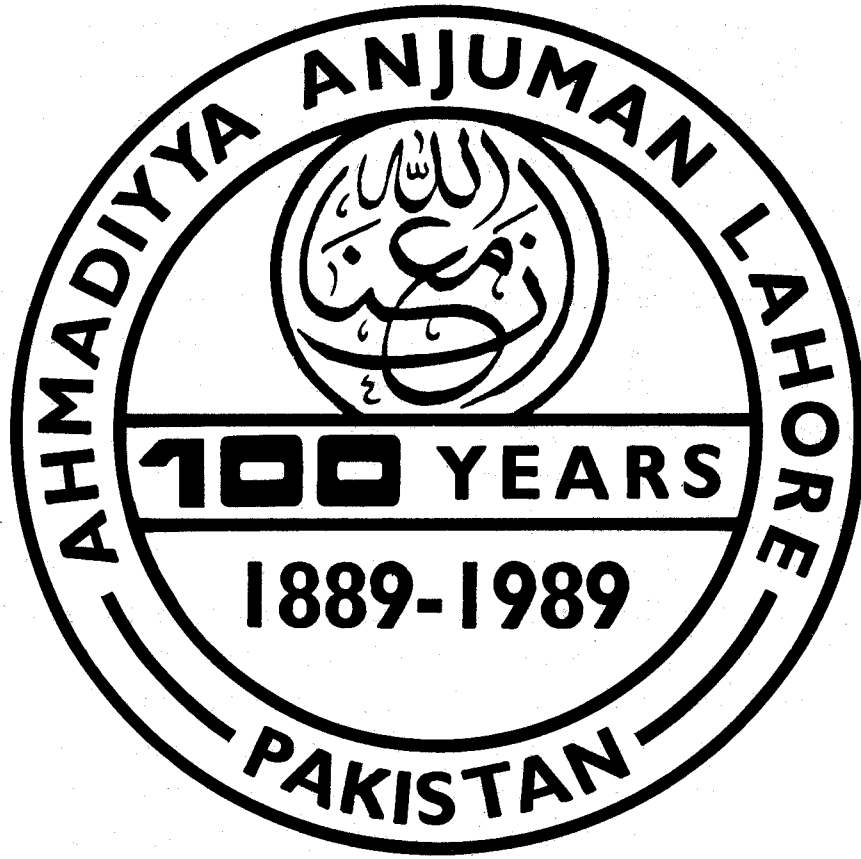


FEBRUARY, 1989.



THUS SPOKE THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Allah wishes to bring all righteous souls to one Religion

“Our Lord is truthful and faithful in fulfilling His promises. He shall bring about what He has promised. Although these are the last days of the world and many calamities are destined to befall, yet it is imperative that this earth witnesses all these events to come to pass as has been foretold.

Allah intends that all righteous souls whether living in Europe, Asia or in any part of the world, should be drawn towards His Unity and be brought together into the fold of One Religion. This is the very object for which Allah has raised me in this age. So try to achieve this objective laying emphasis on meekness and supplication. You should seek divine help through the holy spirit with complete subservience to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and purification of your inner selves. One cannot achieve real inner purification except through the Holy Spirit. In order to seek divine pleasure one should abstain from indulging in sensual pleasures. Follow the path which is the narrowest of all. Do not delve into worldly pleasures as these take one away from Allah. Earn Allah’s pleasure by leading a life fraught with difficulties and hardships. Verily pains to seek pleases Allah than the pleasures which incur His displeasure.”

(Al-Wasiyyat, pp. 14-19)

MONTHLY **THE LIGHT**

ORGAN OF LAHORE SECTION OF THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT
Vol. LXVI – No. 1 – February, 1989.

Editor : NASIR AHMAD

EDITORIAL

MESSAGE OF PEACE

We are glad that the era of democracy has dawned upon the country and the nation is breathing again in a healthier and fresh atmosphere. May Allah inculcate mutual love among the federating units of Pakistan and make the country strong and invulnerable against its enemies.

“The Light” by the grace of Allah is resuming publication after almost four years. During this period we tried to keep our readers informed about important events and activities of the Central Anjuman and its branches abroad through circulars. The couple of pages we regret could not accommodate contributions from our friends and correspondents. We hope they will renew their contributions which will be appearing in our issues as before.

Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement has always supported Muslim cause especially during the historic struggle for freedom in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. It has consistently upheld Islamic ideals of tolerance and service to humanity. In the words of the Quaid-i-Azam Islam means “peace within and peace without”. In order to achieve this cherished goal we all should exert our efforts in evolving norms of “peace” within the social fabric of our country. We hope and pray that the new venture of establishing democracy and freedom in the country will foster amity and brotherhood in the country.

THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM TO THE MODERN WORLD

by
Mr. Yaseen Sahu Khan, Canada

Message of Islam

The Holy Quran says:

“This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion” (5:3).

A perfect and complete message from Allah, the Nourisher of the worlds unto perfection, could only be delivered through the perfect religion and that religion is none other than Islam.

In our everyday life, we depend too much on outward sight, forgetting that it is the inner vision of our souls, that can enlighten the dark and dreary paths of our lives. This is only possible when we remain in touch with that Invisible Factor, Who is behind the music of our existence. When we forget this Supreme Reality, we forget our own selves. The Quran says: “and be not like those who forget Allah, so He makes them forget their own souls” (59:19).

Forgetting of Allah causes disruption in human relations. It brings conflict and tragedy in human life. When we forget Allah we turn our backs on our own happiness and bring grief and fear in our lives.

Fear is the dominant factor in the mind of man today. It also haunted the primitive man. But the modern man is afraid of himself. He must learn to save himself from the self-created fear if he wants to survive. The only possible way is to go back and start again from where he lost his way. He must restore the broken link by surrendering himself to that Ultimate Reality to whom the whole Universe surrenders. He must submit entirely to Allah and reflect over his actions, which will make him free from fear and

grief. The Quran says: "Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good; he has his reward from his Lord and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve" (2:112).

Submission to Allah has been coupled with righteousness. Submission without deeds of piety is like a bird without wings, which can merely hop but cannot fly. Thus faith and good deeds should go together. Faith without action is dead. Life without faith and discipline is worse than death. We must discover the spiritual meaning of our existence if we want to make ourselves free from fear and grief. The Almighty Allah did not leave man alone to grope in darkness to find the solution of problems. He did provide means for his spiritual nourishment as he did for his physical sustenance. A message, however, cannot be delivered without a messenger. The divine method of supplying spiritual nourishment to humanity was through Divine messengers. These messengers, according to the Glorious Quran, were sent to every nation of the world, "and for every nation there is a messenger" (10:47). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was one of them, and the Last of them. The Holy Quran says: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets" (33:40).

He was a guide and mercy to the nations: "And we have not sent thee but as a mercy to the nations" (21:107). He was neither God nor an angel. The Quran says: "Had there been in the earth angels walking about secure, Allah would have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as messenger" (17:95), but the earth was inhabited by human beings, so mortals were sent, who ate food and went about the market as other mortals did (25:7). These mortal messengers were warners and bearers of good news (2:213) and brought mankind from darkness into light (5:16) by the help of Allah. The object of their advent was to recite Allah's messages and thus purify their followers. By purification is meant not only purification from sin, but also setting the believers on the path of moral, spiritual and physical advancement.

These messengers who came to purify the world from sin, and led men to righteousness were themselves sinless. They were the Honoured Servants of Allah, and acted on Allah's commandments (12:25-27). The chief object of their appearance in the world was to remind men of their duties to their Creator and their fellow beings. The Holy Quran itself has been called "The reminder for the nations" (12:104). This is where the Quran makes an

impact on the human mind. It makes us remember what we have forgotten; it makes us recollect what has gone out of our memory, yet it lies latent deep down in our souls. This forgotten truth has to be retold, being in consonance with human nature, the Quran is a reminder of what is already imprinted therein. This indicates the essential worth-whileness of human self which was made in the best make by our Creator. Allah says: "Certainly We created man in the best make" (95:4). Then He warns and gives good news in the same breath, "except those who believe and do good, so theirs is a reward never to be cut off" (95:5, 6). According to the Quran, paradise is man's birthright. He is born on the banks of virtue. By his own folly he falls in the mire of sin.

Brotherhood of Mankind

The Quran reminds us that mankind is a single nation (2:213). It further says: "O mankind, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind), and spread from these two, many men and women(4:1). "O mankind, We have created you from a single male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you" (49:13). "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your colours. Surely there are signs in this for the learned" (30:22). The diversity of tongues and colours is a sign of Allah for human beings, but we have made it a bane and curse to ourselves. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said: "O mankind, surely your God is One and surely your father is one. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a coloured man over a white man, or of a white man over a coloured man. The noblest in the sight of Allah is the most dutiful of you" (*Bukhari*).

The world today is torn on the question of race, colour and religion. The Holy Quran has not only condemned this approach towards life, but has eradicated the prejudices from the minds of Muslims by establishing institutions such as prayer and pilgrimage where all people meet on equal footing, irrespective of their position, colour and race.

Man's suffering and Allah's compassion

We are also reminded by the Quran that man has been created to face distress and difficulties: "We have created man to face difficulties" (90:4). Man has to face problems as long as he lives. When we face problems and overcome them, we become better human beings. Thus pain and suffer-

ing have a great value in our lives. However, man is to go forward under all conditions, banking on mercy and compassion of Allah.

The modern man is fearful of his own destructive weapon. He can destroy himself and all that he has achieved in centuries, within a matter of a few hours. But inspite of this, fear should not prevail in our minds, because until death, it is all life, and we in the meantime should not forget our duty to Allah and to our fellow beings to live a virtuous life in accordance with the command of Allah, so that when the time of our departure comes, we do not fade away into nothingness, but keep on living in another world. "Men are sleeping" says the Quran, when they die they wake up to the spiritual realities of life. "Allah has promised to those who believe and do good deeds forgiveness and a mighty reward" (5:9).

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NEW TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHTS

The First Coming: How the Kingdom of God became Christianity: Written by Thomas Sheehan and published by Random House, Inc., New York; (First Vintage edition August, 1988).

We have just received a copy of the book sent by our respected Brother Mr. Muhammad Abdullah of California, USA. The author in the introduction entitled: "How Christianity came into Crisis" while discussing about a theological crisis which is going on in the Christian Church writes as follows:

"Today, at the Dawn of her third millennium, the Christian church is undergoing a theological crisis in what she thinks and believes about Jesus of Nazareth.

The crisis grows out of a fact now freely admitted by both Protestant and Catholic theologians and exegetes: that as far as can be discerned from the available historical data, Jesus of Nazareth did not think he was divine, did not assert any of the messianic claims that the New Testament attributes

(Continued on Page 15)

What others say about us

REVIVAL OF ISLAM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

“Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was appalled at the decadence and lethargy of nineteenth century Indian Islam, especially in comparison to the vitality and progress of the Western nations. In his effort to reawaken and revive Islam he and his followers struck at the determinism of Islam and again stressed some of the freedom and human responsibility which was promulgated by the Mu'tazila. Muhammad Ali, for instance, says that predestination (*jabr*) has never been the belief of the Muslim community, and that a “strict predestinarian, who believes that man has no control at all over his actions, would deny the very basic principle of religion, that is, the responsibility of man for his action.” Actually, orthodox Muslims usually do not speak of God's predestination in terms of *jabr*, but in terms of *qadar* and *taqdir*, which are words related to God's power. Muhammad Ali reinterprets these words to avoid the idea of predestination. According to his interpretation *qadar* is not God's power in the absolute sense of foreordination but in the sense of “creating things subject to certain laws.” For instance, He has created the seed of a date tree in such a way that it produces a date-palm and not an apple tree. The sperm of man is created in such a way that it produces a man and not some other animal. In other words, His power is exhibited in the laws of nature. These laws prevent confusion in the world and provide a basis for man's enterprise. If he wants to cook food, he knows that fire generates heat and not cold; he also knows that water extinguishes fire and does not increase it. These constant properties of nature are by God's creative foreordination.

These laws of nature do not only apply to the physical universe, but also to the moral universe. There are certain consequences which follow sin. God has foreordained these consequences, but not the sin itself.

The Ahmadiyyas also interpret *qadar* and *taqdir* in the sense of limitation. For example, a man cannot turn himself into a solid block of un-

feeling matter nor can he suddenly become an ethereal being like an angel. In that sense he is "predestined" to walk through doors instead of through walls, to feel pain when pricked rather than to be without sensation.

But such laws of nature and limitations can never remove man's responsibility for his own actions. Denying the doctrine of predestination in the sense of an absolute decree of good and evil by God, Muhammad Ali writes of man's will as follows:

"He can exercise it under limitations and laws, and there is a very large variety of circumstances which may determine his choice in each case. Yet it is not true that the choice to exercise it has been taken from him; and the fact is that, notwithstanding all the limitations, he is free to exercise his will, and therefore though he may not be responsible to the same extent for anything done in all cases, and a variety of circumstances must determine the extent of his responsibility, which may be very small, almost negligible, in some cases and very great in others, yet he is a free agent and responsible for what he does."

(Henry J. Otten, *The Ahmadiyya Doctrine of God*, Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies, Hyderabad, India, pp. 31, 32)

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A Talk over Radio Guyana

JUSTICE IN ISLAM

By Moulvi Mohammad Rasheed
General Secretary
Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Guyana

One of the greatest tragedy of the world today is the injustice of man against man. This has caused great disunity among nations and people alike. People get away with crimes committed because there is no sense of fairplay among those who administer justice. As a result majority of people have become disillusioned with the higher objectives of life and the ethical role which religion is supposed to play in upholding human dignity in the world.

I have personally heard men saying where is God and why does not he bring those who commit injustice to account for. Almighty Allah has the power to bring all those who commit injustice to account for their misdeeds, but He allows them time to mend themselves. The Quran says: "Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change their own condition" (13:11). In other words man has allowed his own fellow beings to dominate over him and to misrule and do injustice to him and it is he alone who could bring back fairplay and justice.

The ideal society envisaged by Islam is based on equality, fraternity and social justice. The Quran says: "Surely we have revealed the Book to thee with truth that thou mayest judge between people by means of what Allah has taught thee. And be not one pleading the cause of the unjust dishonest. And ask the forgiveness of Allah, Surely Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful. And contend not on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls. Surely Allah loves not him who is treacherous, sinful: They seek to hide from men and they cannot hide from Allah, and He is with them when they counsel by night matters which please Him not. And Allah ever encompasses what they do" (4:105-108).

The Holy Quran emphasises the importance of truth and justice in order to uphold human dignity in a society and rejects those who do not subject themselves to the moral code of life. It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, took special care to maintain justice irrespective of fear or favour, to all so as to foster true spirit of Islam among his countrymen. The verses of the Qur'an mentioned earlier were revealed to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, when there was a dispute between an Ansari Muslim and a Jew. In this case the Holy Prophet decreed against the Muslim and acquitted the Jew. A Muslim, Tu'mah ibn Ubairaq had stolen an arm-coat and had hidden it in a Jew's house. Later on because of some contention the Muslim impleaded the Jew for the theft of the arm-coat. In this case all the Ansar Muslims tried to save their brother and wished that he should be acquitted. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, notwithstanding the animosity of the Jews, exonerated the Jew of the charge. This judgement was given at a time when every Muslim hand was needed for the defence of Islam and a judgement against an Ansari Muslim might have given rise to serious problems. But the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, being a man from Allah

and the best exemplar administered justice in a befitting manner and in accordance with the command of Allah.

Justice and equality had always been the ideals of the early Muslims who considered the commandment of Allah binding on them even though it meant confrontation with their own people. In the time of Hazrat Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, Amar bin 'As was the Governor of Egypt. He was a man of great influence and personality. His son belaboured a poor Coptic for no fault of his. When this incident was brought to the notice of Hazrat Umar, he summoned the Governor's son to appear before him in Madina and punished him publicly. This noble and unique standard of justice deeply impressed the people about the veracity of the teachings of Islam where justice is upheld even though it is against a Governor's son.

Man must realise that this world does not belong to a particular clan or autocrat alone. Every human being has a right to enjoy the fruits of his labour and live with honour and dignity. We must remember that today we may be a power on earth, but Allah is the greatest and every sceptre and crown has to crumble down. Therefore let us practise justice and equality so that the society as a whole becomes an haven of peace and bliss.

A MESSAGE FROM INDONESIA

By Brother Mansur Basuki
General Secretary
Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Indonesia

First of all I would like to convey very warm regards and salaam from the President and brothers and sisters of Indonesia Jamaat to Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib and all the Ahmadi brothers and sisters in Pakistan. Our president Dr. Ahmad Muhammad has asked me to apologise you on his behalf, for his inability to attend the meeting of the International Consultative Council because of his pre-occupation at the Jakarta University.

It is after eleven years that I am visiting the Headquarters of the Lahore

Ahmadiyya Movement. Since my first visit I have always been yearning to again meet you all. Though physically we Ahmadis in Indonesia are far away from you but in heart and spirit we enjoy a spiritual unison. In numbers we are small but by the grace of Allah with sincerity and dedication to the cause of religion we have been able to take great strides. And we hope to achieve greater success in future.

We take pride in the fact that our Jamaat took the initiative and translated the English translation of the Quran by Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali into Dutch. It was followed by its Javanese and Indonesian translations. It has been our endeavour to translate all the English publications of the Central Anjuman into Indonesian. Indonesian translation of "The Religion of Islam" and "A Manual of Hadith" are ready for printing.

The founders and senior members of the Indonesian Jamaat have passed away but have left for us rich legacy of valuable literature and traditions of devotion and zeal for the propagation of the Last Message of Allah. Similar is the case with Ahmadiyya Jamaats all over the world. We hope and pray that these luminous relics will provide beacon light to us for marching ahead in the noble task entrusted to us by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. May Allah shower His choicest blessings on the departed elders and grant us courage and zeal to pursue their mission.

Time has changed and we have to face new challenges. We all should try to meet them with greater vigour, determination and zeal. The Indonesia Jamaat have always appreciated valuable and purposeful services rendered by the Central Anjuman. May Allah keep the Central Anjuman under His Benign grace and make it a constant source of light and guidance.

Tides of opposition and persecution against the Ahmadiyya Movement have opened new vistas for work and propagation. And this needs greater cooperation and coordination between the Centre and various Jamaats abroad. We hope International Consultative Council will take appropriate decisions in this regard. It will also serve a useful forum for exchanging ideas and experiences in the field of publication and propagation. For example Indonesian language is also read and understood in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darus Salaam. So we are planning to produce literature on large scale to cater for the needs in these countries as well. In this connection we need help and cooperation of the Jamaats participating in the International Consultative Council.

NEWS IN BRIEF:

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

Inaugural address by
Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib

Two-day meeting of the International Consultative Council consisting of representatives of the foreign Jamaats of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore was held in Darus Salaam, New Garden Town, Lahore (Pakistan) on 26th and 27th of December, 1988. Representatives from Suriname, Holland, USA, Canada, England, Germany, Bharat, Kashmir and Indonesia attended the Council meetings. Representatives from Guyana and Fiji could not reach due to visa obstacles. Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib presided over the inaugural session of the Council on the morning of 26th December, 1988. He started his address with the recitation of *Surah Fatihah*. He said: "I am extremely happy that so many representatives from foreign Jamaats have come to the Centre after covering long distances to take part in the deliberations of the International Consultative Council which will *inshallah* bring closer ties and coordination among them to further the cause of the Movement. I am pleased to report that some of the foreign Jamaats have embarked on the plan of translation of the Quran into various languages of the world and publication of books under the guidance of the Central Anjuman. In this connection example set by Canada, USA and Suriname Jamaats should be followed by others."

After preliminary discussion about the constitution and procedural matters a select committee was formed to revise the draft constitution for the approval of the Council. The Council then took up the agenda itemwise. Decisions were taken regarding holding of inaugural convention in connection with the Centenary celebrations of the Movement in Suriname in July 1989. Certain suggestions were adopted regarding the holding of conventions in Holland and Germany as well. Priority list of the books of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and other luminaries of the Jamaat to be translated into English was drawn up. These books will also be translated into other languages.

We thank Almighty Allah that the two-day deliberations of the first meeting of the International Consultative Council have been extremely useful and fruitful. It has opened new avenues where coordination and co-operation between various Jamaats in foreign countries will accelerate our efforts under the guidance of the Central Anjuman and guarantee better and speedy results.

Name of foreign delegates who attended the Council meetings:

1. Mr. Rashied Pierkhan, Suriname (S. America)
2. Mr. Roshan Ghanie, Suriname (S. America)
3. Mr. Akbar Asghar Ali, Suriname (S. America)
4. Mr. Mansur Basuki, Indonesia.
5. Mr. A.S. Santoe, Holland.
6. Mr. Masud Akhter, USA.
7. Dr. Numan Illahi Malik, USA.
8. Mr. Rafi Yahya Sharif, USA
9. Mr. Yaseen Sahu Khan, Canada.
10. Mrs. Sameena Sahu Khan, Canada.
11. Mr. Abdul Razak, Bombay, India.
12. Ch. Ghulam Mustafa, Jammu, Kashmir.
13. Dr. Zahid Aziz, England.

“Art of Islam” Exhibition

The “Art of Islam” is Unesco’s 14th travelling exhibition of reproductions of works of art and has been prepared in connection with the celebration of the beginning of the 15th century Hijrah. The exhibition was organised in Paramaribo, Suriname (South America) from 11th to 26th August, 1988. Al-Qalam Trust of Paramaribo also put up a stall in the exhibition to introduce its publications to the public. The trust produces valuable books and booklets on Islam in Dutch. The books exhibited on the stall of the Trust included Dutch translations of the Quran and “The Religion of Islam” by late Maulana Muhammad Ali. The Trust printed five leaflets on Islam and activities of the Trust. These were distributed free of cost among the 15000 visitors to the Exhibition. Total number of leaflets distributed on this occasion were 30,000. Mr. Akbar Asghar Ali, Chairman of the Trust along with his wife Mrs. Sabirah Asghar Ali organised the stall and answered hundreds of questions asked by the visitors to the stall. They kept a note of some of those questions and have sent them to us. Some of the questions are very interesting and intriguing, e.g.

1. What is the difference between Allah and God?
2. Why must the forehead touch the floor while praying?
3. Why is God invisible?
4. If a negro becomes a Muslim, will he be treated equally like other Muslims?
5. Was Adam the first human being or the first prophet?
6. Why do women stand behind men during prayers?
7. Can a Muslim have friendly relations with a Christian who worships Jesus as son of God?
8. Are Christians allowed to visit a mosque?
9. Into how many languages the Quran has been translated?
10. Are prayers addressed to God directly or through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him?
11. Was it Isaac or Ishmael who was to be sacrificed?
12. When was the Holy Quran compiled in the form of a book?
13. Why is Islamic flag green?
14. When Jesus was born there was a star to guide the three wise men, did similar thing happen at the time of the birth of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him?
15. What do the moon and the star on the mosque symbolise?
16. Why men have to dress differently during pilgrimage and why in white?
17. How should parents treat children who go astray or have adopted a different religion?
18. Why a mosque is built with minarets?
19. If a Hindu or a Christian greets a Muslim with *Assalamo 'alaikum*, is a Muslim allowed to return it with *wa 'alaikum assalaam*?
20. What is the significance of the Black stone (*Hajr-i Aswad*) in Ka'bah?
21. Are Muslims allowed to seek help of deceased saints to reach Allah?

Formation of Jamaat in New York

Ahmadiyya Jamaat has also been formed in New York. A formal meeting of the Ahmadis of New York was held during a well-attended Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebration party on 28th August, 1988. The participants pledged to contribute substantial amount so as to form an initial amount for the working of the Jamaat activities. This will be in addition to the monthly contributions which every Ahmadi man and woman is required to pay for the furtherance of the cause of the Movement.

THE HOLY QURAN BASIS OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

“Within a decade of the Prophet Muhammad’s message, Islam had spread throughout the Arabian peninsula, Syria, Palestine and Iraq. With the religious faith came new social and political attitudes, and a culture which soon united the Near East, much of Asia, Africa and Spain. This culture gradually assimilated the traditions of the states and peoples it absorbed, and transformed the various artistic styles of each region into a style of its own.

The Holy Koran formed the basis of the Islamic culture in every sense. Revealed in the Arabic language, it was not only a spiritual guide for all Muslim peoples but also provided them with a legal, social and cultural foundation. Arabic, the medium of the sacred message, became the official language and appeared on buildings, textiles, pottery, wood and stone carving, metalwork and jewellery. Fine script, or calligraphy, was also developed for its own sake into one of the highest forms of Islamic art and is found in many different styles.

Since Islam has not encouraged the representation of the human figure in art, a unified decorative style evolved which was spread throughout the Islamic world by craftsmen travelling from one country to another. These links often covered enormous distances. Thus Central Asian artistic themes came to Anatolia by way of Iran through Turkish tribal migrations and were also transmitted by the Mongols.

From the beginning, the mosque has been the heart of the Islamic city and, besides being the prime institution of Islam, has been a unifying cultural factor throughout the Islamic world.

Mosques vary of course according to period and area, but in the various ways reflect the unity of the Muslim world, not just as a place of prayer, but as a centre of life around which cities developed. The mosque is a gather-

ing place for the faithful before and after the prayer ceremony. It is the dominant feature of the Islamic city. Examples of art forms in many different media can be found in mosques, ceramics, tiles, calligraphy, glassware, textiles, carpets, stone and wood carvings, metalwork, stucco and the arts of the book.

(Reproduced from "The Art of Islam" published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, France 1984).

New Trends in Contemporary Christian Thoughts

(Continued from Page 5)

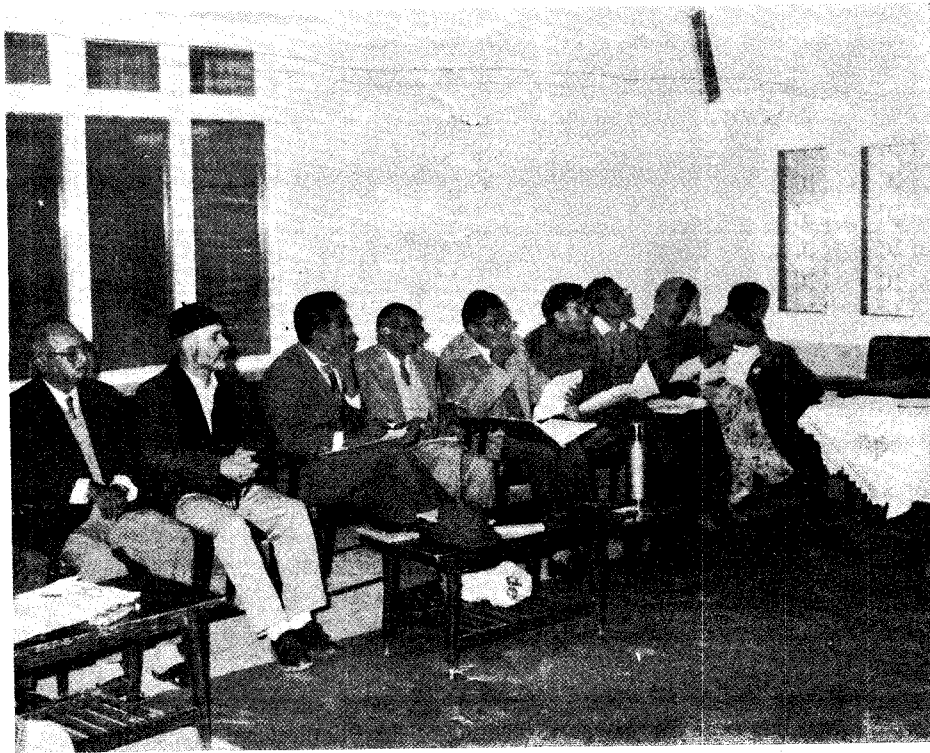
to him, and went to his death without intending to found a new religion called "Christianity." That is, the theological crisis has to do with the *prima facie* discrepancy between what Jesus of Nazareth apparently thought he was (a special but very human prophet) and what mainline Christian believers now take him to be (the divine Son of God, consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit).

The apparent difference between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" is not a new problem in Christianity. Since the last century liberal Protestant scholars like Adolf von Harnack and agnostics like Ernest Renan have tried to strip away what they thought were the church's divinizing embellishments of Jesus of Nazareth so as to arrive at the "real" (that is, the human) prophet of Nazareth.

More recently Roman Catholic exegetes and theologians have joined the discussion. With the encouragement of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, Catholic scholars now teach that the Gospels are not accurate "histories" of Jesus but religious testimonies produced by the second and third generations of Christians, whose faith that Jesus was their saviour coloured their memory of his days on earth. Thus, even though all Catholic biblical scholars believe that Jesus is God, they do not necessarily maintain that Jesus himself thought he was the divine Son of God, who had existed from all eternity as the Second Person of the Trinity.

“Does this difference constitute a discrepancy, an incompatibility between the evidence of history and the claims of faith? On the one hand, no one can scientifically prove (and no believer would want to) that Jesus actually was the divine saviour that Christianity eventually took him to be. On the other hand, it can be established with a high degree of historical certitude that the early church did not create her christological understanding of Jesus out of absolutely nothing, but rather based it on the earliest believers’ firsthand impressions of Jesus’ dramatically prophetic comportment. That is, Jesus spoke and acted with an extraordinary *authority* that he attribute to God, who was working through him. His disciples interpreted this authority as evidence that Jesus was God’s final prophet, sent to prepare Israel for the end of time. Thus early christologies, which interpreted Jesus first as the Son of Man and eventually as Christ and God (see Part Three), were an extension and enhancement of what Simon Peter and the original disciples believed that Jesus had been, whether or not that belief corresponded to what Jesus actually thought of himself and (if this were knowable) who he ontologically was.”

“At the heart of this theological crisis there lies a revolution in biblical studies—specifically, the emergence of historical-critical method—that began over a century ago and now dominates both Catholic and Protestant exegesis. The employment of the historical-critical method in scriptural research has often led to extraordinary shifts in the Church’s understanding of biblical texts; and since the testimony of the Bible is a major stone in the foundation of Christian faith, such shifts are bound to have repercussions in the theological edifice built on that foundation.” (pp. 5-9).



Two views of the inaugural meeting of the International Consultative Council.





Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib (sitting in the centre) presiding over the inaugural meeting of the International Consultative Council in Darus Salaam, Lahore (Pakistan). Mian Naseer Ahmad Faruqui, Senior Vice-President (right) and Mr. Mansur Ahmad, General Secretary (left).



Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib with the participants of the Council at the steps of Jamia Darus Salaam, Lahore.