “paradise” in this world for every situation in which he may find himself. The “paradise” that exists for him in this world contains the promise of paradise in the next world. How clear this matter is that paradise lies within people’s own beliefs and good deeds! The enjoyment of its pleasure begins in this very world. It is the same belief and righteous actions of this world that appear as gardens of paradise together with the flowing streams of water.
(Malfuzat, Vol. 2, pp. 386-388.)

The best and most satisfactory state for a human being is that in which the state of his deeds is clear and correct. His actions should vouch for this and the blessings of God and powerful and extraordinary signs should be with him and always support him. It is only then that he is with God and God is with him. Satan creates an opportunity for himself in everything to deceive and divert people from the right path. It is because I have repeatedly presented my own revelations that some people have had the idea that they, too, should do the same. This is a tribulation that has been imposed upon them and Satan helped them in this path of destruction. Consequently, they began to receive satanic revelation and to hear voices from within themselves. People such as Chiragh Din, Ilahi Baksh, Faqir Mirza and many others met their destruction in this path and there are many others still who are treading the same path. Members of my Community should move away from such things. On the Day of Judgement, God will not ask them how many dreams they had. Rather, they will be questioned about righteous acts and about how many good deeds they
performed. Revelation is an act of God; it is not an act of man. To consider God’s act to be the cause of pride and joy is the work of an ignorant person. Observe the life of the Holy Prophet (sas) and see how he used to worship. At times he would stand up all night (in prayer) so that his feet would become swollen. When his wife enquired as to why he strove so hard when he had been purified of sin, he replied, “Should I not become a grateful servant of God?”

A person should never give up hope. The onslaught of sins is a very severe thing and reform seems difficult, but one should not despair. Some people say that we are sinners and we are overwhelmed by the demands of the self, so how is it possible for us to become righteous. They should consider that a believer is never without hope. He who despairs and thinks that there is no hope is none other than Satan himself. A believer should never be a coward. No matter how much a person is overwhelmed by his sins, God has placed such ability in man that he eventually does overcome sin. God has placed in man a power that burns away sin and this power is there in man’s nature. You will note that no matter how much water is heated – it can be heated so much that it burns whatever it touches – but even then, if this water is poured over fire, it will quell the fire. This is because God has placed this characteristic in water that if it is poured over fire, the fire is extinguished. Likewise, no matter how much a person is immersed in sins, no matter how much he is burning in bad deeds, even then he has the capacity to put out the fire of sins. However, if this ability had not been given to man, he could not then have been held accountable for himself. What is more, in that case even the appearance of Prophets and Messengers would have been unnecessary. The reality is that the nature of man is pure and provision has been made for its requirements. If there is physical hunger and thirst, there is also food and water. A human being needs air to breathe, so there is air. In short, if all that is required for the physical body is provided for, why should there not be provided the requirements of the soul? God, Who is ever Merciful and ever Forgiving, and Who covers up the faults of His servants, has provided all the necessary provisions for the preservation of the soul. If a human being were to search for spiritual water, he will find it; if he searches for spiritual bread, it would be given to him. Just as there is a law operating in the physical world, so there is a law relating to the spiritual world, but the condition is that one must seek. He who seeks shall find. He who strives to find God shall certainly meet the pleasure of God.

(Malfuzat, Vol. 10, pp. 93-95.)

Having taken the Oath of Allegiance, a person should not be content with the belief that this movement is based on the truth and that such a belief would bring blessings. The present time is one of tribulation and sinfulness is spreading all around. God is not pleased with mere belief unless it is accompanied by good deeds. Now that you have entered the fold of this Community, you should try to be good and righteous. You should avoid all ills and should spend your time in prayer – supplicate at the feet of God day and night. The time of tribulation is also the time of God’s anger and at such a time prayer, supplication, giving of alms and repentance should be the norm, and your speech should be kind and gentle. Prayers should also be offered during salah as the saying goes, “He who pleads, does not die.” Mere belief does not serve man – the belief of a person who puts his belief to one side cannot benefit him. Subsequently, it is meaningless to complain that taking the pledge of Initiation has been of no benefit! God is not pleased with mere words.

In the Holy Qur’an, God has set righteous actions side by side with belief. Righteous deeds are deeds that do not contain the slightest ill within them. However, remember that the good deeds of a human being are attacked by ‘thieves’. What are these ‘thieves’? These include actions that are carried out for show as well as the feeling of pride at one’s good actions. There are also numerous other ill deeds and sins that a person often commits. All such behaviour falsify the good deeds. The righteous deed is that which contains no
element of cruelty, ostentation, pride or the usurping of the rights of others. Just as good deeds safeguard one in the next world, so is he saved in this world through good deeds. In a household, if there is even one person who performs righteous deeds, the whole household is safeguarded. It should, therefore, be well understood that mere belief is of no avail until one steadfastly performs righteous deeds. When a physician writes a prescription, his intention is that the patient should follow that prescription and take the prescribed medicine. Should the patient not make use of the medicine and put the prescription aside, what benefit can possibly accrue to him!

(Malfuzat, Vol. 4, pp. 274-275)

EDUCATION

Hazrat Ameer Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha Sahib was quite upbeat about the education program managed by Central Anjuman at Darus Salaam, Lahore, Pakistan. In a recent telephone conversation we learned that the students of the three levels, namely elementary, intermediate and advanced, have successfully completed their first year of instruction and have moved on to the next level of studies. Jazak Allah! for this encouraging news!

On the subject of education, may we remind you to participate with your monthly donations towards the scholarship programme which is managed by an education committee chaired by Hazrat Ameer.

POEMS

The following are English renderings of the Persian poems by Capt. Abdus Salam Khan of California, USA. The first is of the verse Hoosan-e-yusaf, dumay Eesa, yuday baize daaree Aancheh khooban haman darand wa tu tanha daaree.

O Prophet of mine,
   Gathered in thy person I divine,
O Prophet of mine,
   The hallmarks of the ancients.
Their shining signs.
   The quickening breath of Jesus does blow.
Joseph’s angelic looks do show,
   The white hand of Moses does shine,
In thy holy person,
   O Prophet of mine!

God Realization

Looking for emancipation, and
   Tranquillity of your soul?
Serve Him, serve Him,
   Make Him your goal.
Self-annihilation is the path
   To God realization.
Get lost in Him to find
   The Lord of all creation.
A note from Capt Abdus Salam Khan, California, USA
Thanks for publishing the biography of my late father. He was a man of many parts with great qualities of head and heart. For correction of record I would like to state that he was never the Headmaster at Muslim High School, Baddo Malhi, though he supervised that school when he was the Education Officer at the Central Anjuman. The following interesting incident of that period was related to me by the late Abdul Hafeez Butt Sahib, the then Headmaster of the school at Baddo Malhi.

Following a scuffle between the headmaster and the second master, in which the latter was knocked down inadvertently by the former, Father was sent to Baddo Malhi by the Anjuman to investigate the incident. Butt Sahib narrated following:

"Don't get too depressed by the fact that you knocked down your second-in-command; even the Prophet Moses had to face a similar situation when he inadvertently knocked down an Egyptian. Please go to your subordinate's house with a peace offering of five kilos of pure desi ghee and we hope this will settle the matter," Khan Sahib advised me. This I did and the strategy worked perfectly. The dispute was over!"

Father wanted his children to be brought up in the pristine and rustic environment of the Punjab countryside, so he rented a house in Baddo Malhi from Ch. Sarfaraaz Ahmad, the lumberdar and a pillar of the Lahore Ahmadiyya community, and shifted us all there. He took on a heavy burden on himself by commuting daily by train to Lahore.

But he had not reckoned the downside – the virulent malaria and typhoid so endemic in those parts – and with not much medical support, we had to flee back to Lahore after a couple of years, though we probably still carry the malaria parasites in our blood. However, we also still carry some wonderful memories of this ancient little town tucked away in the heartland of the Punjab, with its cosmopolitan touch, with its rice-mills, quaint old bazaars and such hearty folks. The basmati rice grown there is still considered the best for its fine flavour.

Somehow the religious fervour that became the hallmark of those parts in those days has now vanished. There used to be a debating season during the winter months, after the rice and cotton crops had been gathered, and people, having plenty of spare time on their hands, would proceed to the pandaal to hear the munaazirah (religious debate) between the Muslim scholar and the Christian missionary or the Hindu pundit, just as people now go to watch a cricket Test match. Of course, these contests were always inconclusive, with each side claiming victory. All these wonderful memories are worth a few malaria parasites!

QUESTION & ANSWER

Question:
In recent years Muslims have been using the term “revert” (pronounced “re-vert”), rather than “convert”, to describe someone who was a non-Muslim but has now embraced Islam. They say that such a
person has “reverted” to Islam. Is there any basis in the religion of Islam for applying this term to one who has accepted Islam?

**Answer:**

The reason given for using these terms is that, according to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, every child is born as a Muslim and those whose parents are non-Muslim are made by their parents into followers of their religions. So it is claimed that when a non-Muslim embraces Islam he or she is actually “reverting” to the religion he or she had at birth.

As far as I can see, this claim has no basis in Islamic teachings and merely shows the height of superficial thinking by its upholders.

The Holy Quran, which is the first book to invite people to Islam, does not use any words for accepting Islam which can be translated as “reverting”. It tells people to believe, to submit, to follow (the Holy Prophet or the Quran), etc. Those who enter into the fold of Islam are called Muslims, believers and like terms. The same is found in *Hadith* literature. There are reports in which the Holy Prophet Muhammad invited some individual to embrace Islam and reports by various Companions describing the events of their acceptance of Islam. To my knowledge the Holy Prophet never asked anyone to “revert” to Islam, nor did any Companion (for example, Hazrat Umar) in relating his or her account of becoming a Muslim ever say that he or she “reverted” to Islam.

Ironically, any “reverting” mentioned in the Quran or *Hadith* relates to those who revert to their past wrong behaviour and beliefs after becoming Muslims! Abdullah Yusuf Ali translates a part of 58:8 as: “…those who were forbidden secret counsels yet revert to that which they were forbidden (to do)?” Mohsin Khan, in his English translation of *Sahih Bukhari*, available online, translates a *hadith* as stating that a believer “hates to revert to disbelief”, and another as instructing Muslims: “Do not revert to disbelief after me by striking off the necks of one another.” But we do not find “reverting” ever applied to the act of becoming a Muslim, as far as I know.

The *hadith* report on which this notion is based has been misunderstood by being taken out of context. The fact is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was asked about the children of non-Muslims who die in infancy, as to how God would judge them. He replied that all children are born having a true nature or the nature of Islam and it is their parents who make them Jew or Christian etc., as the case may be. Obviously this means that a non-Muslim infant who dies will be innocent in the judgment of God of holding any false belief or committing any evil deed. Everything in the world which does not have a free will and discretion is described in the Quran as submitting to God and obeying His laws, whether it is the sun, the earth, trees, animals etc. It is only in this sense that all children are born submitting to God.

But we are talking about adults who are responsible for their beliefs and deeds. An adult cannot revert to that initial state of childhood. If we speak of someone as having reverted to that state, it would mean we are saying that that person is submitting to and obeying God perfectly in each and every respect, and cannot even think of going against God’s law in the slightest! The “Islam” followed unconsciously by the whole of the natural universe as well as by infants, none of whom have the capability to disobey God, is not the “Islam” that adults human beings try to follow by means of their own understanding and free action.

Lastly, what about children born to Muslim parents? It is true, of course, that their parents don’t turn them into followers of non-Muslim religions. But as we know, many parents by their own bad example cause their children to grow up to be immoral, greedy, dishonest, corrupt adults who pay little heed to the
teachings of Islam. Are we to believe that all such Muslim adults have always remained in the condition of Islam in which they were born because their parents didn’t turn them into non-Muslim?

**LESSON OF THE DAY**

**Mean Mums**

[Courtesy Muhammad Ameen Sahu Khan]

Someday when my children are old enough to understand the logic that motivates a parent, I will tell them, as my Mean Mum told me:

I loved you enough . . . to ask where you were going, with whom, and what time you would be home.

I loved you enough to be silent and let you discover that your new best friend was not really a friend.

I loved you enough to stand over you for two hours while you cleaned your room, a job that should have taken 15 minutes.

I loved you enough to let you see anger, disappointment, and tears in my eyes. Children must learn that their parents aren't perfect.

I loved you enough to let you assume the responsibility for your actions even when the penalties were so harsh they almost broke my heart.

But most of all, I loved you enough to say NO when I knew you would hate me for it.

Those were the most difficult battles of all. I'm glad I won them, because in the end you won, too. And someday when your children are old enough to understand the logic that motivates parents, you will tell them:

Was your Mum mean? I know mine was. We had the meanest mother in the whole world! While other kids ate candy for breakfast, we had to have cereal, eggs, and toast.

When others had a Pepsi and a Twinkie for lunch, we had to eat sandwiches. And you can guess our mother fixed us a dinner that was different from what other kids had, too.

Mother insisted on knowing where we were at all times. You'd think we were convicts in a prison. She had to know who our friends were, and what we were doing with them. She insisted that if we said we would be gone for an hour, we would be gone for an hour or less.

We were ashamed to admit it, but she had the nerve to break the Child Labour Laws by making us work We had to wash the dishes, make the beds, learn to cook, vacuum the floor, do laundry, empty the trash and all sorts of cruel jobs. I think she would lie awake at night thinking of more things for us to do.

She always insisted on us telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. By the time we
were teenagers, she could read our minds and had eyes in the back of her head. Then, life was really tough!

Mother wouldn't let our friends just honk the horn when they drove up. They had to come up to the door so she could meet them. While everyone else could date when they were 12 or 13, we had to wait until we were 16.

Because of our mother we missed out on lots of things other kids experienced. None of us have ever been caught shoplifting, vandalizing other's property or ever arrested for any crime. It was all her fault.

Now that we have left home, we are all educated, honest adults. We are doing our best to be mean parents just like Mum was.
I think that is what's wrong with the world today. It just doesn't have enough mean mums.

HOPE MEMBER SERVICE

Recipe of the Month

Sweet Potato Chips

Ingredients

- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- ice water
- oil for deep frying
- salt

Method of Preparation

- Peel potatoes; cut in half lengthwise then slice very thin.
- Place slices in a medium bowl and cover with ice water; chill for 1 hour.
- Lift from water and drain on paper towels.
- Heat oil to about 375° in deep fryer or about 1 inch deep in an electric skillet or deep skillet on stovetop.
- Fry potato slices in one-layer batches for a minute or two, or until golden brown.
- Lift chips out with slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.
- Sprinkle sweet potato chips with salt before serving.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRESENTATION

[Courtesy Mudassar Aziz, P.A. to Hazrat Ameer]

Vander Hoven, a psychologist from Netherlands, announced his new discovery about the effect of reading the Qur'an and repeating the word “Allah” both on patients and on normal persons. The Dutch professor
confirms his discovery with studies and research applied on many patients over a period of three years. Some of his patients were non-Muslims; others do not speak Arabic and were trained to pronounce the word "Allah" clearly. The result was great, particularly on those who suffer from dejection and tension.

Al Watan, a Saudi daily, reported that the psychologist was quoted as saying that Muslims who can read Arabic and who read the Qur’an regularly could protect themselves from psychological diseases.

The psychologist explained how each letter in the word "Allah" affects healing of psychological diseases. He pointed out in his research that pronouncing the first letter in the word "Allah", which is the letter A, when released from the respiratory system, controls breathing. He added that pronouncing the velar consonant, L, in the Arabic way, with the tongue touching slightly the upper part of the jaw producing a short pause and then repeating the same pause constantly, relaxes the aspiration.

Also, pronouncing the last letter, which is the letter H, makes a contact between the lungs and the heart and in turn this contact controls the heartbeat.

What is exciting in the study is that this psychologist is a non-Muslim, but interested in Islamic sciences and searching for the secrets of the Holy Qur’an.

Allah, The Great and Glorious, says, “We will show them Our signs in the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to (remember Me in dua).”

Attached to the above article was an image of the Holy Qur’an showing white light emanating from the pages of the Holy Book. We are attaching this image to this issue of the Bulletin so that you too can experience the pleasure of viewing it.

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