

QUARTERLY

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.



The

Message

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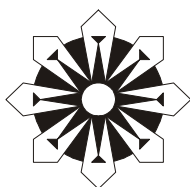
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And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way. (H.Q. 2:186)

COMMENTARY ON 2:183-184 OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

by Naseer Ahmad Faruqui

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil. For a certain number of days. But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man. So whoever does good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know (2:183,184).

Unbridled passions the cause of spiritual decline of a nation

Historically there have been many examples of human civilisations before and since the advent of Islam. They have all had one common feature: in their earlier stages

of development they all had some good and admirable characteristics, particularly when they were still influenced by the spiritual and the moral values of their respective faiths. Eventually, however, the inner animal passions of the members of these faiths became predominant over their moral and spiritual values. This unbridled freedom of emotions and desires led to their eventual decline. To observe this we do not have to go very far into our past. In our own times we have witnessed the historically unparalleled worldly progress and dominance of the Western nations. The West has been very proud of its culture and civilisation, and remains so, to this day. The whole world has practically adopted their values. Careful observers can, however, perceive, even now, the ultimate fate of this civilisation. During the advent of modern civilisation, when the moral values of Christianity were influential in their society, it had some admirable qualities. The Christian re-

PASS ON THE MESSAGE

ligion has tried to treat human internal spiritual and moral ailments by encouraging its followers to become monks or nuns. As a result of this it has been unable to keep its followers on the right path, and today Western civilisation manifests the consequences of unbridled human emotions and desires. Humanity has fallen below the level of animals because even animals do not indulge in acts contrary to their natural instincts. In Western society today, unnatural acts are not only committed without any inhibitions, but they also have the sanction of the law.

Islamic teachings suited to human nature

Islam does not give the impracticable advice of giving up one's biological emotions and desires. Instead, it teaches their proper control and usage so that they can lead towards achieving the goal of human spiritual development. Man's body resembles that of other animals. That is why medical experiments with drugs are first carried out on animals before being tested on humans. The basic emotions and desires that are generated in human beings are, therefore, similar to those of other animals. These emotions and desires are also the basic motive forces of man's struggle in life, without which he cannot advance. Let us take the example of a car engine in which motion is generated through the production of heat. This, when properly controlled and utilised by the driver, has numerous benefits and can transport man with all his necessities from one place to another. Improperly controlled, this energy can lead to destruction and irreparable damage. All motive forces act in a similar

manner, irrespective of whether they are human emotions or desires or the physical forces that move a railway engine, an airplane, or a rocket which has propelled man into space.

Fasting - the means to regulate human passions

Islam has clearly identified the high moral and spiritual values it seeks to inculcate in society. In addition, it has prescribed fasting to regulate human emotions and desires which provide the motive force to achieve these lofty goals. If we observe animal behaviour we find that there are three basic desires in every animal, including man; that is, eating, drinking and the sexual urge. A person, who follows only these basic instinctive drives, as is quite common in modern Western society, wastes his lifetime. The desires in themselves are not bad, and, in fact, all human activities of daily living are dependent upon them. The desire to eat motivates many of man's worldly activities, and human progress and endeavour have evolved from man's struggle to gather food for himself and his family. Similarly, the desire for sex leads to procreation of the human race, and various aspects of his social existence.

Divine wisdom behind fasting

Just as an animal does not appreciate being restrained, the inner animal within man also does not like interference or constraint. It disobeys and rebels against such measures. Any animal trainer will confirm that in order to discipline a circus animal, it has to be subjected to deprivation of food and sex. Likewise, by fasting and abstaining from food and sex from dusk till dawn

for thirty days, a person can discipline and control the animal within him. Only then can he successfully mount it and journey on to higher stages of his moral and spiritual development. The Holy Qur'an has referred to riding and controlling this very animal in Chapter 16, verses 8 and 9, where the physical and externally manifest theme of the creation of animals for riding, in verse 8, is immediately changed in verse 9 to the spiritual one of guidance: *And (He made) horses and mules and asses that you might ride upon them and as an ornament. And He creates what you know not. And upon Allah it rests to show the right way, and there are some deviating (ways). And if He please, He would guide you all aright.*

Fasting enjoined on all nations

The plain and simple words of the Holy Qur'an possess great wisdom. The verse pertaining to fasting begins with the words: *O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you.* Let us look into the wisdom behind this statement. The institution of fasting exists in all religions, but it does not extend over a period of thirty days as in Islam. The Christians fast for three days during Easter, while the followers of Hinduism do not have a prescribed schedule and fast as they wish, and have made it easier for themselves by just abstaining from a particular type of food. Islam is unique in that it obligates fasting continuously for thirty days, during which eating and drinking is prohibited from dawn till dusk. Does this mean Islam is more rigid than other faiths? The Holy Qur'an states that this is not the case, for all these nations had been commanded to fast

in a similar manner, and with similar restrictions. They, however, changed this Divine injunction and retained fasting only as a token; Muslims are enjoined not to do so. Praise be to Allah! Since the Holy Qur'an is safeguarded, the institution of fasting has also remained intact.

Fasting for the sake of spiritual development

To a superficial observer, the prohibition to eat and drink from dawn till dusk in the heat of summer or the cold of winter appears to be excessive. Doctors have now determined the health benefits of fasting, but not many Western-oriented people, despite knowing about the medical benefits, will be willing to commit themselves to this effort for thirty days. The Holy Qur'an states that the believers should accept this challenge more so for its spiritual, rather than its physical benefits. When a doctor prescribes a medication which is very strong and could have harmful side effects or recommends an operation which could be life threatening, we accept his advice. This is because we believe in what he says and accept his advice even though we do not know the outcome of his recommendations. In case of fasting, besides the command of Allah, we have the testimony of hundreds and thousands of prophets, the truthful (*siddiqun*), saints (*auliya*), and other righteous servants to the fact that, based on their own experience, fasting is the best remedy for the purification of the soul. We, however, do not listen to their advice.

It is a great benevolence of the Holy Qur'an that it does not enjoin anything without explaining its benefits.

It tells us that the efforts of fasting are for our own good, for it will develop within us the ability to guard against evil (*taqwa*). *Taqwa* also means guarding one's soul against harmful and noxious elements. Nobody wants to be exposed to such a danger, but even so, why is it that the whole world is so deeply involved in evils and misdeeds despite the fact that there is nothing more painful, harmful and grievous to the human soul? This is a consequence of the unbridled freedom of the low desires and emotions that I have already mentioned. The inner animal of man, representing his biological desires, can be as uncontrollable as a wild animal. The human spirit, which is sensitive and fragile in comparison, is assisted by man's intellect and instinct, but it can be overwhelmed by the animal drive. Unless the animal instincts of man are controlled by means of fasting, other means such as intellect, worldly education, cultural factors, or an internal guidance system, can be of no avail. We can clearly observe this in the modern Western society today.

After striving for a whole month in the way of Allah by abstaining from lawful sustenance and sexual relationship in accordance with His command, it becomes difficult for man to commit unlawful acts. A believer abstains from food and water only for the sake of Allah, despite the fact that no one is observing him, and even though he may have the most delicious food and the coolest drink available in his house. This strengthens his belief in Allah, and whosoever develops such strength, will find all his actions evolving towards righteous-

ness.

Those exempted from fasting

The verses under discussion end with the statement: *For a certain number of days*, which means that the days of obligatory fasting are numbered. A sick person or a traveller is allowed exemption from fasting during Ramadan, but must complete the fast on other days. Jurists have gone into lengthy discussions as to what length of journey, or what type of illness, falls into this category. How can it be appropriate for us to dig into such details when Allah and His Messenger have not specified any such matter? In any case, the distances which the jurists have fixed were applicable only to journeys on foot or on camel and horseback, and are not applicable to modern means of fast travel by car, trains or airplanes. Every individual has a different limit of endurance and, therefore, it is inappropriate to put limitations. In any case, it is improper for anybody else to prescribe limits when Allah and His Messenger did not do so. To discourage people from misusing this privilege, attention is drawn to the fact that righteousness demands some sacrifice. Therefore, if one chooses to fast with some tolerable exigency it is better for the person.

In the end it is stated that those who find it extremely hard to fast should feed a poor man. This also includes the elderly who find fasting an unbearable burden due to feebleness of age, and those in ill health who are unable to fast even at any other time because of medical advice. Pregnant women, and those breastfeeding, also fall in this category. Fasting is also not allowed for men-

struating women but they should make up for the missed fasts.

(Taken from *Light from the Holy Qur'an*, pp. 178-182. Translated from Urdu by Dr Mohammad Ahmad.)

From Abu Huraira.....

Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as saying, "He who fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from God will have his past sins forgiven; he who prays during the night in Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from God will have his past sins forgiven; and he who passes Lailat al qadr in prayer with faith and seeking his reward from God will have his past sins forgiven."

He reported God's messenger as saying, "Every (good) deed a son of Adam does will be multiplied, a good deed receiving a tenfold to seven hundredfold reward. God has said, 'With the exception of fasting, for it is done for My sake and I give a reward for it. One abandons his passion and his food for My sake. The one who fasts has two occasions of joy, one when he breaks his fast and one when he meets his Lord. The bad breath of one who fasts is sweeter to God than the fragrance of musk. Fasting is a protection, and when the day of the fast of any of you comes he must not use vile language or raise his voice, and if any one reviles him or tries to fight with him he should tell him he is fasting.'" (Bukhari and Muslim).

The Role of Education in Islamic Renaissance

by Kalamazad Mohammed, BA. Dip. Ed.

[The following is the first part of a paper that was presented at the Ahmadiyya Convention, on 27 August 1980, at the Carapichaima Senior Comprehensive School, Freeport, Trinidad, West Indies. The final part will be published in the March 2003 issue.]

And say, O my Lord, increase me in knowledge (20:114).

INTRODUCTION

This paper is divided into four main sections. As we form a tiny minority in the Western world and are influenced by its culture, it is quite relevant to take a brief look at the education system that prevails in this part of the globe.

As a result, Section A will give a selective and impressionistic view of the main characteristics of Western education, in particular the shortcomings in its philosophy and its ultimate objectives. The aim of this survey is not a wholesome condemnation of Western education but rather to demonstrate how inadequate it is to bring about a New World Order in spite of its scientific and technological pre-eminence.

Section B gives some Islamic viewpoints on educational philosophy and answers, in particular, the deficiencies of Western education adumbrated in Section A.

Section C details some of the challenges facing an Islamic system of education, in particular, the one problem I find most daunting, that is, the generation of a new consciousness in Muslims.

Section D attempts to answer pertinent educational questions and, in so doing, gives a tentative definition of

education and suggests some elements that are indispensable in formulating an Islamic philosophy of education.

Before going on, the question might well be asked: What is education? An answer to this question has never been satisfactorily given and this has been so for good reasons. Education is as wide as the universe and a single definition cannot encompass the whole field. Also, each education system reflects a philosophy of life, and as we know, there are many philosophies of life, many world views. Furthermore, there is considerable controversy between the means and ends of education; and, besides, education is not a static phenomenon; rather, it is living, growing, changing, increasing.

However, as we are going to look at Western education presently, it is only fair to give the views of some Western intellectuals on the matter:

"Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilisation of knowledge" (Whitehead).

"We are born weak, we need strength; helpless, and we need aid; foolish, we need reason. All that we lack at birth, all that we need when we come to man's estate, is the gift of education. This education comes to us from nature, from men, or from things" (Rousseau).

“To be educated is not to have arrived; it is to have travelled with a different view” (RS Peters).

“What education is and how young people should be educated are questions which demand consideration. At present, there is a difference of opinion about the things to be taught, whether the young should aim at goodness or at getting the best out of life. Neither is it clear whether education is more concerned with the cultivation of the intellect or with character. The existing practice of education offers no solution to the problem. No one knows on what principle we should proceed, whether the young should be exercised in that which is useful in life or should goodness or should the higher knowledge be the aim of our training. All three points of view have been maintained. If there is no agreement about the aims, neither is there about the means. Different persons starting with different ideas about the nature of goodness naturally disagree about the practice of it” (Aristotle).

“When I lecture at teacher training colleges and universities, I am often shocked at the ungrownupness of these lads and lasses – stuffed with useless knowledge. They know a lot - they shine in dialectics; they can quote the classics – but in their outlook on life, many of them are infants for they have been

taught to know, but have not been allowed to feel. The students are friendly, pleasant, eager, but something is lacking – the emotional factor, the power to subordinate thinking to feeling. These textbooks do not deal with human character, or with love, or with freedom, or with self-determination. And so... the system goes on, aiming only at standards of book learning and goes on separating the head from the heart” (AS Neill).

SECTION A

Intellectual advancement is the cornerstone of Western education. Although the nurturing of the mental faculties is of paramount importance in any education system, over-emphasis in this area results in gross lopsidedness. Even Western educationists are now alarmed at the dangers this trend poses. They contend that there are different ways of knowing, and while logic may hold good in the physical sciences, yet in the social sciences, complete dependence on its method is doubtful, for logic depends on *a priori* perceptions and assumptions upon which to work. And if these assumptions are wrong or deficient, the whole spider’s web of tangled logic will disintegrate under close scrutiny.

Daniel Yankelovic says: “... our equation of abstract logical thinking with knowing, with truth, and with rationality itself, is based on a series of fallacies built into the epistemological foundations of modern Western philosophy and science” (Dia-

logue, vol. 6, 1973).

Furthermore, there are different ways of knowing than knowledge that comes through logical reasoning, and he quotes Marston Morse: “The creative scientist lives in the wildness of logic where reason is the handmaiden and not the master”.

He continues: “Morse’s viewpoint, shared by many creative scientists, often after long introspection about how their discoveries were actually made, is that the logical, orderly abstract purposes of explicit reasoning are merely the surface manifestations of rationality. They presuppose other, less well-organised forms of experience that arise out of immediacy of involvement, a total engagement of mind and senses with the subject being studied. This type of involvement is the opposite of detachment and sequential logic. Without it, technical reason is doomed to perform its sterile operation in a vacuum. Reason is trivial when cut off from its grounds in direct experience” (*Ibid.*).

In other words, feelings, sense experiences, involvement with the subject being studied, intuition and flashes of illumination which logic cannot account for, are important ways of gaining knowledge. Unfortunately, these are neglected in Western education, and modern scientific discoveries concerning the composition and function of the brain now reveal the folly and danger of this neglect, for, as we shall see from this quotation, only a special part of the intellect is being cultivated.

“A serious obstacle to self-discovery through the experience of school is that our

educational system has always had a strong masculine bias. Recent work on the physiology of the brain (Ornstein 1972) has shown that each lobe specialises in certain functions. Generally speaking, the left lobe develops language, logical thinking, an analytic approach, a study of items, linear apprehension, and pragmatic understanding. The right lobe is strong in artistic appreciation, intuitional thinking, a synthetic approach, spatial awareness, and relational understanding.... It is at once obvious that right-lobe functions are those which, traditionally, have been considered to be 'feminine' qualities, whereas those of the left lobe have been thought to be typically 'masculine' (*Education for Self Discovery*, p. 84, Hodder & Staughton, London, 1977).

And as emphasis is placed mainly on left lobe functions we see firstly, that Western education overvalues one group of functions thus making it impossible to achieve a well-balanced personality, and secondly, "it has only an alien environment whose right lobe functions cry out for expression and growth" (*ibid.* p. 85).

And the writer concludes: "If we ask which set of qualities the world especially needs at the present time, the answer is indisputable – the feminine syndrome" (*ibid.* p. 85).

Another damaging feature of Western education is the compartmentalisation of knowledge which results, no doubt, from the dual

nature of its educational philosophy. The justification for this practice seems to lie in the dubious interpretation placed on the verse of the New Testament which speaks of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's. As a result of this facile view, life itself is divided into two airtight categories: religious and secular. This erroneous interpretation of life has led to a process of fragmentation which has adversely affected every aspect of the education system: its nature, purpose, content, organisation and methodology.

Nowhere is this fragmentation most strikingly exemplified than in the school curriculum, and this has led A.N. Whitehead to argue: "The solution which I am urging is to eradicate the fatal disconnection of subjects which kills the vitality of our modern curriculum. There is only one subject-matter for education, and that is life in all its manifestations. Instead of this single unity, we offer children Algebra, from which nothing follows; Geometry, from which nothing follows; History, from which nothing follows; a couple of languages, never mastered.... Can such a list be said to represent life, as it is known in the midst of the living of it? (*The Aims of Education*, p. 10, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1962).

And as God is no longer regarded as the pivotal force of all existence, education is in a state of disorientation for there is no unifying thread, no unity of purpose by which to combine the various elements of the curriculum into a single harmonious whole.

But not only has this false dichotomy between religious and secular affairs undermined the nature and process

of education, it has also tainted and misdirected the object of education itself. Education is regarded as a luxury rather than as a tool and so greatly has the desire for wealth, status and prestige dominated the educational process that the end of education itself is corrupted, devalued and relegated to the role of being an agent of selection for entry into white-collar jobs and the consequent ease, mobility and luxury that such jobs promise.

Schools have now become factories charged with the task of providing skilled and semi-skilled labour for the industrial state, and the school system itself, argues Toffler, performs the function of acclimatisation for the world of industry: "Mass education was the ingenious machine constructed by industrialism to produce the kinds of adults it needed.... The inner life of the school became an anticipatory mirror, a perfect introduction to industrial society" (*Future Shock*, pp. 354-355).

Furthermore, the division between the Church and State is so closely guarded that in some circles, political, business and especially in higher educational institutions, to invoke the name of God in an argument, or even in a discussion is to invite patronising, derisory and contemptuous treatment from one's peers.

SECTION B

An Islamic system of education provides unity of purpose and objective to mankind. It caters for the multi-dimensional facets of human nature and consequently aims at a balanced development of personality.

The intellect by itself cannot guide us on the right path. It must feed on Divine revelation. Just as rainwater gives life to the dead earth and brings out her boundless potentials, so does Divine revelation quicken the intellect and bring out the divine in man. Potentially, man is the best and highest of God's creation: *Certainly we created man in the best make* (H.Q. 95:4).

But this potential can only be actualised if the logic of the intellect nourishing itself upon divine perceptions and assumptions work towards the total development of man's nature. This is not to deny the importance of the intellect, for the Qur'an itself says: *The vilest of animals in God's sight are the deaf and dumb who do not use their reason* (8:22). Instead, it is to place the role of the intellect in proper perspective as was done by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his *Tarjumanul Qur'an*. He recognises four main types of equipment given as guidance to man: (1) Instincts (2) Senses (3) Intellect. The instincts are corrected by the senses and the intellect corrects the mistakes of the senses. The fourth type of guidance is Divine revelation which needs no correction but guides all the others.

In Islam there is no false dichotomies, no arbitrary segmentations that have no connecting links. Instead, we find unity of purpose: *To Allah is all affairs returned*, and *To Allah is the end of all affairs*, the Qur'an repeatedly affirms. There is no division between Church and State, for in Islam all actions have religious significance, thus ruling out all grounds for double standards and false justifications in our behaviour.

As a result of this unity of purpose, there is in Islamic education, no rigid separation and even opposition between the arts and sciences, no fragmented subject-centred curriculum, the dangers of which are manifold: for example, the subjects do not reinforce one another because the links between them are not well established. In fact, they are not clear at all. Were it not for examinations, success at which promises to provide a meal ticket, this curriculum would never work. As a matter of fact, examinations, both internal and external, have come in for a lot of adverse criticism from progressive educationists in the West. Constant testing, they argue, helps to segment the curriculum into pieces that never connect in the student's mind, and external examinations help to distort the purpose of education. Schools, they continue, should come out of the certifying business and instead get on with the purpose of educating students; that is, developing their means of self-discovery, their general intelligence and their character. This, of course, is part of an Islamic education.

What is the place of morality, of virtues; of values, for example, truth, honesty, chastity, justice, perseverance, patience, selflessness, altruism etc., in education and in life generally? Do we need values just for social adjustment as is advocated in the West or do they serve a deeper purpose as advocated by Islam? The latter view is definitely espoused by Muslims who argue that sound moral attributes form the foundation and also the springboard without which intellectual and spiritual excellence are impossible. Imam Ghazali is quoted as saying: "The aim of moral discipline is to purify the heart from

the lust of passion and resentment till, like a clean mirror, it reflects the Light of God". This lifts the aims of education far above mere mundane considerations like just getting a good job, social status, prestige, and power over one's fellow men, which seem to be the end result of Western education.

Is Islamic education limited only to what takes place in schools? Certainly not! "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave," the Holy Prophet (*sas*) commanded. Furthermore, even in the West there are strong currents of thought professing the view that educational reform of schools is impossible without a general reform of society.

"Few things tell us so much about a country as its schools. In them we can see some of the most important processes of any nation yesterday's traditions and today's policies moulding and developing the citizens of tomorrow" says Nigel Grant (*Soviet Education*, p.15, Penguin Books, London, 1964).

Julienne Ford goes further: "One might argue, as did Warner, that the notion that social structure can be changed through education reform (of schools) is a liberal myth. As long as we live in a class society, then the influence of social class will be felt in all the schools determining the kinds of education children receive and the results they receive from them" (*Social Class and the Comprehensive School*, p.132, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1969).

How can we achieve this overall reform of society? What models should we follow? Do we have to depend on our intellect and the examples of

others alone? Muslims are fortunate in that we have been bequeathed the perfect guidance in the form of a unique Book, the Holy Qur'an, which asserts: *And certainly We have made distinct in this Qur'an every kind of description* (18:54), that is, all things personal, social, political, spiritual.

Every aspect of human existence is catered for and complete balance and harmony are maintained between the various elements: *And the Heaven, He raised it high, and set up the Measure, that you may not exceed the Measure, and keep up the Balance with equity, nor fall short in the Mea-*

sure (55:7-9).

Non-observance of these twin laws of creation certainly leads to lopsidedness and imbalance, among other things.☐

To be continued in the next issue.

F A S T I N G

Fasting is universal: all religions have the institution of Fasting in some form or the other as the Holy Qur'an informs us

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil. For a certain number of days. But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man. So whoever does good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know (2:183-184)

Time of Fasting

1. Month of Ramadan – the month in which the Holy Qur'an was revealed.

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you and that you may give thanks (2:185).

2. From dawn to sunset. Roughly this year from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m.

...And eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn, then complete the fast till nightfall... (2:187).

3. Refraining from food, drink and sexual passions during the time of fasting; that is, from dawn to sunset; and also from all other kinds of sinfulness of thought, feeling, word or action. Instead, the heart of the fasting person should be seeking the pleasure of God.

Purpose of Fasting

Many benefits are derived from fasting; for example, physical, moral and social; but the chief aim is spiritual:

...So they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way (2:186).

The Holy Qur'an also tells us to keep the fast in order to:

1. Guard against evil.
2. Keep one's duty to God and to our fellow human beings.
3. Develop love for God.
4. Develop fear of God.
5. Achieve righteousness.
6. Develop self-control.

The Holy Prophet tells us: "Fasting is a shield, and when the day of the fast of

any of you comes he must not use vile language or raise his voice, and if anyone reviles him or tries to fight with him he should tell him he is fasting."

Some more quotations on fasting from the *Hadith* (Sayings) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him):

1. "Ramadan, a blessed month, has come to you during which God has made it obligatory for you to fast. In it the gates of heaven are opened, the gates of hell are locked and the rebellious devils are chained. In it God has a night which is better than a thousand months. He who is deprived of its good has indeed suffered deprivation."
2. "Fasting and the Qur'an intercede for a man. Fasting says, 'O my Lord, I have kept him away from his food and his passions by day, so accept my intercession for him.' The Qur'an says, 'I have kept him away from sleep by night, so accept my intercession for him.' Then their intercession is accepted."
3. "It is a month of endurance, and the reward of endurance is paradise. It is the month of sharing with others, and a month in which the believer's provision is increased. It is month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness, and whose end is freedom from hell." ☐

HAZRAT AMEER DR ASGHAR HAMEED PASSES AWAY

We announce, with the deepest regret, that news has been received from Lahore that the Head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, Professor Dr Asghar Hameed Sahib, passed away in the early hours of Monday 14 October (Pakistan time).

Inna li-llahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un (We belong to Allah and to Him we return).

The *janaza* (funeral) is due to be held today, Monday 14 October, at 7 p.m. (Pakistan time), at Darus Salaam, Lahore, the headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore.

Please join us in prayer that: Allah may shower His mercy on the deceased, grant him His forgiveness and protection, admit him into His *Jannah*, and join him with the righteous elders who have passed away before him. - *Ameen*.

Our prayers and sympathies are extended to his sons and daughters, and near and dear ones.

The late *Hazrat Ameer* Dr Asghar Hameed, who was eighty-two years of age, was an outstanding scholar of Islam and highly learned in the books of the Promised Messiah and Maulana Muhammad Ali. By profession he was a Professor of Mathematics and had reached the high position of vice-chancellor of the Engineering University Lahore before his retirement in the 1970s. All these worldly and religious distinctions were combined with an utterly humble and unassuming personality.

Zahid Aziz
on behalf of
AAIIL USA Board of Directors
14 October 2002

The Muslim Literary Trust of Trinidad and Tobago regrets the passing away of our former *Ameer*, Dr Asghar Hameed Sahib, on 14 October 2002. We convey condolences to his family, relatives, community, friends, and pray for an honourable sustenance and a noble rank for him in the life hereafter.

Funeral prayer *in absentia* was said for him at the Freeport Uquiré Muslim Association Masjid (the Fireburn Jama'at).

On the other hand, we congratulate our new *Ameer*, Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha, on his elevation to this state of honour and responsibility, and we pray for Allah's guidance to him in this onerous but blessed task that he has undertaken to spread the message of True Islam (*Ahmadiyyat*) to every corner of the globe.

The following is a short but impressive biography of our dear *Ameer Sahib*:

Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha was born on 28 February 1945, at Dadar, District Mansehra in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. His father, the late Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan named him Abdul Karim. Hazrat Syed Asadullah Shah Sahib, who was very close to the family, lovingly called him "Pa-

sha" when he was still a child. He is today more commonly known by that name in the *Jama'at* [Movement].

Dr. Pasha attended Burn Hall School in Abbottabad, and Forman Christian College in Lahore before enrolling in medical school. He graduated as a doctor from King Edward Medical College, Lahore, in 1968. Dr. Pasha was inclined towards religion from early childhood. He benefited a lot from the *Dars-i-Qur'an* and *Hadith* [discourses on the Holy Qur'an and Hadith] and readings from the books of Hazrat *Masih-i-Maoud* [Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib of Qadian] that his father conducted almost on a daily basis. He was also very much influenced by lectures and *Dars-i-Qur'an* by the late Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi Sahib, Naseer Ahmad Faruqui and Hafiz Sher Mohammad Sahib. As a student in a missionary school he did not hesitate to engage the Christian priests in discussions about the death of Jesus Christ or to explain the reality of the claims of Hazrat Mirza Sahib to fellow students and teachers. He has been continuously building on this firm foundation and is today considered one of the most learned members of the *Jama'at*.

Dr. Pasha started his medical career in Mayo Hospital, Lahore, and later moved to New Zealand, then to the U.K. where he obtained Membership in the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) in 1979. He moved back to Pakistan in April 1981 and took up a teaching assignment in Ayub Medical College Abbottabad. He was promoted as Professor of Medicine in 1987 and appointed Head of the De-

partment of Medicine in 1991. In 2001, he was selected to become principal of the college, but his appointment was cancelled by the government under pressure from the religious lobby for obvious reasons. Dr. Pasha also has the distinction of being conferred the Fellowship of the Royal Colleges of Physicians, London (1994) and Fellowship of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Pakistan in 2001. He is also serving as a member/chairman of a large number of professional committees and programmes. He has been a regular contributor to international and local professional publications and has travelled widely to attend conferences and conventions.

He has remained a staunch member of the *Jama'at*, and has shown great patience and commitment to the Movement in the times of adversity brought about by the opponents of

the Movement. His love for the Holy Qur'an is exemplary. Dr. Pasha was elected a member of the *Majlis-e-Mu'tamideen* in 1992 and has retained this honour and served the *Jama'at* in that capacity ever since. He commands a lot of respect in the *Jama'at* for his piety and virtue. He has always made very positive contributions about the affairs of the *Jama'at*. He has been a regular speaker at the Annual *Ahmadiyya Duaa'iyah* [prayer gathering] for over twenty years. He is fond of poetry and has expressed, in his poems, deep sentiments relating to the *Jama'at* and the hard times it has been through. He has served as a trustee of the *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Missions International (AALMI)* but resigned from this position when it became difficult for him to attend meetings of the Trust in London. He represented the Central Anjuman at the World Muslim Convention of the

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam (Lahore) Fiji in April 1985. He also performed the dedication ceremony of *Masjid-i-Noor* in Suva on behalf of *Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan*.

Dr. Pasha is married and has three sons. The two elder ones are qualified doctors while the third is in the final year of medical school.

On 3 November 2002, Dr. Pasha was unanimously elected as *Ameer* and President of *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore*. Being at the pinnacle of his career, he has accepted this responsibility at a tremendous sacrifice. We request all readers to pray for his success in uplifting the *Jama'at*, and that Allah may give him the strength, wisdom and spiritual power to lead us successfully in propagating Islam to all the corners of the world.☐

POEM – Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib

*Log kuchh baa-ten ka-ren, me-ree
baa-ten aur hain,
Main fi-daa-e yaar hoon, go taygh
khayn-chen ha-zaar.*

*Ay me-re pyaa-re ba-taa tu kis ta-rah
khush-nood ho,
Naik din ho-gaa wo-hee jab tujh-pe
ho-wain ham ni-saar.*

*Ib-ne Mar-yam hoon ma-gar ut-raa
na-heen main charkh se,
Neez Mah-dee hoon ma-gar be taygh
aur be kaar-zaar.*

*Mulk se mujh-ko na-heen mat-lab na
jan-gon se hai kaam,
Kaam me-raa hai di-lon ko fat-ha
kar-naa ney di-yaar.*

*Mujh-ko kyaa mul-kon se me-raa
mulk hai sab-se ju-daa,
Mujh-ko kyaa taa-jon se me-raa taaj
hai riz-waa-ne yaar.*

People may say base things about me,
but my gaze is towards the heavens.
My life is for my Friend alone, even
if a hundred swords were drawn
against me.

Tell me, O my Beloved, in what way
I can win Thy pleasure,
Momentous will be the day when I
sacrifice my life for Thee.

I am the son of Mary but I have not
descended from the heavens,
I am also the Mahdi but I have no

use for sword nor battle.

I have no desire for kingdom nor any
concern for war,
My work is the conquest of hearts
and not of cities.

Earthly kingdoms mean nothing to
me, for my kingdom is divine,
Wherefore the need for princely
crown when my crown is the pleasure
of my Friend.☐

*Yet there are some men who
take for themselves objects of
worship besides Allah, whom
they love as they should love
Allah. And those who believe
are stronger in (their) love for
Allah. (H.Q. 2:165)*

Questions & Answers

1. Q. Who is a prophet or messenger of God?

A. A prophet (nabi) or messenger (rasul) of God is a human being to whom God gave His guidance and whom He charged with the task of conveying that guidance to the people, so that they may do good and avoid evil.

2. Q. In which countries of the world did prophets arise?

A. According to Islam, Allah sent prophets to all nations on earth at various stages of their histories. The Holy Qur'an says:

And for every nation there is a messenger (10:47).

And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them (35:24).

3. Q. In which of these prophets of God do Muslims have to believe?

A. Muslims have to believe in all the prophets and messengers of God, equally, without distinction, wherever they may have appeared. It is clearly stated in the Holy Qur'an: We make no distinction between them (2:136,285 and 3:84).

4. Q. Who are some of these prophets?

A. Many prophets are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. For example, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus, who are Biblical prophets, and also

non-Biblical prophets such as Luqman, Hud and Dhul Kifl. And last of all, the great universal prophet, Muhammad (sas).

5. Q. Did any other prophets appear, apart from those mentioned in the Holy Qur'an?

A. Yes. The Qur'an itself tells us that it has mentioned only some of the prophets (4:164). Muslims have to believe in and respect all the prophets whether named in the Holy Qur'an or not.

6. Q. It is a well-known fact that Muslims believe in the Israelite prophets including Jesus. How do they regard the great figures of other religions, such as Krishna, Buddha and Confucius?

A. The Holy Qur'an teaches us that Allah sent prophets to every nation - the ancient founders of these other religions, too, would have been prophets and messengers of God. Wherever there are people following a sacred scripture older than the Qur'an, their religious founders mentioned in those Books should be accepted by Muslims as true prophets of God. It has been suggested that Buddha is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an by the name Dhul-Kifl, meaning Man of Kifl, where Kifl is the Arabic form of the name of his birthplace, Kapilvestu.▣

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There are many doubts that Satan instigates in the hearts of men. The most dangerous of them and the one which becomes a source of loss in the world as well as the next world is connected with belief in the Hereafter, for, a greater part of virtuous deeds and truthfulness is linked, along with other factors, with faith in a life after death. When a person considers life in the Hereafter as no more than stories, then there can be no doubt about it that he has made himself unacceptable and has lost both worlds - this one and the next.▣

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib

Have they not travelled in the land so that they should have hearts with which to understand, or ears with which to hear? For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts.
H.Q.22:46

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And the servants of the Beneficent are they who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, Peace! H.Q. 25:63

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