

*Islam*  
*And*  
*Freedom of Conscience*

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*Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V<sup>at</sup>*

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QADIAN

# ISLAM AND FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

English translation of *Islām Aur Āzādī-e-Damīr* (Urdu)  
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## *Preface*

Since the remotest ages the Prophets and Messengers of God have met opposition from people who seek to spread confusion and disorder. In the Holy Quran God has shed light on the lives of various Prophets and the unhappy end met by those who were hostile to them. In the past, Prophets were sent by God for specific periods in time, therefore, opposition to them lasted only so long as the age of their prophethood. However, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent for all peoples and all ages. Thus, from the time of his advent until the present day he has faced a consistent storm of antagonism. This has taken the form of enemies like Musailamah Kadhdhāb, malevolent writings like *Rangīlā Rasūl* and *Satanic Verses* or odious cartoons. The most recent manifestation of this has been the film *Innocence of Muslims*.

In such times of trial, God tests the will of the believers in order to see how they react.

Taking guidance from the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the

Head of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>at</sup>, has numerous times addressed this issue in his Friday sermons some of which are presented in this booklet. The reaction of the media following Ḥuḍūr<sup>at</sup>'s sermon of 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2012 has been included towards the end of the booklet.

It is my fervent prayer that God may enable us to propagate the light of truth to the various parts of the world so that peace and tolerance might be firmly established.

Munir-ud-Din Shams  
Additional Wakīlut-Taṣnīf  
London  
December 2012

## *About the Author*

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the fifth spiritual successor [Khalīfah] and great grandson of the Promised Messiah and Mahdī, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, is the Head of the Worldwide Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at spread over 200 countries. He is the elect of God and voice-articulate of the age.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad graduated from Ta'līmul-Islām College, Rabwah, Pakistan, and in 1976 received his M.Sc. degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. Thereafter he devoted his life to the service of the Jamā'at and went to Ghana under the Nusrat Jahan Scheme. There he served for several years as Principal of various Aḥmadiyya Muslim Schools and as the Manager of the Aḥmadiyya Agricultural Farms.

In December 1997 Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad was appointed as Nāẓir-e-A'lā [Chief Executive] of Ṣadr Anjuman Aḥmadiyya, Pakistan.



He was elected to the office of Khalīfah, the Supreme Head of the Jamā'at, on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2003 after the demise of the fourth Khalīfah, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. Because of the persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at in Pakistan, he is currently based in London from where he champions Islam's message of love, peace and tolerance.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In his Friday Sermon delivered on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2012 at Baitul-Futūḥ Mosque, Morden, Surrey, UK, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>at</sup>, the Head of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Community, said:

When I arrived for last week's Friday sermon there was a heavy media contingent [at the mosque]. I asked Amir Sahib the reason for this and he told me that in light of the recent hurtful and insensitive film made in the United States about the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the international reaction among Muslims, they had come to report on the Jamā'at's point of view. I told him to inform them that my Friday sermon would be on this very subject and that they could gauge the reaction of Aḥmadīs from that. Such are the works of God that not only did He bring these numerous journalists here but He also put it in my mind to deliver a sermon on this topic.

Apart from print journalists a number of television reporters were also in attendance, including one from the BBC's Newsnight program, another BBC reporter,

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representatives of New Zealand national television and French television as well as numerous others. The reporter from New Zealand, who was sitting on my right, asked the first question. He inquired what message I wished to convey [with regards to the circumstances surrounding the movie]. I replied that I had said everything in the sermon. I told him that he had listened to the translation and therefore he knew that I had elaborated on the high station and rank of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and explained that his example is one that should be followed by all Muslims. While the anger of Muslims is justified and only natural, in certain instances, their reaction is completely unwarranted. Those of a worldly disposition cannot understand the love Muslims have for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, therefore they are entirely unaware of the extent to which our feelings are injured by such reprehensible acts. This is a threat to the peace of the world.

He then said to me that I had used harsh language and declared that these perpetrators would go to Hell. Although he didn't say as much, he meant that I too was acting in the same way as those whom I condemned. Because he pressed the point, I told him that the decree of God takes effect against those who continually deride and mock His loved ones and do not cease in this and it is

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possible for this to excite God's wrath and result in severe punishment....

I told the journalists present that the Jamā'at was not in favour of reactionary protests or rioting. An Aḥmadī will never be involved in demonstrations that disturb the peace. A journalist later reported that Aḥmadīs are a minority sect in Islam who have suffered at the hands of Muslims. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether the message of their Khalīfah resonates among the wider Muslim world...

The reporter from Newsnight, a current affairs program here in the UK, mentioned that he had seen the film and found nothing in it that would prompt such a fierce reaction within the Muslim world. He said that by delivering such a detailed and forceful sermon on the subject [I too had overreacted]. The movie was in his words a bit of joke. *God forbid*. This is what has become of the etiquettes and conduct of these people. I said to him that I could not understand how he could watch such a film. I further said that it was impossible for him to understand the status given to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> by Muslims and the love and affection they have for him. Though I had not seen the film myself, from what I am told, there are one or two things in the film which are completely intolerable and yet he says that there is

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nothing untoward in it. I told him that after hearing these things I did not have the strength of will to watch the film for they would disturb anyone. I asked him how he would respond if someone were to abuse his father; for he would be certain to react and speak out against this. In the sight of Muslims the status of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> is far beyond [that of a parent]...

These people will not be dissuaded from their misdemeanors and on the pretext of Muslim demonstrations it seems that they are ready to injure our feelings again. They spread the foulness of their deeds from one place to another. Only two days ago a Spanish magazine published cartoons of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and justified it in the name of satire. They also argued that it was the best response to Muslim protests.

So we must again silence these detractors and inform educated people that such acts only serve to threaten the peace of the world. It is imperative that these injustices be shown up for what they are...

During Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> wrote a book entitled *Tohfa-e-Qaişariyyah* [*A Gift for the Queen*] in which he praised the just and fair government of her Majesty and delivered to her the message of Islam. He also wrote on how to establish peace in the world, inter-religious harmony and the need

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to uphold the sanctity and honour of the Prophets and other esteemed religious personages. On the occasion of Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, a translation of this book was prepared and published in an attractive edition and was presented to her relevant office along with a letter I had written in her name. [Afterwards] I received a reply thanking me for the gift and informing me that the book had been included in the Queen's collection and that she would take the time to read it. Whether she does or not is another matter, the more important thing is that we have fulfilled our responsibility. Today, the peace of the world is as threatened as it was when the book was first published. Indeed in many ways the current climate is far more precarious. The increasing attacks on Islam and the person of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> mean that the message of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> needs to be widely disseminated once again...

### *The Honour of God's Messengers Needs to be Upheld for the Preservation of World Peace*

When the messengers of God bring their teachings and their communities start to grow then this in itself is a sign of their truthfulness. It is important to respect and honour those individuals who were sent by God in order to preserve the peace of the world. I will now read an

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excerpt from the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>'s writings in which he talks on this subject. He writes,

"Therefore, this law is part of the eternal practice of Almighty God that He does not grant respite to a false prophet (that is to say if worldly governments do not tolerate that something false be ascribed to them, how can God tolerate it?). Such a person is soon seized and suffers his punishment. In view of this, we shall honour and accept as true all those who claimed to be Prophets at any time, and their claim was established and their religion became widespread and flourished over a long period. If we should discover mistakes in the scriptures of their religions or should observe the misconduct of their followers, we would not attribute these faults and shortcomings to the founders of these religions, inasmuch as the perversion of scriptures is possible and it is possible that mistakes of interpretation might find their way into the commentaries. But it is not at all possible that a person should fabricate lies against God and claim to be a Prophet and then put forward his own compositions as the Word of God falsely, and yet God should grant him respite like the righteous (that is, that all this should happen and God deals with him like a truthful person) and allows him wide acceptance worthy of the truthful."

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"Therefore, this principle is an ultimate truth and endless blessing, and withal lays the foundation for conciliation, in that we affirm the truthfulness of all Prophets whose religion has been well-established, has survived for a long time period and has had millions enter its fold. This is a very blessed principle. If all the world were to adhere to this fundamental principle, thousands of disorders and blasphemies, which disturb the peace among general public, would be eradicated. It is apparent that people who consider the adherents of a religion to be following a person, who, in their view, is a liar and fabricator, lay the foundation of many tribulations. They certainly commit the crimes of defamation and speak of the Prophets with extremely disrespectful words, going as far as employing abusive language, and disrupt harmony and peace among the general public; notwithstanding that their estimation is wrong and they are transgressors in the eyes of God with regard to their disrespectful views. God, Who is Merciful and Beneficent, does not like that a liar should prosper unfairly and then put people in doubt by establishing his own religion. Nor does He allow that, in the eyes of the world, a person be raised to the level of true Prophets while he is a fabricator and a liar.

"Therefore, this principle lays down the foundation of love, peace and harmony, and supports moral values, in



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that we consider all those Prophets true who appeared in the world—whether in India, or Persia or China or any other country. God instilled their respect and grandeur in the hearts of millions and made firm the roots of their religion, which remained established for centuries. This is the principle that **the Quran teaches us**. In light of this principle, we honour all religious founders who fall under this description whether they are the founders of the religion of the Hindus, or the religion of Persians, or the religion of the Chinese, or the religion of the Jews or the religion of the Christians. Unfortunately, our adversaries cannot treat us this way, and they do not bear in mind the pristine and unalterable law of God that He does not give that blessing and honour to a false prophet that He bestows upon the true one. The religion of a false prophet does not take root and does not last long, as does the religion of a truthful Prophet. Therefore, people subscribing to this kind of belief—who defame the Prophets of other nations by declaring them false—are always enemies of peace and harmony, because there is no greater mischief than abusing the elders of other nations. Sometimes a person would rather die than hear disparaging words for his elders. If we have an objection over the teaching of a religion, we should not attack the honour of the Prophet of that religion or mention him in an unseemly manner. Rather, we should object only on

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the current practices of that nation. (That is, if any fault is found among a people then the blame for this should not be attributed to a Prophet, but their own corrupt practices). We should be certain that the Prophet whom God Almighty has graced with the honour of acceptance by millions, and whose acceptance has continued for centuries, is thus firmly proven to be from Allah. If he were not the beloved of God, he would not have achieved so much respect. It is not the practice of God to grant honour to a fabricator, to spread his religion among millions, and to safeguard the fabricated religion for a long time.

"Therefore, a religion which spreads in the world, takes root, and finds honour and long life, cannot at all be false in its origin. Therefore, if anything in that teaching is found objectionable, it can either be because (the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> listed three reasons why various religions are prone to criticism in the current age). (Firstly) the teachings of that Prophet have been altered, (that is, the teachings of the Prophet are changed). (Secondly) or because a mistake has been made in the exposition of his teachings (that is, false exegeses are made). (Thirdly) it is also possible that we may not be justified in our objections. (That is, people readily object to that which they don't even understand. For example,

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currently people make allegations against the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> without having read the relevant sources or having made any effort to understand the Holy Quran). It may be observed that some priests raise objections about certain tenets in the Holy Quran, even though they believe them to be true and as the teachings of God according to the Torah. Therefore, such objections are due to one's own mistake or due to haste.

"In summary, the welfare of humanity, peace, harmony, righteousness, and fear of God call for adhering to the principle that we do not declare such Prophets as false concerning whose truth the opinion of millions of people for centuries has been established, and they have been supported by God since time immemorial. I am confident that a seeker of truth, whether Asian or European, will cherish this principle, and will profoundly regret that he did not believe in it all along. I place this principle before Her Majesty, the Queen, the Empress of India and England because only this principle can spread peace in the world. This is our principle. Islam is proud to be unique in subscribing to this beautiful and handsome principle. Is it befitting that we malign the sages to whom God has subjugated a world and kings have been bowing to them for centuries? Is it befitting that we be distrustful of God, thinking that He wants to deceive people by

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giving the status of the truthful to the liars, making them the sages of millions, giving their religions long lives and showing heavenly signs in their favour? If God Himself were to deceive us then how could we differentiate right from wrong?

"This is an important tenet: a false prophet should not achieve the grandeur, acceptance and greatness as that of a truthful one. Prosperity should not result from the plans of liars as it does from the activities of a truthful one. That is why the first sign of the truthful is that perpetual support is with the truthful, and God plants his religion in the hearts of millions, and grants it long life.

"Therefore, keeping in view the day of our passing away and the day of recompense, we should not malign such a great sage; rather, we should garner true respect and true love for a Prophet who carries such signs. This is the first principle which God has taught us. Through this we have become inheritors of a great moral code.<sup>1</sup>

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> also proposed that such conferences ought to be held in which adherents of various religions should come together and elaborate on the excellences of their respective religions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Toḥfa-e-Qaiṣariyyah, Ruḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 12, pp. 258-262

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p. 279

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Thus, in terms of practice, Islam is the world's foremost religion and in terms of numbers it is the second largest. Therefore, the followers of the world's other religions ought to respect Muslims and confer the honour that is due to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. Otherwise mayhem and disorder will engulf the world. We honour the religions of the world and consider their holy persons God's true Prophets because of the beautiful teaching of the Holy Quran which has been delivered to us by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. Despite the fact that the opponents of Islam direct untoward abuse at the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and make despicable caricatures of him, we do not respond by abusing the Prophets or holy persons of other religions. And yet Muslims are still accused of disturbing the peace. But, it is our opponents who initiate strife and play with the emotions of other's and then eventually lay the blame for this at the door of Muslims. Thereafter, they call for action to be taken against them...

The message of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> which I have just read needs to be widely publicised so that the true picture of Islam can emerge before the people of the world. Those of a materialistic disposition have no understanding of the honour in which a true Muslim holds the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. His teaching and example are beautiful. Such people cannot perceive the love a true Muslim has for the Holy

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Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. Over 1400 years ago today the poet Ḥassān bin Thābit expressed this devotion in the verse:

كُنْتَ السَّوَادَ لِنَاظِرِي فَعَمِيَ عَلَيْكَ النَّاطِرُ  
مَنْ شَاءَ بَعْدَكَ فَلَيْمْتُ فَعَلَيْكَ كُنْتُ أَحَاذِرُ

*That is, "O' Muḥammad! You were the pupil of my eye. With your demise I am now blind. I care not for the death of anyone now, it was only your passing that I feared."*

This verse was spoken by Ḥassān bin Thābit on the demise of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. But, in this age, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has inspired the love of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in our hearts. In his extensive Arabic Qaṣīdah, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

قَوْمٌ رَأَوْكَ وَأُمَّةٌ قَدْ أُخْبِرَتْ  
مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْبَدْرِ الَّذِي أَصْبَانِي

*A nation has seen you; an ummah has heard the name,  
Of the moon who has made me its lover,*

يَبْكُونَ مِنْ ذِكْرِ الْجَمَالِ صَبَابَةً  
وَتَأَلَّمًا مِنْ لَوْعَةِ الْهَجْرَانِ

*In memory of your beauty the people cry because of  
their love,*

*They cry also from the pain of separation,*

وَأَرَى الْقُلُوبَ لَدَى الْخَنَاجِرِ كُرْبَةً  
وَأَرَى الْعُرُوبَ تُسِيلُهَا الْعَيْنَانِ

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*In its anxiety my heart has reached the throat,  
And my eyes are tearful.*

The final verse of this *Qaṣīdah* [whose verses are memorised even by children] is,

جِسْمِي يَطِيرُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ شَوْقِي عَالَا  
يَا لَيْتَ كَانَتْ قُوَّةُ الطَّيْرَانِ

*My body wishes to fly to you in its love,  
Would that I was able to take flight.*<sup>3</sup>

Thus, we have been taught about love and affection for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, and yet the people of the world ask us what difference these jokes make. When etiquettes and conduct reach such a nadir then the peace of the world comes under threat.

But as I have said our task is to make greater efforts than before to bring various aspects of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>'s life before a wider audience. Every Aḥmadī ought to read *Life of Muḥammad* which is a small but comprehensive life history included in the biographical section of *Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran*. Almost all aspects of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>'s life have been discussed in this book, or at the very least, the most important aspects. Secondly, all Aḥmadīs should read other biographies in accordance with their own tastes, preferences and intellectual abilities and then afterwards bring to light the

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<sup>3</sup> *Āṭina-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Ruḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 5, pp. 590-594

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many excellences of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> before a wide audience through various means such as, pamphlets, essays and personal interaction. Let God enable us to fulfil this crucial obligation. And let Him draw the attention of erudite people, so that they too respond to the actions of those who create unjust satires and make expressions of enmity for the preservation of the peace of the world and so that the people might be saved from the displeasure of the Almighty. Let God allow this to occur.<sup>4</sup>

### *How Aḥmadīs Ought to Respond to Provocation*

In 2006, a number of reprehensible and offensive cartoons were published in Denmark against the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. These caricatures were strongly condemned by the Head of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>at</sup> during one of his Friday sermons. At the time a wave of violent protests swept across the Muslim world. The Head of the Community advised Aḥmadīs in particular and Muslims in general on the correct response to this provocation.

"As I said, possibly, rather certainly, our hearts are the most aggrieved at this act. However, our mode of response is different. I would mention here that it will not be far-fetched, that as before, they will continue to make similar

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<sup>4</sup> Friday sermon, delivered on September 28, 2012



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mischief time to time; that is, they will do something or the other that would again cause hurt to Muslims. Another objective behind this could be to use this as an excuse to put legal restrictions on Muslims, in particular those who have emigrated from the East, from the Indian sub-continent. Anyhow, despite the fact whether they put restrictions or not, we should formulate our responses according to the Islamic values and teachings.

As I said, from the very beginning these conspiracies have been carried out against Islam and the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. However, as it is Allah's promise to safeguard Islam, therefore, He has been protecting it, and all the opposing efforts are met with failure.

### *The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> came to defend Islam & the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> against conspiracies*

"For this age, Allah appointed the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> to fulfil this objective. With regard to the attacks made on the blessed person of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, in this age, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, himself, and later on by following his teachings, his *Khulafā'*, guided the Community and demonstrated responses that bore [positive] consequences. I shall present a couple of examples of this so that the achievements of the Community are made clear to those who allege that by not participating in the boycotts and by

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not joining them Aḥmadīs demonstrate that we feel no pain over the defamation of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>.

Our response always is, and always should be, one that is lucid in conveying the blessed model and teachings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>; and lucid in, as well, presenting the teachings of the Holy Quran. Rather than be involved in subversive activities when faced with attacks on the blessed person of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, we turn to Allah and seek His help. I shall now present two examples, which show the honour of the love of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> of his true and ardent devotee, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.

The first example is that of ‘Abdullāh Ātham, who was a Christian and had revealed his extremely depraved mind by using the word *Dajjāl*, *God forbid*, for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in his book. At that time, a discussion was underway with the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> about Islam and Christianity. A debate was ongoing.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states:

'Thus, I was engaged in debate for fifteen days, the discussion continued and I privately continued to pray for Ātham's chastisement; that is, for punishment for the words he had used. When the discussion was over I said to him that one debate has ended but a contest of one sort remains, which is from God and is that you have termed our Prophet<sup>sa</sup> with the name *Dajjāl* in your book ‘*Andrūna*

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*Bible*'. I deem the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> to be truthful and honest and believe the religion of Islam to be from Allah. Thus, this is the contest that shall be settled by the heavenly decision, and the heavenly decision is that whoever among the two of us is a liar and unfairly terms the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> as a liar and *Dajjāl* and is an enemy of the Truth, shall, during the lifetime of the person who is truthful, be doomed to nether hell within fifteen months from this day onwards; unless he turns to the Truth. That is, desists from calling the truthful and honest Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, *Dajjāl* and abandons impudence and foul language. It is thus said because simply denying a religion does not determine punishment in this world. Rather, it is brazenness, impudence, and foul language that determines punishment.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> further states:

'When I said these words his face turned pale, he was ashen and his hands began to tremble. He then promptly stuck his tongue out, put his hands to his ears and started shaking his head and his hands in the manner that a frightened criminal vehemently pleads not guilty and comes across most repentant and humble. He kept uttering, again and again, that he had not been disrespectful and impudent, and he did not ever speak against Islam again.'

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So this was the response of the gallant of God who had a great sense of honour for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and who would challenge those who committed acts like these.

Then there was a person called Lekh Rām, who used abusive language for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> tried to stop him from this impertinence. He did not desist. Eventually the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> prayed and Allah revealed to him the news of the man's painful death.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says that:

'Allah the Exalted has given me a pledge about the enemy of God and the Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, who uses foul and vulgar language for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and is called Lekh Rām. Allah the Exalted has accepted my prayer and in answer to my malediction for him, gave me the tidings that he shall die within six years. This is a sign for those who seek the true religion. This is exactly what happened and he died a most painful death.'

### *Enlighten the excellences of the Holy Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> personality and character to the world*

These are the ways the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has taught us; to counsel those who act improperly, to relate the virtues of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, to make the world aware of these beautiful and luminous aspects that are unknown to the world. Pray to Allah that He keeps them away from these improprieties or that He chastises them. Allah has His

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own ways of chastisement, and He knows best how to chastise whom.

Later, in the time of the second Khilāfat, a vulgar book entitled '*Rangīlā Rasūl*' came out, and a magazine, *Wartamān* published a vulgar article which aroused the Muslims of India. There was great incitement among Muslims all over, and they reacted most strongly.

Addressing the Muslims at this occasion, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd, Khalīfatul Masīḥ II<sup>ra</sup> said:

'O brothers! I say with heart-felt compassion one more time that one who starts fighting is not brave. He is a coward because he has been overcome by his 'self'. According to a Hadith, the one who suppresses anger is truly brave. It is said that the brave is one who makes a resolute determination and then does not waver from it until he accomplishes it.' He said, 'Make a pledge for three things for the progress of Islam; first of all you will have fear of God and will not be flippant about religion. So, firstly reform yourself. Secondly, be fully interested in conveying the message of Islam. The teachings of Islam should reach each person in the world. The qualities of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, the virtues of his beautiful life, his blessed model should be known. Thirdly, you should fully try to

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save the Muslims from social and economical subjugation.<sup>5</sup>

'This is now the obligation of each Muslim, the ordinary person as well as the leaders. You will find that despite having independence, the Muslim countries that are known as independent are subject to social and economic subjugation. They are at the mercy of the Western countries and are inclined towards imitating them. Rather than work themselves, they mostly rely on them. It is for this reason that time and time again, they play with the sentiments of Muslims. He also initiated the tradition of holding conventions on the blessed life of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. These are the ways of showing disapproval, rather than sabotage and disorder. While addressing the Muslims he predominantly spoke to the Aḥmadīs about these points.

Some wrong traditions of these countries are imperceptibly creeping into some of our families. I say to Aḥmadīs that you too were addressed therein. Do adopt what is good in their culture, but we should avoid what is wrong. Our reaction should be this, rather than damage and destruction. Our attention should be drawn towards self-reflection, to analyse what our deeds are, how much fear of God do we have, how much attention do we pay

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<sup>5</sup> *Anwārul-'Ulūm*, vol. 9, pp. 555-556

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towards His worship, how much attention do we pay to abide by religious commandments, and how much attention do we pay to deliver the message of Allah the Exalted to others!

Later, in the era of the fourth Khilāfat, [Salmān] Rushdi wrote a most offensive book. At that time, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IV<sup>th</sup> delivered sermons concerning it and had someone write a book about it. Then, as I said, these improprieties are ongoing. In the beginning of last year, a similar article came out on the life of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. At that time I drew attention of the Community, as well as of the auxiliary organizations to write articles and letters and to widen communications; to cite the virtues and attributes of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. This is a matter that requires presenting the beautiful aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> to the world and this cannot be achieved by damage and destruction. For this reason, Aḥmadīs of all social backgrounds in all countries should also include other educated and sensible Muslims in presenting a peaceful reaction by widening communications and writing. In this way, reason would be accomplished in each country and each social sphere, and after this, if anyone still takes a step then their matter is with God.

Allah the Exalted sent the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> as a mercy for the whole of mankind as He Himself states:

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وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples.

A being as great as him, one who dispensed mercy, [the like of him] neither existed before nor could come later. Indeed his blessed model shall remain forever, and each Muslim should try to follow it. For this the greatest responsibility lies on an Aḥmadī; it befalls upon us. In any case, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was a mercy for all peoples. While these people depict him in a manner that portrays a most horrific concept. We have to tell the world about the blessed loving and compassionate model of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. It is obvious that to do this, the Muslims will also have to change their attitudes. There could be absolutely no issue of terrorism or militancy, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> would always try to avoid war, until the time when he came to Medina, and war was imposed on him. Then with Allah's permission, war had to be fought in defence. However, there was also the commandment of Allah:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَقَاتِلُونَكُمْ  
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.

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<sup>6</sup> Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', 21:108

<sup>7</sup> Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 2:191



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Certainly the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was the greatest of all adherents of the *Sharia* that was revealed to him. It is extremely cruel to convey such disgraceful thoughts about him....

### *The immediate response of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Community at the publication of the caricatures*

The other Muslims are incited to strike actions, damage and destruction and such is their response. The Aḥmadiyya Muslim Community promptly reacted to this in the manner they should have. The Aḥmadīs promptly communicated with the newspapers. This is not a matter that took place today that they are taking strike actions in February 2006. This incident took place last year in September. When the mischief was made how did we respond? As I said, this took place in September or maybe early October, and our Missionary promptly prepared a detailed article which was sent to the newspaper that had published the caricature; a protest was made at this publication. The teaching of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was explained and they were told that this is our way of protest. We will not launch a rally but we will do the Jihad of the pen with you and express our feelings of sadness at the publication of the images. They were told that freedom of conscience notwithstanding, it is not meant to hurt the sentiment of others. Anyway, this was

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met with a positive response. An article was sent to the newspaper which was published. Danish people responded very well to it. As our Mission House received telephone calls and letters with messages of appreciation about the article. Moreover, the President of the Journalists' Union extended an invitation to a meeting. There it was explained to them that although the law allowed for freedom of conscience, it did not mean that others' religious leaders and revered persons should be demeaned. It was crucial to look after the feelings of the Muslims and the Christians as they co-existed in the society because there could be no peace without this.

They were also told of the beautiful teachings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, his excellent model, his high morals and civility, his compassion for people and for the creation of God, and that he was the personification of compassion and affection. A few incidents were related to them and the question was raised that how such images could be made about a person whose teaching was such and whose deeds were such? They greatly appreciated our Missionary's input. One cartoonist openly said that had such a meeting taken place beforehand he would have never made the caricature. Now he knows the teaching of Islam. Everyone agreed that dialogue should continue.

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The President of the Union issued a press release; its text was read out to all. A television interview took place which went well; a meeting with a Minister also took place. Anyway, the Community continues to endeavour; similar actions have been taken in other countries, and, in any case, a lot of work was done where the issue started. The basis for the creation of these caricatures is a book by a Danish writer entitled, *'The life of the Prophet and Quran'*, which is on sale now. The author of this book had asked the public to send pictures of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, some were sent anonymously lest there was a Muslim reaction. So the reason for this incident seems to be the book. However, in the case of the newspaper, the basis were also the caricatures. They should also make constant efforts in this regard and everywhere in the world as well; if it [the book] is read and anything objectionable is found, the matter should be addressed and answers should be given [to any questions raised]. There is also a perception in Denmark that certain Muslims are showing different caricatures than the ones published to incite the Muslim world. It is not known whether this is true or not, however, with our prompt attention they have developed some awareness. This action was taken immediately, while these people have come to know now, even though this happened three months ago.

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As I said, there is a need to present and promote the aspects of the blessed life of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in each country. In particular, it is our obligation to dismiss the misconception about Islam being militant with reasoning and argument. I have advised before to write to newspapers in abundance. Writers and newspapers could also be sent books on the blessed life of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>.

### *Aḥmadī youth should enter the field of Journalism*

Another suggestion is that the Community should plan for the future in that young people should try to go into journalism as much as possible; those who are more inclined this way, so that we may have our influence in newspapers and such places. For this kind of mischief is going to continue to emerge from time to time. If the maximum links can be made with the media these matters can be stopped, these vulgarities can be stopped. If after all this, someone is still obstinate, they would come under the category of those upon whom is Allah's curse in this world and the Hereafter, God Almighty states:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ  
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ٨

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<sup>8</sup> Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, 33:58

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Verily, those who annoy Allah and His Messengers—Allah has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them an abasing punishment.

This commandment has not ceased, our Prophet<sup>sa</sup> is a living Prophet, his teaching is eternally life-infusing, his *Sharia* is one that can solve problems of all time and era, and following him grants nearness to Allah. For those reasons, the hurt and pain that is inflicted on those who believe in him remains true to this day in each and every way. Allah is a Living God and He is watching over their misdeeds.

It is our obligation to inform the world. We will have to communicate to the world that Allah the Exalted has the power, even today, to punish the pain and torment you inflict. Therefore, desist from hurting Allah and His Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. However, while we have to impart the teachings of Islam and the blessed model of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> to the world, we also need to reform our deeds. It will be our deeds alone that shall silence the world and will play the most significant role in silencing the world. As I mentioned in the report, duplicity is being alleged against a Muslim scholar, in that he says one thing here and goes there and does the opposite [incites people]. Maybe, I did not read that report. So we need to present practical models of our outer-self and our inner-self,

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corresponding with each other, and also harmonization in our words and deeds.

***Flag burning or demolition will not establish the honour of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>***

I also say this to those who are known as Muslims, any whether or not they are Aḥmadīs, Shi‘as or Sunnīs or belong to any other sects of Islam; when the person of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> is attacked, rather than exhibiting momentary passion, burning flags, causing damage and destruction and attacking embassies, reform their deeds instead, so that the others do not get a chance to point their finger at them. Do they believe that setting fires, *God forbid*, is all that demonstrates the honour and station of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, and by burning flags or burning the property of an embassy they have had their reprisal? No! We are followers of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, who came to put the fire out, who was the Ambassador of Love, was the Prince of Peace. So rather than take harsh actions, impart his beautiful teaching to the World.

May Allah give the Muslims sense and understanding. However, I say to the Aḥmadīs that these people do not know and who knows if they will come to their senses or not? In response to the publication of the offensive caricatures, each child, each elderly, each youth, each

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man and each woman among you should kindle a fire that would never extinguish. Not a fire to burn down the flag or property of a country that extinguishes in a few minutes or a few hours. Here they stand showing great enthusiasm (in a photograph from Pakistan) in setting fires, as if they have had a great achievement - this fire would extinguish in five minutes! The fire we light should be such that would blaze forever and that is the fire of love and devotion for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, the fire to adopt each of his blessed models and demonstrate it to the world. Once this is inflamed in your hearts, it shall keep burning. This fire should be such that it would also be moulded in prayers with its flames ever reaching the heavens!

*Turn your anguish into prayers and invoke blessings upon the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, in abundance*

This is the fire that every Aḥmadī has to kindle in their hearts and have to mould their pains into prayers. Yet, for all this, the mediator has to be the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. For the acceptance of our prayers, to attract the love of God, to avoid the absurdities of the world, to protect ourselves from wickedness of this kind that take place, to keep the love of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> alive in our hearts, for the good of our life in this world and the Hereafter, we should invoke blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>,

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immeasurably. Indeed, we should do so profusely. In this seditious time, to keep ourselves immersed in the love of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and to keep our next generations firm on Aḥmadiyyat and Islam, each Aḥmadī should strictly adhere to the commandment that:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا<sup>9</sup>

Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! you also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace.<sup>10</sup>

*Injuring the sentiments of others is neither democracy, nor freedom of conscience*

Ḥuḍur warned the western world about the dangers of toying with other people's sentiments saying that such behaviour might incite Divine wrath. He said:

'We tell the world that any kind of vulgar expression about any sacred person of any religion does not constitute freedom in any way at all. You apparently champion democracy and freedom of expression, but play with the sentiments of others; this is neither democracy nor freedom of expression. Everything has a limit and

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<sup>9</sup> Sūrah Al- Aḥzāb, 33: 57

<sup>10</sup> Friday sermon, delivered on February 10, 2006, at Baitul-Futūḥ Mosque, London, from *Uswa-e-Rasūl aur Khākoḥ kī Ḥaqīqat*, second edition, pp. 9-20.



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some code of conduct. Just as there are codes of conduct in all professions, there is also a code of conduct in journalism. Just as no matter what kind of government there is, it has its rules and regulations. Freedom of expression certainly does not mean that sentiments are trifled with, or are caused to be hurt. If this is the freedom that the West is proud of, then this freedom does not lead to advancement, rather it leads to decline.

### *Persistent activities intended to blaspheme the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, will incite the Wrath of God Almighty*

'The West is swiftly abandoning religion and is demolishing moral values in every field in the name of freedom. They are oblivious to how they are inviting their own destruction. Recently, an Italian Minister has started a new mischief in printing these offensive caricatures on T-shirts, and wearing it. He has invited others to get these from him. It is said that these are also being sold. They say this is what the Muslims deserve. These people should understand that we do not know whether the Muslims deserve this or not. However, through these improprieties, they are certainly incurring the Wrath of God. Whatever happened in foolishness, happened. However, to prolong it with obstinacy and to insist that whatever they are doing is right is what definitely incurs the Wrath of God.

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### *How Aḥmadīs should react under such circumstances*

Anyhow, as I said the reaction of the rest of the Muslims is up to them. However, the response of an Aḥmadī Muslim should be to make them understand and to warn them about the Wrath of God. As I have said before, present the beautiful picture of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> to the world, turn to the All Powerful God and seek His help. If these people are heading towards destruction, then God, Who has His own sense of honour, and a sense of honour for His dear ones, has the power to manifest severe chastisement. He is the Master of all powers and is not restricted by man-made laws. He has power over everything, when His Wrath comes, the human mind cannot encompass its full scope, and none can then evade it.

In light of the attitude of certain people of the West or certain countries, Aḥmadīs should further turn to God. The Messiah<sup>as</sup> of God has also warned Europe, as well as America. The earthquakes, the storms, and the calamities that are occurring in the world are not specific to Asia. America has had a glimpse of it. Therefore, O Europe! You too are not safe. So have some fear of God and do not challenge the sense of Honour of God. I will also add here that Muslim countries, or those who are known as Muslim, should also reform their ways. Adopt ways and responses that present the high station and the good

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manners of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> to the world. This would then be the correct and befitting response of a believer.<sup>11</sup>

### *Beautiful teachings of Islam with regard to good treatment of non-Muslims*

Shedding light on Islam's excellent teaching with regards to the treatment of non-Muslims and the freedom of speech and expression, His Holiness, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalīfatul Masīḥ V, may God be with him, said,

'The Holy Quran repeatedly mentions beautiful teachings of Islam pertaining to good conduct with the non-Muslims, the safeguarding of their rights, fairness and justice with them, freedom of their religion, and no coercion in matters of faith, etc. There are many such directives relating to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Indeed, fighting is also permitted in certain situations. It is permitted only in the event that the enemy initiates (a fight), breaches pacts, is brutally unjust or oppressive. Even in these circumstances, no group or party of a country has the right, rather, it is up to the government to decide what to do and how to end the oppression. It is not

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<sup>11</sup> Friday sermon, delivered on February 24, 2006, Baitul Futūḥ Mosque, London, from *Uswa-e-Rasūl Aur Khākoḥ kī Ḥaqīqat*, second edition, pp. 25-27

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up to any and every Jihadi organization to rise, and to take up the task.

### *Exemplary good behaviour of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> compared to the excesses and tyranny of the infidels of Mecca and the enemies of Islam*

At the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, specific situations were created for wars, which left Muslims with no choice but to fight back in defence. However, as I said, the current-day Jihadi organizations, with their militant slogans and actions, without having any warrantable reasons and rightful authority, have given others the opportunity, and courage to become audacious and shameless enough to make nonsensical attacks on the holy person of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, and continue doing so. Whereas, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was the personification of compassion; a benefactor for humanity and a great defender of human rights who would not miss a chance to facilitate the enemy even at the time of a battle. Each step of his life, his each deed, in fact each moment of his life is a testimony to the fact that he was an embodiment of compassion with a heart that surpassed all others in fulfilling the requisites of compassion and kindness. He did so at the time of peace, at war, at home, outside the home, in his daily routine as well as in honouring the pacts with people of other religions. He established high

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standards of freedom of conscience and freedom of religion and tolerance. When he entered Mecca as the great conqueror, he granted amnesty to the conquered people and gave them total freedom of religion. Thus, he established an excellent example of the Quranic injunction: <sup>12</sup>لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ There should be no compulsion in religion.

Religion is a matter of an individual's heart and mind. He only desired that they accepted the true religion and thus made their life better both here and in the Hereafter, and tried to achieve forgiveness for themselves. However, there is no compulsion. His life is replete with similar illuminating examples of tolerance, freedom of religion and conscience, of which I shall mention a few now.

The hardship and pain of the thirteen year period in Mecca after his claim of prophethood is known to all. The Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and his Companions<sup>ra</sup> endured great suffering and torment. They were laid on the scorching midday sand while hot stones were placed on their chests. They were flogged. Women were killed by having their legs torn apart. They were martyred. A range of tortures were inflicted on the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> himself. At times the innards of a camel were placed on his back while he was prostrating, which would make it impossible for him to get up. During

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<sup>12</sup> Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 2:257

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his visit to *Tā'if* children threw stones at him, hurled abuse at him. Their leaders kept on inciting them. His injuries made him bleed profusely from head, and his shoes were filled with blood. Then there is the incident of *Sha' b-e-Abī Tālib* when he, his family and his followers were held under siege for many years. They had nothing to eat or drink, and children starved. A Companion felt something soft under his feet at night which he picked up and put in his mouth, imagining it to be food. Such was their desperation due to hunger. Eventually, compelled by these circumstances, the migration to Medina took place; the enemy did not leave him alone even in Medina and invaded the town. They tried to incite the Jews of Medina against him. Under the circumstances, which I have just briefly described, if war ensues and the victim has a chance for reprisal, an attempt is made to requite oppression with oppression. It is said that all is fair in war. However, our Prophet<sup>sa</sup> established high standards of compassion and mercy even in these situations. It had been a very short time that they had left the relentless persecution of Mecca, the memories of which were still raw; the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was mindful of the pain of his adherents more than his own pain, yet he did not breach the Islamic rules and regulations. He did not contravene his inherent high morals that constituted his teachings. You may notice the extent to which certain Western

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countries go to in treating those with whom they are at war these days, and notice this blessed model in contrast. Regarding this, in history, a tradition is related which is as follows:

At the Battle of Badr, the spot where the Muslim troops had encamped was not very suitable. Ḥubāb bin Mundhar inquired from the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> whether the choice of the area for encampment was by Divine revelation or he had chosen it himself from a strategic point of view. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> replied that he has chosen it due to its elevation thinking it would be a good place strategically. It was submitted to him that it was not such a good area. They should head for the water spring and take control of it, and make a reservoir there. This way they would have access to water and the enemy would not. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> accepted this counsel and they moved to that spot and encamped there. After a short while a few people of *Quraish* came by to drink water, the Companions<sup>ra</sup> tried to stop them from getting the water. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> refrained his Companions<sup>ra</sup> to do so, and said, "Let them take water."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *As-Sīratun-Nabawīyyah libn-e-Hishshām*, vol. 2 p. 284, Ghazwatu-Badril-Kubrā, Mashwaratul-Ḥubāb 'Alar-Rasūl...

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*Islam did not spread through the force of the sword. Rather, it spread through good moral behaviour, and the Islamic teachings of freedom of conscience and creed*

'Such was the high standard of the character of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> even when dealing with the enemy, who had totally blockaded even the food and drink of the Muslim children just a short while ago. Discounting all that, he did not stop the soldiers belonging to the enemy who had come to get water from the spring, which was under his control because this would have been beneath the moral code. The biggest objection raised against Islam is that it was spread 'with the sword'. The people who had come for the water could have been put under duress for accessing the water and forced to accept their conditions. The pagans fought many battles in this manner. However, this is not what the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> did. It could be said here that maybe this step was taken to gain favour to avoid war because the Muslims were in a weak position. However, this was not the case. The bloodthirsty tendencies of the pagans of Mecca towards the Muslims were common knowledge to all Muslims, therefore no one ever entertained this vain imagination in particular, there was no question that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> would be under such an illusion. He did so because he was the very personification of compassion and kindness who upheld



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human values; because it was him indeed who was to give the teaching to appreciate these values.

### *The Unique Standard of Justice and Freedom of Speech set by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>*

There is an incident of an enemy of Islam who had received the death penalty. Not only was he pardoned by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, he was also given the freedom to practice his own religion while staying among the Muslims. His story is as follows:

‘Ikramah, son of Abū Jahl, fought wars all his life with the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. At the time of the victory of Mecca, despite the declaration of amnesty, he attacked some troops and caused bloodshed in the Ka‘bah. It was for his war crimes that he had been given the death penalty. Since, at that time, no one could stand up to the Muslims, therefore, after the victory of Mecca, he ran off towards Yemen to save his life. His wife sought forgiveness for him from the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> who most graciously pardoned him. She then followed her husband to fetch him back. ‘Ikramah could not believe that he had been pardoned despite the fact that he had meted out such cruelty, killed so many Muslims and was fighting till the last day, how could he be forgiven? However, she somehow managed to convince him and brought him back. When ‘Ikramah came in the presence of the Holy

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Prophet<sup>sa</sup> he wanted to have confirmation of his clemency. On his arrival the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> made an amazing gesture of goodwill, and stood up as a mark of respect for him in his capacity as the leader of the enemy. On his asking he told ‘Ikramah that he had indeed pardoned him.<sup>14</sup>

‘Ikramah inquired if his pardon was on the grounds that he stayed firm on his own faith? That he had not embraced Islam, and he still maintained his idolatrous stance, was he still forgiven? Confirmation of this by the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> moved ‘Ikramah immensely and he cried out, 'O Muḥammad! Certainly, you are extremely forbearing, compassionate and benevolent to your kindred.' Seeing the miracle of the supreme civility and act of kindness of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> ‘Ikramah embraced Islam.<sup>15</sup>

This is the manner in which Islam was spread; with excellent manners and with freedom of conscience and religion. The act of supreme civility and freedom of religion had a person like ‘Ikramah smitten in a moment. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> had even afforded prisoners and slaves the freedom of religion, while maintaining that the

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<sup>14</sup> *Muaṭṭā Imām Mālik*, Kitābun-Nikāḥ, Nikāḥul-Mushrik idhā Aslamat zaujatuhū qablahū

<sup>15</sup> *As-Sīratul-Ḥalabiyyah*, vol. 3, p. 109, bābudh-dhikr-e-Mughāziyah..., fatḥ-e-Makkah sharrafahullāhu-ta’ālā. Printed in Beirut.

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propagation of Islam was in accordance with the Divine commandment to spread the teachings of Islam to those who did not know about it. The purpose behind it was to grant nearness of God to others, and it was done out of sympathy for others.

An incident about one of the prisoners is related as follows:

Sa'īd bin Abī Sa'īd narrates that he heard Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah<sup>ra</sup> say that when the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> sent an expedition to *Najad* a person from the tribe of *Banū Ḥanīfah*, named Thumāmah bin Athāl, was brought in as a prisoner. The Companions<sup>ra</sup> tied him to a pillar of the Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> Mosque. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> came to him and inquired, 'O Thumāmah, what is your excuse or what do you think will be done with you?' He replied, 'I have a positive expectation. If you have me killed, you will be killing a murderer. If you show me goodwill, you will be, favouring a person who values kindness. If you want property you may have as much as you like.' His people could give property for him. The next day, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> again came by and asked Thumāmah what did he wish? He replied that he had already said the previous day that if a favour was bestowed on him it would be a favour on a person who valued kindness. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> left him there. On the third day he returned and

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inquired, 'O Thumāmah, What are your intentions?' He said that he had already said what he had to say. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> ordered that Thumāmah be freed. Thumāmah went to a nearby date orchard and bathed there, he re-entered the mosque and recited the *Shahādah* and said, 'O Muḥammad<sup>sa</sup> by God I disliked your face the most in the world, but now it is so that your face is the most beloved to me. By God, I disliked your faith the most, but now it is so that my most beloved faith is the one you have brought. By God, I disliked your town the most, but now this is my most beloved town. Your horse-riders held me although I wanted to perform *Umrah*. What do you say about this?' The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> gave him the glad-tiding, congratulated him for accepting Islam and ordered him to perform *Umrah*, saying that Allah would accept it. When he reached Mecca someone asked him if he had become a Sabian. He replied, 'No, I have believed in Muḥammad<sup>sa</sup>, Prophet of God and by God, now not even a grain of wheat shall come your way from Yamāmah.<sup>16</sup>

Another tradition relates that he was either beaten up or an attempt was made to beat him on which he had said that no grain would come and this would not happen until permission was given by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. As a result,

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<sup>16</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Maghāzī, bābo wafd-e-banī Ḥanīfah wa ḥadīthū Thumāmah bin Athāl

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he went back to his people, and the grain export was stopped. The situation got quite bad. Eventually Abū Sufyān took a plea to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> saying that people were starving, and asked for some pity to be shown to his people. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> did not say you would only get the grain if you accepted Islam. Rather, he promptly sent a message to Thumāmah to stop the embargo as it was cruel. The young, the elderly, the sick needed food and it should be available for them.<sup>17</sup>

We see that it was not said to the prisoner, Thumāmah, that you are in our control, accept Islam. Rather, he was treated well for three days and then the higher standards of treatment were established in that he was released. Thumāmah too had the insight that as soon as he was given the freedom he presented himself for the subjugation of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> knowing full well that his worldly and spiritual welfare was indeed in this subjugation. Likewise, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> did not coerce a Jewish slave into doing what he wished just because he was under his authority. The man fell very ill and when the Prophet saw that his life was in danger he was concerned for his good ending. He was concerned that he should not depart this world without accepting the final

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<sup>17</sup> *As-Sīratun-Nabawīyyah libn-e-Hishshām*, 'asru Thumāmah bin Athālul-Ḥanafī was-salāmah Khurūjuhū ilā Makkata wa qiṣṣatuhū ma' Quraish

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*Sharia* of God, so that he may be forgiven by God. He went to visit him on his sick bed and asked him most affectionately to accept Islam.

Ḥadīrat Anas<sup>ra</sup> narrates that:

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> had a Jewish slave who fell ill. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> went to visit him and asked him to accept Islam. Another tradition relates that he [the Jew] looked at his elders; anyhow, whether on being given the permission or of his own accord, he accepted Islam.<sup>18</sup>

This acceptance was certainly borne out of the loving and affectionate treatment given to this young man when he was a slave; he must have realised that certainly Islam was a true religion and that there was salvation in accepting it. He would have never imagined that an embodiment of affection and love such as the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was, would ever think of anything bad for him. Certainly, he was on the truth and always called others to what was the best, and always advised about what was the best. Such was the freedom that he had established and there can be no (other such) example of this in the world.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> preferred freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, and freedom in life even before his claim to prophethood and he disliked slavery. When after

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<sup>18</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitābul-Janā'iz*, bābo 'idhā aslamaṣ-Ṣabīyyu ... Hadith No. 1356

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marriage Ḥaḍrat Khadījah<sup>ra</sup> handed over all her property and her slaves to him, he said to her that if she was giving it all to him, it would all be at his disposal to do as he pleased. She said that is why she was giving these to him. He said he would free the slaves. She replied that he could do as he pleased, once she had given it all to him, she had no influence over it and that it was now his property. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> immediately called all of Ḥaḍrat Khadījah<sup>ra</sup>'s slaves and told them that they were free from that day onwards. He also distributed a large portion of the property among the poor and the needy.

Among the slaves he freed, one was called Zaid. It seems that he was brighter than the rest of the slaves and was intelligent. He realised it well that once he was granted freedom, the stigma of slavery had been removed, however his well-being was in permanently remaining in the subjugation of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>.

Therefore, he said:

'Very well, you have freed me, however, I shall not go, I shall stay with you as your slave.' He stayed on with the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and their mutual love and affection continued to grow. Zaid, who was originally from a well-to-do family, had been kidnapped [as a child] and then sold on by the bandits. He was sold several times over and had eventually reached here. His parents and other

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relatives were ever looking for him and came to know that their son was in Mecca. They reached Mecca and having found out their son's whereabouts came to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. They offered him as much wealth as he wanted for the freedom of their son, saying his mother was desperately aggrieved. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> told them that he had already freed Zaid so he was free to go, and that he did not want any money. His people asked him to come. However, the son replied, 'I have met with you and this is sufficient, if an opportunity comes by, I shall meet my mother as well, however, I cannot come with you people now. I am now the slave of the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and there is no question of separation from him. I love the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> more than one could love one's mother and father.' Zaid's father and uncles urged him but he refused to go. Seeing the love of Zaid, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said, 'Zaid was already free but from today he is my son.' Zaid's father and uncles left for their homeland while Zaid remained there permanently. <sup>19</sup>

After prophethood, the Holy Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> values of freedom were further enhanced. Besides his inherent good nature he had the directive of the *Sharia* revealed to him that

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<sup>19</sup> *Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran* by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashīr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad Khalīfatul Masīḥ II, p. 112



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gave the slaves their rights, and if one could not fulfil them then one had to set them free.

A tradition recounts that once a Companion<sup>ra</sup> was beating up his slave which the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> happened to see. He expressed great anger. On this the Companion<sup>ra</sup> freed his slave. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> remarked that if he had not freed the slave he would have come under the chastisement of God.<sup>20</sup>

So this is what freedom is!

An example of freedom of expression for people of other religions can be found during the times when the Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> government was established in Medina.

In a tradition, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah<sup>ra</sup> narrates that two men were quarrelling. One was a Muslim and the other a Jew. The Muslim said, 'I swear by the Being Who chose Muḥammad<sup>sa</sup> over all the worlds and granted him excellence over others.' The Jew retorted, 'I swear by that Being Who granted excellence to Moses over all the worlds and chose him.'

On this the Muslim slapped the Jew. The Jew took the complaint to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, who asked the Muslim for the details and then said: لَا تُخَيِّرُونِي عَلَى مُوسَى

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<sup>20</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitābul-Īmān* bābo ṣuḥbatil-mamālīk, Hadith No. 4308

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Do not give me preference over Moses.<sup>21</sup>

Thus was his standard of freedom, religious freedom and freedom of conscience, during his reign. After the migration to Medina, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> entered into a pact with the Jews and other tribes to maintain peace. Due to the Muslims being in the majority, either by themselves or by including those who although were not Muslim but had joined them, the government was in the hands of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. However, this did not entail that the feelings of others were not looked after. Despite the Quranic testimony that he indeed had excellence over all the other Prophets, he did not tolerate a contest over Prophets that could have polluted the atmosphere. After hearing what the Jew had said, he only reproached the Muslim not to involve Prophets in their quarrels. His stance being that it was well and good that the Muslim considered him most excellent among all Prophets, that God too gave testimony to this. Yet the feelings of a person in their realm could not be hurt because of something that was said about his Prophet. He would not allow this. If one was to hold him in respect one had to hold other Prophets in respect as well. So, these were the standards of justice and freedom of expression of the

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<sup>21</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitābul-Khuṣūmāt* bābo mā yudhkaru fil-ashkhāṣ wal-khaṣūmāt-e-bainal-muslim-e-wal-yahūdī

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Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, which he had established to look after the feelings of his own as well as the others. At times, preference was given to the sentiments of others.

### *Practical examples of the conduct of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> with regard to establishment of human values and religious tolerance*

There is another example of his establishment of human values and of fairness.

‘Abdur Raḥmān bin Abī Lailā narrates that Sahl bin Ḥanīf and Qaiṣ bin Sa‘d were sitting at a place called *Qādsia* when a funeral procession went by. They both stood up. When they were told that the funeral was that of a non-Muslim, they replied:

‘Once a funeral procession went by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> who stood up as a mark of respect. He was told that it was the funeral of a Jew. To this the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> replied: *أَلَيْسَتْ نَفْسًا* Was he not human?’<sup>22</sup>

Thus should be the respect for the religion of others as well as for humanity. Such expressions and such models create an atmosphere of religious tolerance. In conveying such feelings, kind sentiments for others are generated and it is these sentiments that create an atmosphere of love and peace. Unlike the actions of the worldly people

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<sup>22</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Janā’iz bābo man qāma-lijanāzat-e-yahūdī

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of today that are nothing beyond creating an atmosphere of hatred.

Another Tradition relates that at the victory of Khaybar some Muslims came upon some copies of the Torah. The Jews went to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and requested that their Holy Book be returned to them. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> directed the Companions<sup>ra</sup> to return the religious books of the Jews to them.<sup>23</sup>

'Despite the wrong attitude of the Jews for which they were being punished, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> did not tolerate to even treat the enemy in a way that would have hurt their religious sentiments.

### *The Peace Treaty Between the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and the Jews of Medina*

These are some isolated incidents that I have related. I also mentioned that a pact was made in Medina, I will now recount the clauses of this pact that have reached us through the Traditions, and expound how the Prophet made efforts to create an atmosphere of tolerance in that environment, and how he aspired to bring peace in that setting. So that peace was established and dignity of humanity was upheld in the society.

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<sup>23</sup> *As-Sīratul-Ḥalabiyyah*, bābo Dhikri Mughāziyah,... Ghazwah Khaibar, vol. 3 p. 49

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- Some conditions of the pact that he made with the Jews upon reaching Medina were that Muslims and Jews would live with mutual sympathy and sincerity, and would refrain from oppression against each other. Despite the fact that the Jews continually breached this clause, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> continued to treat them with kindness, until the time the matter reached to such an extreme that he was forced to take severe actions against the Jews.
- The second condition was that each people would have religious freedom. Despite the Muslims being in the majority the others were free to practice their religion.
- The third condition was that the life and property of all inhabitants would be safe and would be respected, unless someone committed a crime or transgression. In this matter too there would be no discrimination, whether the criminal was a Muslim or a non-Muslim, punishment would be given anyhow. Additionally, protection was to be a mutual task. It was to be the government's task.

All sorts of disagreements would be brought to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> for decision and each decision would be made in accordance with the respective people's own religious law. As the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was the Commander-in-Chief at the time, all cases were to be presented to him anyhow. Objections are now raised by Christians and other opponents that the decisions given for some Jews, which

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were in accordance with their own *Sharia*, were too harsh. Although they were carried out according to the stipulated conditions.

- Another condition was that no one would go to war without the permission of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. It was, therefore, important to abide by this condition while living under the government. The Jihadi organisations of today could take guidance from this clause. Any kind of Jihad is not allowed without the permission of the government of the country except in the situation that one joins the armed forces of the government and in the event the country goes to war, they also get to participate.
- Another condition was that if any nation fought against the Jews or the Muslims, they would help each other, and in the case of a truce with the enemy if the Muslims or the non-Muslims attained any war booty or any other benefit from the truce then this would be proportionally shared by all. Similarly, if Medina was attacked all will join forces to contend with it.
- Another condition was that the Jews would not give the Quraish of Mecca or their associates any kind of help or refuge as it was the Meccans who had forced the Muslims out of there. The Muslims had found refuge here [in Medina], therefore, those who lived under this government could not enter into any pact with the enemy

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nation or take any help from them. It was stated that each nation would meet its own expenses. In accordance with this pact no oppressor or offender or insurgent would be safe from punishment or retribution. As mentioned before, whoever committed an act of oppression, iniquity, or wrongdoing, would be seized and punished without any discrimination of being a Muslim or a Jew or another.<sup>24</sup>

### *Religious Freedom and an Amnesty for the People of Najrān*

It was to promote this very religious freedom and tolerance that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> permitted the visiting Christians from *Najrān* to worship inside the Prophet<sup>sa</sup>'s Mosque. They worshipped while they were facing eastward. The Companions<sup>ra</sup> were of the opinion that this should not have been allowed, but the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: It does not matter.

The Letter of Immunity that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> gave to the people of *Najrān* is also reported, in which it is mentioned that he had undertaken the responsibility of protection of the boundaries of the Christians (who had come from *Najrān*) by the Muslim Army. Furthermore, it was also the obligation of the Muslims to protect their Churches, places of worship and inns, no matter how far off they were

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<sup>24</sup> *Sīrat Khātāmūn-Nabiyyīn* by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashīr Aḥmad, p. 279

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located, and whether they were in cities, mountains or woods. They were free to worship in accordance with their religion, and to safeguard their freedom of worship was also the responsibility of the Muslims.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said:

'Since they are now the subjects of a Muslim government and so are my subjects, therefore, their protection is obligatory upon me.'

The pact goes on to state that the Muslims would not include them (the Christians) in their battle expeditions without their willingness. Their priests and religious leaders would not be removed from their positions and would continue their tasks. There would be no interference in their places of worship. These would not be brought to any use under any circumstances, and would not be converted into inns. These would not be used as accommodation for anyone and would not be used for any other purpose without permission. *Jizyah* would not be collected from religious scholars and priests no matter where they were. If a Muslim had a Christian wife, she would have total freedom of worship in her own way. If anyone wished to go to their own religious scholars for advice, they could do so. With regard to repairs of Churches, etc., the pact maintained that if they sought financial help and moral support from the Muslims, they



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should help them as it was a preferred option. It would neither be deemed a loan nor a favour but would be a means to enhance the pact in that it would improve social connections, and spirit of mutual help.<sup>25</sup>

With standards of religious freedom and tolerance of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> as these, it is extremely cruel to allege that Islam was spread through force and oppression.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states:

At a time when the People of the Book and the idolaters of Mecca were extremely depraved and having committed a wicked act considered they had done a meritorious act. They did not desist from crime, and interfered with public order. Allah the Exalted willed to save the helpless from their clutches by giving the reins of government into the hands of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. Since the land of Arabia was unbridled and the people were not under the rule of any King, consequently each faction lived its life most freely and daringly. The people exceeded in crime day by day as no law of punishment existed for them. So, God had mercy on this land.... and sent the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> not only as a Prophet for this land but also made him the King of the land, and completed the Holy Quran as such a law that contained all directives pertaining to judicial, criminal and financial matters. Therefore, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was the

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<sup>25</sup> *Zādul-Ma'ād* fī ḥadye khairil-'ibād, faṣl fī qudūm wafd-e-Najrān...

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ruler of all factions in his capacity as the King and people of all religions brought their matters to him for judgment.

It is proven from the Holy Quran that once a matter between a Muslim and a Jew was brought to the court of the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> for judgment. After investigations the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> deemed the Jew rightful and decreed against the claim the Muslims had made.

Thus, some unwise opponents who do not read the Holy Quran attentively, consider every aspect under the sphere of prophethood of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, while punishments such as these were given under the auspices of Khilāfat. That is, it is an obligation of a government.

He<sup>as</sup> goes on to state:

After Ḥaḍrat Mūsā<sup>as</sup>, the Israelites had separate Prophets and Kings. The Kings kept peace and order through the political process. However, at the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, both these offices were granted by God to the Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. Excluding the criminals, how the rest were treated is quite clear from the following verse:

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وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ  
ءِأَسْلَمْتُمْ ۗ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا ۗ  
وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاءُ ۗ<sup>26</sup>

This verse does not declare that it is also your task to battle with them. It is evident from this that war was only meant for the criminal minded people who killed the Muslims, created disorder in the public, and were engaged in theft and robbery. These wars were fought in the capacity of a King and not in the capacity of prophethood. As Allah the Exalted declares:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ  
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ۗ<sup>27</sup>

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.<sup>28</sup>

How could it be that a Prophet as holy as him<sup>sa</sup>, to whom this *Sharia* was revealed, would contravene the directives that were Divinely revealed to him? Indeed, he had declared general amnesty at the victory of Mecca without the clause that protection was conditional on accepting

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<sup>26</sup> And say to those who have been given the Book and to the unlearned, 'Have you submitted?' If they submit, then they will surely be guided; but if they turn back, then thy duty is only to convey the message.

Sūrah Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:21

<sup>27</sup> Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 2:191

<sup>28</sup> *Chashma'-e-Ma'rifat*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 242-243

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Islam. We have heard of one example of this. This amnesty had different clause that protection was conditional on accepting Islam. We have heard of one example of this. This amnesty had different facets but did not include the acceptance of Islam as a prerequisite for pardon. Amnesty was declared for going to and entering different places, for coming under certain banners, by entering the Ka‘bah and by going to certain houses. This was, such a great example, the like of which cannot be seen anywhere else. An unqualified announcement was made that: <sup>29</sup> لَا تُثْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ No blame *shall lie* on you this day. A thousand salutations and blessings on him<sup>sa</sup> who set these excellent examples and granted us such a teaching. May we also be enabled by Allah the Exalted to act upon it, "<sup>30</sup>

### *A Proposal to Remove Misconceptions*

In order to remove the misconceptions that exist between various religions and individuals and in order to promote peaceful coexistence, the founder of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian proposed the regular initiation of inter-religious

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<sup>29</sup> Sūrah Yūsuf, 12:93

<sup>30</sup> Friday sermon, delivered on March 10, 2006, Baitul-Futūḥ Mosque, London, from *Uswa-e-Rasūl aur Khākoḥ kī Ḥaqīqat*, Second Edition, pp. 92-111

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conferences. Accordingly, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations he wrote:

"It will be necessary that every participant present his faith's excellences and not malign others."<sup>31</sup>

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that people are often misled by religious leaders and the Christian clergy. He also writes:

"If they had good intentions, they would not have raised such objections on the Quran as can also be raised against the Torah of Moses. If they had fear of God, they would not have relied upon such books, which, in the view of Muslims, are unauthentic and devoid of definitive truths. Therefore, justice dictates that even if the whole of Europe were to be considered angelic, the priests would be an exception. The reason that the Christians of Europe look at Islam with hatred and dislike is that these same priests have been giving the lessons of hate by presenting unauthentic incidents. I do accept that the behaviour of some ignorant Muslims is not worthy and they have habits borne of ignorance, as some ferocious Muslims apply the term jihad to cruel bloodshed and they do not know that public's rising against a just ruler is mutiny and not jihad. Severance of covenant, committing evil instead of good,

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<sup>31</sup> *Toḥfa-e-Qaiṣariyyah*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 12, p. 279

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and murder of the innocent, whoever commits such acts should be called an offender and not a hero.

"These thoughts have been produced through the perverted interpretations of the priests. There is no sign of them in the Book of God. The Word of God declares the punishment of sword for the ones who raise the sword and does not teach mutiny against the ones who establish peace, benefit the public, and give every people the rights of freedom. It is dishonesty to malign the Word of God. Therefore, it is highly desirable that for the good of humanity a conference of religions be held by the Empress of India to disseminate the reality of religions."<sup>32</sup>

### *To show Compassion is to be Human*

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

"A religion which does not inculcate universal compassion is no religion at all. Similarly, a human being without the faculty of compassion is no human at all. Our God has never discriminated between one people and another. This is illustrated by the fact that all the potentials and capabilities which have been granted to the Aryans have also been granted to the races inhabiting Arabia, Persia, Syria, China, Japan, Europe and America.

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<sup>32</sup> *Toḥfa-e-Qaiṣariyyah*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 12, pp. 280-281

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The earth created by God provides a common floor for all people alike, and His sun and moon and many stars are a source of radiance and provide many other benefits to all alike. Likewise, all peoples benefit from the elements created by Him, such as air, water, fire and earth, and similarly from other products created by Him like grain, fruit, and healing agents, etc. These attributes of God teach us the lesson that we, too, should behave magnanimously and kindly towards our fellow human beings and should not be petty of heart and illiberal.

"Friends! Take it as certain that if either of our two nations would not treat God's attributes with respect and will not shape its conduct in accordance with the conduct of God, then, that nation will soon be wiped out from the face of the earth. Not only will it destroy itself but it will also jeopardise the future of its generations to come. The righteous of all ages have testified that following God's ways works like an elixir for the people. Moreover the survival, both physical and spiritual, of human beings depends on the same eternal truth that man should follow the virtuous attributes of God Who is the Fountainhead of all that is essential for survival."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Paighām-e-Şulh*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 439-440

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

### *The Undesirability of Blaspheming Against Holy Persons and Scripture*

In his book *Paighām-e-Şulh*, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

"In precarious times such as these I invite you to truce, as reconciliation is urgently required by both nations. Many a calamity is befalling the world; there are earthquakes and there are famines. Over and above the earthquakes and famines we continue to be plagued by the bubonic pestilence. Moreover the Divine revelations which God has conveyed to me further confirm that if people do not mend their evil ways and practices and do not repent their sins, the world will be further visited by other severe calamities. One misery will not end before another follows. Eventually people will reach the end of their tether and will wonder what is happening to them and what next is in store for them. They will be pushed to the edge of their senses by calamity upon calamity. So take heed my countrymen, before such evil days confront you. It is highly essential that Hindus and the Muslims should come to terms with each other and if either of the two parties is guilty of such excesses as obstruct the path of peace, they are better advised to desist from pursuing that course. Otherwise, the entire blame for the sin of mutual enmity will be borne by the faulting party.



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"If someone questions the possibility of reaching reconciliation while religious differences are playing such a negative role, throwing hearts further apart, then my answer would be to say that difference in matters of religion can only play a negative role when it disregards the dictates of justice, wisdom and the well-tested human values. It is to avoid this danger that man has been fully fortified with a clear sense of judgement and common sense. He should thus always carve a path for himself which never deviates from the path of justice and good sense. Again it should not violate the commonly experienced human sensibilities. Also it should be remembered that day to day petty differences cannot obstruct the course of reconciliation. Only those differences can destroy the process of reconciliation which result in insulting and blasphemous attitudes by one towards the revered Messengers and revealed holy books of the other."<sup>34</sup>

"O Dear Ones! Age-old experience and repeated trials have established, without question that to insult and abuse the Prophets and Messengers of different countries and peoples is such a deadly poison which not only destroys the body but also kills the soul, thereby ruining the worldly prospects as well as the spiritual. A country

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<sup>34</sup> *Paighām-e-Şulh*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, p. 444

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

whose inhabitants are always after finding faults in the leaders of others, and constantly assassinate their characters, can never rest in peace themselves. Such people can never achieve true unity who, individually or mutually, refer to each other's Prophets or saints or divines with malice or foul language. Who would not be outraged at the insults hurled at their Prophet or leader? In particular, Muslims are such people who, although they do not believe their Prophet to be God or the son of God, do regard him<sup>sa</sup> to be the most revered of all the holy men born of a human mother. To make peace with a sincere Muslim is not possible unless during discussion, their Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> is mentioned with respect and refined language.

"As for us, we never use indecent language with regard to the Prophets of other peoples. In fact, we believe that for all the Prophets who have come to different peoples of the world and have been accepted by millions of people in all parts of the world, and love for them and their greatness has been firmly established in any one part of the world, and further that this state of devotion and love for them has endured the test of time, is evidence enough of their truthfulness. Had they not been from God, they could not have been accepted on such a wide scale by millions upon millions of hearts. God does not bestow such honour upon

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those whom He favours not. If an imposter aspires to occupy their position, he is soon brought to ruin."<sup>35</sup>

### *Reconciliation is Best Course*

He also writes:

"My dear ones, there is nothing like peace and compromise. Let us unite with the blessing of this treaty and be one nation. You know full well that denial on both sides has thrown us apart and that our country is suffering greatly. Visualise how blessed it could prove to testify to each other's truth. Come, give this a try now. This is the best course for achieving peace. Pursuing any other course would be like ignoring a dangerous abscess merely because it looks clear and shiny, while, in reality, it contains rotten and putrid matter."<sup>36</sup>

### *True Objective of Religion*

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in *Paighām-e-Şulh*:

"The spirit of piety requires that you abstain from whatever God has forbidden. To actually pursue the path of gaining His favour and to have the welfare of His creation at heart and to treat others with goodness and sympathy and to respect all the holy Prophets and

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<sup>35</sup> *Paighām-e-Şulh*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 452-453

<sup>36</sup> *Paighām-e-Şulh*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, p. 456

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Messengers from God, and to accept them as reformers and to not discriminate between them and to serve all mankind irrespective of denominations. This is the essential requirement of our faith. How can we ever be at peace with such people who—without justification and without regard for the fear of Allah—speak of our Holy Prophet, Ḥadṛat Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with disrespect, and abuse him and refrain not from the use of foul language? In truth, I declare that it is possible for us to make peace with the serpents fed on brackish soil and the wolves of the wilderness, but not with those who make wanton attacks on our Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who is dearer to us than our lives, our mothers and our fathers. May Allah cause us to die as Muslims. We are not willing to do anything at the cost of our faith.....

"With a deep sense of mortification, I observe that Islam, being a religion of peace, never attacked the founder of any religion. The Quran is that revered book which laid the foundation of peace between nations and acknowledged the truth of all Prophets belonging to all the different nations. It is the Holy Quran which enjoys the unique distinction of teaching us with regards to the Prophets of the entire world that:

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لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

Therefore, O Muslims, you should declare: We believe in all the Prophets of God belonging to this world and we do not discriminate between them as to reject one and accept the others.

Name one book like the Holy Quran which is so dedicated for the cause of peace. The universal beneficence of God has not been confined by the Quran to any specific House. It acknowledges the Prophets of the House of Israel, one and all, be they Jacob [Ya‘qūb<sup>as</sup>], Isaac [Ishāq<sup>as</sup>], Moses [Mūsā<sup>as</sup>], David [Dāwūd<sup>as</sup>] or Jesus [‘Īsā<sup>as</sup>]. And it acknowledges the Prophets of other nations regardless of whether they dwelt in India or Persia. None of them have been labelled as deceitful or imposters. On the contrary, it clearly proclaims that Prophets appeared in every nation and in every township and laid the foundation of peace between all the peoples. Alas, this Messenger of Peace is abused and treated with contempt by all peoples alike.

Countrymen, I have not expressed this view to offend you or to hurt your sensibilities in any way. But I do desire to submit, in all sincerity, that those who have made it their second nature to vilify the Prophets of other faiths and

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<sup>37</sup> We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we submit. Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 2:137

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consider this unjustified behaviour to be a part of their faith commit an act of unwarranted interference in others' affairs. They not only sin against God, but they are also guilty of sowing the seed of discord and enmity among mankind. Now answer me with hand on heart: if someone abuses another's father or accuses another's mother of unchaste conduct, will this not be tantamount to assailing the honour of his father himself? If anyone retaliates with similar abuses, will it not be appropriate to say that in reality the blame lies with the person who initiated it? In that case he himself would be the offender of his parents' honour."<sup>38</sup>

### *Only Repentance Can Bring Salvation*

The Founder of Aḥmadiyya Jamā'at Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian writes:

"Bear in mind that God has informed me time and again about the coming of earthquakes. Be sure, therefore, that just as there have been earthquakes in America and in Europe in keeping with the prophecies, so will they occur in different parts of Asia, and some of them will be as terrifying as Doomsday. There will be death on such a large scale that rivers of blood will flow and even birds

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<sup>38</sup> *Paighām-e-Şulḥ*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 458-460

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and other animals will not be able to escape. Such destruction shall overtake the earth as has not happened since the birth of humanity. Many places will be completely wiped out as if they had never been inhabited. In addition, there will be other terrible afflictions both from heaven and the earth, until every sensible person will realize that they are no ordinary phenomena, nor will any trace of them be found in the books of natural philosophy and astronomy. Then people will be seized by anxiety and wonder as to what is going to happen. Many will be saved and many will perish. The days are near, indeed they are so close that the world shall witness a spectacle like doomsday. Not only will there be earthquakes but other terrible calamities as well, some from heaven and some from the earth. This will happen because mankind has given up the worship of their God, and all their thoughts and all their designs and all their resolves are exclusively centred on this world. Had I not come, these calamities might have been delayed for a while, but with my coming, the purposes of Divine wrath which remained hidden for so long have become manifest. As God said: <sup>39</sup> وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ﴿٣٩﴾ i.e., those who repent shall find security and those who fear before calamity strikes shall be shown mercy. Do you think you

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<sup>39</sup> We never punish until We have sent a Messenger. Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17:16

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will escape these earthquakes or that you can save yourselves by your own designs? No, you cannot. On that day, all human designs shall come to nought. Do not labour under the misconception that only America has been shaken by terrible earthquakes and that your own country will remain safe. I, for one, can visualize that you shall be overtaken by a greater calamity. O Europe! You are not safe! And O Asia! Neither are you! And O the dwellers of Islands! No artificial God will come to your aid. I see cities falling and habitations in ruin. The One and Unique God has long remained silent. Abominations were committed before His eyes and still He remained silent. But now He shall reveal His countenance in an awesome manner. Let him who has ears, hear! The hour is not far. I tried to bring every one under the protection of God, but Divine decrees have to be fulfilled. Truly do I proclaim that this country's turn is also drawing near. You shall witness the return of Noah's [Nūḥ] time and also of that which happened to the land of Lot [Lūṭ]. But God is slow to wrath; repent so that you are shown mercy. He who abandons God is a worm, not a man. And he who does not fear Him is dead, not alive."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Ḥaqīqatul-Waḥī*, Ruḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 268-269



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*The only way to restore the lost glory of Islam is to make an effort, after entering the fold of the community of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>*

Today, the revival of faith, the resurgence of the lost glory of Islam is by following the gallant of Allah whom Allah the Exalted established in the defence of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. It is by following the reasoning and arguments taught by him that were told to him by Allah the Exalted and by fully implementing his teachings that the banner of Islam and the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> will rise with its full glory and dignity, *Inshā 'Allāh*, and shall continue to flourish.

The summary of what the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says about the significance of this era and drawing the attention of people to it, is that Islam is undergoing hard times and for this reason Allah the Exalted established a mission that would restore the lost greatness. For this reason he said to the Muslims to give up their obstinacy and contemplate over the fact that would Allah the Exalted not be aroused to establish the honour of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> even in these circumstances when he is being attacked from all directions? Whereas, He invokes blessings and salutations on him.

The full extract is as follows:

How blessed is this era that merely with His Grace, Allah the Exalted has willed the blessed objective for the

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manifestation of the greatness of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> during these tumultuous days; has arranged for the triumph of Islam from the Divine and established a mission. I would like to ask those people who have compassion for Islam and who have respect and consideration for it in their hearts that can they say if there has been a time worse than this in which this much abuse and disrespect of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has taken place and the Holy Quran has been so blasphemed? I am then deeply saddened and distressed by the condition of the Muslims and at times I get anxious with this grief that there remains not even enough feeling in them to sense this disgrace. Did Allah the Exalted not regard any honour for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in that would He not have established a Divine mission on this extent of abuse to silence these opponents of Islam and to spread his<sup>sa</sup> greatness and purity in the world. In the event that Allah the Exalted and His angels invoke blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, how essential it is to manifest these salutations at this time of abuse and Allah the Exalted has manifested this in the shape of this mission. <sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Malfūzāt*, vol. 3 pp. 8-9, 2003 Edition

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

Notice this phrase and how great a responsibility lies on the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Community who associate themselves with the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.

At a time when there is an ongoing furor against the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, most certainly Allah the Exalted and His angels would be sending blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, are indeed sending it. It is also our task, those who have attached themselves to the mission and the Community of the true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and the Imam of the age, to mould our prayers in *Durūd* and infuse so much *Durūd* in the atmosphere with the sincerity of the heart that each particle of the atmosphere is fragrant with it and all our prayers gain acceptance in Allah's Presence by means of *Durūd*. This is the kind of demonstration of love that we should have for the person of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and his people. May Allah also grant the Muslim *ummah* wisdom and sense to recognise this Messenger of Allah and to join the Community of the spiritual son of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, who are once again elevating the station of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> by creating an atmosphere of peace and love in the world. May Allah give these people the wisdom to see that despite being linked to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> today once again, 1,400 years later, in the very same month of *Muḥarram*, in the very same land, a Muslim is spilling the

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blood of a Muslim. However, the lesson has never been learned and they are continuing to spill blood. May Allah give them sense that they may desist from these actions and may they inculcate fear of God in their hearts, and may they follow the true teaching of Islam. All that they are currently involved in is because of not accepting the Imam of the age, and for disobeying the directive of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. It is the responsibility of each Aḥmadī and it is a huge responsibility indeed, for one who has accepted the Imam of the age to abundantly invoke *Durūd* for the love of the Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, for your own sake, and for the sake of the other Muslims so that Allah may save the Muslim *ummah* from destruction.

It is the requisite of the love of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> that we generously include the Muslim *ummah* in our prayers. The intentions of the others (enemies) are also not right. Who knows what more trouble and turmoil these people are going to be entangled in, and these Muslims have to face it all, and what plans are being hatched against them. May Allah have mercy.

May Allah guide us on the right path, may we be grateful servants of God, may we be grateful to Him that He has enabled us to accept the Imam of the age, and now may

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He continue to enable us to honour this acceptance, and always keep us on the paths of His pleasure.'<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Friday sermon, delivered on February 24, 2006, Baitul-Futūḥ Mosque London, from *Uswa-e-Rasūl aur Khākoḥ kī Ḥaqīqat*, pp. 62-65

*International Press  
Coverage  
Of  
Ḥadīrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad's  
Friday Sermon  
Of 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2012*





LONDON, 22 September 2012

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**WORLD MUSLIM LEADER**  
**CONDEMNS ANTI-ISLAM FILM**

**Head of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at says that anger of Muslims is fully justified, but violent reaction must be condemned**

**Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad speaks to assembled media about film**

The World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Fifth Khalīfah, has called on Muslims across the world to peacefully unite in their opposition to the film ‘The Innocence of Muslims’ which has stirred up great resentment and anger amongst Muslims worldwide. He has also called for limits to free speech so that the religious sentiments of all people are protected.

During his weekly Friday Sermon, delivered from the Baitul-Futūḥ Mosque in South-West London on 21 September 2012, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said that Muslims across the world had been aggrieved and hurt by the film and also by the decision of a well-known French



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magazine to once again print vile caricatures depicting the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

Media outlets including BBC National News, BBC Newsnight, Sky News, Sky Arabic, Reuters, the Press Association and various other organisations were in attendance and met with Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad immediately after his address.

During his sermon, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said it was an inherent fear of Islam that was the main motivation behind the anti-Islam video and other similar attacks on the religion. He said:

***“It is their inability to defeat Islam that is causing its opponents to resort to such vile acts which they try to justify on the basis of freedom of speech or expression.”***

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad was clear in his condemnation of the violent response witnessed in a number of countries by extremist Muslims. He said that the killings of innocent people including ambassadors and diplomats was completely contrary to the teachings of Islam; he said that damaging property or burning buildings was completely wrong and benefited no party, except those who wished to defame Islam.

Addressing the issue of freedom of speech, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said that people should never be too

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proud to admit that there may be flaws in certain manmade laws or regulations. To treat freedom of speech as paramount at the expense of world peace and harmony was a flawed concept.

Speaking about the need to prioritise certain rights over others, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

***“Let it not be that in the name of freedom of speech the peace of the entire world be destroyed.”***

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad also called on the leaders of the world and members of the public to reflect whether they were playing a role in causing hostilities to rise in the world by supporting, at all costs, the right of people to make films or caricatures that offend religious sentiments and hurt innocent people.

In reaction to such provocations, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad called on Muslims worldwide to display a collective and mature response. He said Muslim Governments and Muslims who live in Western countries should join together to promote the real and peaceful teachings of Islam and of the Holy Quran to the world. He said they should take a peaceful and united stand to defend Islam and the noble character of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) at every opportunity and at every level.

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Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

***“Muslims need to remember that extremism is not the answer to such provocation. Instead the answer is to reform oneself and to respond to the curses of the opponents by sending salutations on the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).***

***And in worldly terms the Muslim world needs to unite and Muslims who live in western countries should fully utilise the power of their right to vote.”***

His Holiness noted that in recent years such attacks on Islam were increasing and whilst the inappropriate reactions of certain Muslims had to be condemned, he said it should not be forgotten that it was often others were taking the first step in causing such disorder.

Addressing the efforts of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at to portray the true teachings of Islam to the world, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

***“We Aḥmadi Muslims leave no stone unturned when it comes to serving humanity. For example last year, in response to a pressing need, we raised around 12,000 bottles of blood for the people of America and we are doing a similar blood drive once again currently. Thus we are giving blood in an effort to save lives, but by***

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***supporting the acts of vile and hateful people, others are making our hearts bleed with grief.”***

The Khalīfah concluded by speaking about how all attempts to undermine or mock the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) were destined to fail. He said:

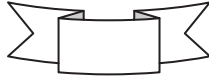
***“It should be remembered that the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at, the Promised Messiah, said that every victory comes from the heavens and that the heavens have decreed that the Prophet who the world is trying to insult will ultimately be granted a great victory in this world. And this victory will be achieved by winning the hearts of people.”***

During the press conference that followed the Friday Sermon, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad told the assembled media that the love a Muslim has for the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was unparalleled. He said that all people are hurt if their loved ones are mocked and thus any attack on the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) is sure to grieve all Muslims.

In response to a question about the violent protests following the release of the film, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said that such protests were wrong and that

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the killing of any innocent people, including ambassadors and diplomats was completely contrary to the teachings of Islam. He said that all protests must be conducted within the scope of the law and remain peaceful.



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**THE EXPRESS**  
**TRIBUNE**  
WITH THE International Herald Tribune

Anti-Islam film: Head of Ahmadi  
community says anger of  
Muslims 'fully justified'

Web Desk

Published: September 23, 2012

**The head of the Ahmadi community said that anger of Muslims regarding the anti-Islam film is “fully justified, but violent reaction must be condemned,” a statement issued by their global community quoted him on Sunday.**

Speaking to a media gathering, Mirza Masroor Ahmad said that the Muslims across the world should “peacefully unite in their opposition to the film” which has stirred up “great resentment and anger among Muslims worldwide.”

Ahmad also called for limiting free speech so that the religious sentiments of people are protected.

The statement quoted the Ahmaddiya leader as saying:

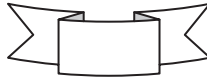
***It is their inability to defeat Islam that is causing them to resort to such vile acts which they try to justify on the basis of freedom of speech or expression. Let it not be that in the name of freedom of speech the peace of the entire is destroyed.***

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He condemned the violent response witnessed in a number of countries by Muslims and the killings of innocent people including ambassadors and diplomats.

He said, “Damaging property or burning buildings was completely wrong and benefited no party.”

*Correction: An earlier version of this article had construed that the Ahmadi community head meant “non-Muslims” when he said “their” during his address. The error is regretted.*





The Times of India, India

**Anti-Islam movie: Ahmadiyyas to hold peace conference**

Yudhvir Rana, TNN Sep 26, 2012, 06.43AM IST

AMRITSAR: Even as Muslims across the world are fuming over controversial movie "Innocence of Muslims" that has hurt their religious sentiments, Ahmadiyyas have decided to hold a "peace conference" at their headquarters in Qadian in Gurdaspur district on September 30. This decision was taken following Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat world head Mirza Masroor Ahmad called on Muslims across the world to peacefully unite in their opposition to the movie.

Expressing differences over spate of violence and killing of innocent people following the release of trailer for the movie, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad condemned the violent response witnessed in a number of countries. He said, "The killing of innocent people, including ambassadors and diplomats, is completely in contradiction to the teachings of Islam."

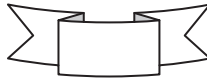


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***"Damaging property or burning buildings is completely wrong and benefited no party, except those who wish to defame Islam. We need to reflect if we are playing a role in fuelling hostilities or are we displaying a collective and mature response."***

He said Muslim governments and Muslims who lived in Western countries should join hands to promote the real and peaceful teachings of Islam and of the Holy Quran to the world. He said, "They should take a peaceful and united stand to defend Islam and the noble character of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad at every opportunity and at every level," he said.

Syed Tufail Ahmad Shahbaj, office in charge of press committee, Ahmadiyya Jama'at, said they had invited representatives from all religions besides political leaders to participate in the peace conference.



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**OTTAWA  
CITIZEN**

Ottawa Citizen Newspaper  
**Ottawa Muslim leader  
condemns violence over  
anti-Islamic film.**

BY CHLOÉ FEDIO, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN SEPTEMBER 30, 2012

The Ottawa leader of a Muslim sect condemned the violent reaction to “an extremely foul and provocative film,” including bloody protests and the storming of a consulate building in Benghazi that killed the U.S. ambassador to Libya and three embassy staff.

During a Saturday evening gathering at the spiritual centre of Ahmadiyya Muslims in Cumberland, Imam Imtiaz Ahmed told members of his congregation that it’s possible to protest peacefully against “The Innocence of Muslims,” a 14-minute amateur film produced in the United States and released online.

“It is a disgraceful and vulgar action of the producer of the film that has caused unrest in the entire Muslim world. Each Muslim is reacting to it — they exhibit momentary passion by burning flags, causing damage and destruction, and attacking embassies,” he said. “By burning flags and burning property of an embassy and by killing an ambassador, do they think that they have had their

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reprisal? This is indeed against the teaching of Islam. This is not true Islam.”

The Ahmadis are a minority Muslim sect that encourage interfaith dialogue. The congregation in Cumberland is about 500 people, Ahmed said.

Ahmed joined a host of Muslim leaders across the globe that have criticized the defence that the film falls under freedom of speech.

“Any kind of vulgar expression about any sacred person of any religion, for that matter, does not constitute the freedom in any way at all,” Ahmed said.

Last week in London, the world head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama‘at called on all Muslims to unite peacefully in opposition to the film and condemned the violence. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad also suggested there should be limits to free of speech to protect religious beliefs.

“Let it not be that in the name of free speech the peace of this entire world be destroyed,” he said

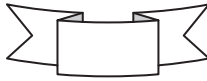
Awais Mehmood, president of the Ottawa congregation’s youth association, said he’s concerned about his family members in Pakistan, where AFP reported at least 21 dead and more than 200 injured in clashes about the film over the weekend.

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“Islam teaches us about loyalty. The Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him, said loyalty to your homeland is part of your faith,” Mehmood said. “In Pakistan, what’s happening is they are damaging their own property, hurting their neighbours — this is not the way to express your view.”

Yasmin Malik, a leader in the women’s auxiliary, suggested a peaceful alternative.

“Instead of getting out and burning all these things — we don’t believe in it. We strongly believe in writing to get your message out,” Malik said.



*9:48am Monday 24th September 2012*

Thousands of worshippers turned out in force on Friday to hear their spiritual leader condemn violent protests across the world against an anti-Islamic film.

Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community gathered at the Baitul-Futuh mosque in London Road, Morden, to hear His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad deliver a one-hour sermon.

In a live global broadcast, he deplored the protestors' actions and said a peaceful approach should have been used to condemn the film.

This month's deadly violence in the Middle East, North Africa, Asia and Australia was sparked by a 14-minute trailer for the amateur US-produced film *Innocence of Muslims*.

An actor in the footage - clips of which were posted on YouTube - portrays the Prophet Muḥammad which is strictly forbidden in Islam.

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

Muslims have been further outraged by the film depicting Muḥammad having sex with different women, and permitting the sexual abuse of children.

Speaking after his sermon, His Holiness said: "We cannot tolerate it, not even the smallest thing against the Prophet.

"Is it freedom of expression for somebody to insult your father in front of you? You will obviously retaliate."

He also called for the ridicule of other religions to be made illegal.

His Holiness said the violent protestors were not following the true teachings of Islam and lacked leadership.

He added: "The way these Muslims are protesting is not the right way."

The American-made film has sparked deadly violence across the Muslim world, including in Pakistan where 21 people were killed in violence on Friday, September 21.

On Saturday, a minister of the Pakistani Government told reporters he would pay \$100,000 to have the U.S.-based movie producer killed, and even called for the help of terrorist organisations like Al Qaeda and the Taliban to catch the filmmaker, who is currently in hiding.

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

President of the Muslim Women's Association, Nasira Rehman, said the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was "terribly hurt" and for someone to tarnish the reputation of the prophet was "heartbreaking."

"Our hearts are bleeding," she added.

On the protestors, she said it is not the duty of Muslims to punish those who "make mischief" and people should pray to God for a solution and not take matters into their own hands.

Worshipper Ahmad Murtaza, of Putney, said peaceful, intelligent debate would have been the answer.

He said: "The Prophet Muḥammad is so dear to every Muslim.

"You are supposed to hold Muḥammad closer to you than anyone you love - it is ingrained since childhood.

"You shouldn't violate the rights of others.

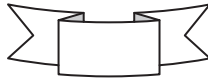
"Your freedom of expression ends where another person's nose begins."

Ahmadiyya Muslims are themselves the target of persecution in hardline Islamic countries like Pakistan, because they believed their spiritual leader is religion's latest prophet, whereas most Muslims believe Muḥammad was the last prophet.

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

In 2010, this newspaper exposed how members of the Ahmadiyya sect were open insulted and discriminated against by religious bigots in south London, who targeted their livelihoods and political candidates in Tooting.

Also that year, 93 Ahmadi worshippers were slaughtered by terrorists while they prayed in mosques in Lahore – including Muḥammad Ashraf Bilal, a visiting businessman who lived in Sispara Gardens, Southfields.







**Pak Ahmadi community leader says  
anger of Muslims over anti-Islam  
film 'fully justified'**

Islamabad, Mon, 24 Sep 2012ANI

Islamabad, Sept. 24 (ANI): The head of the Ahmadi community in Pakistan has said the anger of Muslims regarding the anti-Islam film produced in the United States, is "fully justified", but has condemned the violent reaction to it.

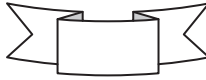
"It is their (non-Muslim's) inability to defeat Islam that is causing them to resort to such vile acts which they try to justify on the basis of freedom of speech or expression. Let it not be that in the name of freedom of speech the peace of the entire is destroyed," The Express Tribune quoted Mirza Masroor Ahmad, as saying in a statement.

Ahmad said that Muslims across the world should "peacefully unite in their opposition to the film" which has stirred up "great resentment and anger among Muslims worldwide".

Ahmad also called for limiting free speech so that the religious sentiments of people are protected. He also condemned the violent response witnessed in a number of countries by Muslims and the killings of innocent people including ambassadors and diplomats. (ANI)

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

The film, made by an Israeli-American, which portrays Prophet Muḥammad as a fraud, child molester and a womanizer, created furore across the Muslim world, resulting in violence and worldwide protests against America. (ANI)





**Muslim leader calls for peace,  
limits to speech over incendiary  
video**



By Graham Lanktree Metro Ottawa

The World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Fifth Khalīfah, called on Muslims across the world to peacefully unite in their opposition to the film ‘The Innocence of Muslims’ Sept. 21.

After weeks of violence erupted over an amateur video criticizing the Muslim faith, members of Ottawa’s Islamic community will call for an end to the violence and limits to free speech at a meeting Saturday.

“It is against the teachings of Islam to burn flags, burn property and kill people – including an ambassador,” said Imtiaz Ahmed, an Islamic missionary and community leader. “There is a fine line between freedom of speech and hurting people’s sentiments. When we hurt people we have to draw a line on freedom of speech.”

Ahmed hopes to draw a crowd of 400 members of Ottawa’s Ahmadi community, a small Muslim sect persecuted in Pakistan, to share the message of rejecting violence.

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

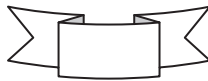
“The best way to react is to pray to God the almighty for his help and be a role model,” he said. “Violence is not a solution to anything. We also condemn the video produced in America and the cartoons in France.”

On Sept. 21, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, a spiritual leader of the Ahmadi, called for limits to free speech so that the religious sentiments of all people are protected.

“We are grateful the Canadian government has given us freedom to practice our faith,” Ahmed said. “In my country we can’t even call ourselves Muslims,” he noted in reference to numerous and regular attacks on Pakistan’s 2 to 5 million Ahmadi.

“Each religion has respect for their own Prophet. Christians respect Jesus Christ, peace be upon him,” he said. “But sometimes ignorant clergymen use people for their own personal gains. Prophet Mohammed never taught us to go out in the street and create violence.”

Imtiaz Ahmed will lead a talk condemning violence Saturday, Sept. 29 at 5 p.m. at 2610 Market St. in Cumberland.



## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*



### **One News**

New Zealand's News  
Reporter: Garth Bray

But in Europe moderate Muslim leaders have been trying to stop the violence spreading to their region and it seems to be working so far. Our Europe correspondent Garth Bray has been given a rare access to a London mosque.

As American flags burn across Asia and the Middle East, in Paris where cartoons, of a naked Prophet Muḥammad were published, call for calm word heeded. So too in Britain.

I was invited into this mosque so eagerly to show its moderate views that these two female reporters were welcomed also. The Khalifah condemned the filmmaker and cartoonists.

“Allah Almighty is going to fill hell with these people.”

Just as quickly, he reminded listeners that it is not up to them to punish the wicked.

“We do not believe in any type of violence and you have never observed or seen any Ahmadi involved in this type of protest and violence.

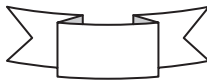
## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

The people who built this mosque in South-West London say it is the largest in Western Europe and that Muslims in a hundred nations would have heard the words spoken inside, calling on them to do no more than speak out against insults to their religion, like the cartoon and the film.

But their leader the Caliph admitted to me that there are many more Muslims prepare to do much worse.

He says:

“It is not anti-Western sentiment, more a case of others inciting violence to increase their own following. Of course, as the Head of a minority Muslim sect his words may not move many of them, nor quell the violence in places like Peshawar.”





الْفَضْلُ مَا شَهِدَتْ بِهِ الْأَعْدَاءُ

*Excellence is that which even the opponents  
acknowledge.*

*Views of eminent non-  
Muslim Scholars regarding  
the Holy Prophet,  
Muḥammad*  
[Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him]





### *George Sale*

In his English translation of the Holy Quran, the writer George Sale writes with reference to Spanhemius – a staunch opponent of Islam, who said many negative things against the Prophet Muḥammad<sup>sa</sup> – yet Sale writes:

"...for how criminal soever Mohammed may have been in imposing a false religion on mankind, the praises due to his real virtues ought not to be denied him; nor can I do otherwise than applaud the candour of the pious and learned Spanhemius, who, though he owned him to have been a wicked imposter, yet acknowledged him to have been richly furnished with natural endowments, beautiful in his person, of a subtle wit, agreeable behavior, showing liberality to the poor, courtesy to everyone, fortitude against his enemies, and above all a high reverence for the name of God; severe against the perjured, adulterers, murderers, slanderers, prodigals, covetous, false witnesses &c. a great preacher of patience, charity, mercy, beneficence, gratitude, honouring of parents and superiors, and a frequent celebrator of the divine praises."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> George Sale. To the Reader. In: *The Koran: Commonly called the Alkoran of Mohammed*. J. B. Lippincott & Co., PA. pp.vi-vii (1860).

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

*Stanley Lane-Poole*

Another writer, Stanley Lane-Poole, wrote:

"He freely forgave the Koreysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him, and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mekka...It was thus that Mohammad entered again his native city. Through all the annals of conquest there is no triumphant entry comparable to this one."<sup>44</sup>

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*H.G Wells*

In *The Outline of History*, professor H.G Wells wrote regarding a major proof of the prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad<sup>sa</sup>:

"Because those who knew Muhammad best believed in him the most... Muhammad was no impostor at any rate...there can be no denying that Islam possesses many fine and noble attributes... They created a society more free from widespread cruelty and social oppression than any society had ever been in the world before."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole. Introduction. In: *Speeches and Table Talk of the Prophet Muhammad*. Macmillan & Co., London. p xlvi (1882).

<sup>45</sup> H.G. Wells. Part II: Muhammad and Islam. In: *The Outline of History*. University of Michigan Library., MI. p 269 (1920)

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

*De Lacy O'Leary*

In his book, *Islam at the Crossroads*, De Lacy O'Leary wrote:

"History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races, is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated."<sup>46</sup>

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*Mahatma Gandhi*

In a statement published in *Young India*, Mahatma Gandhi stated:

"I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days, in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These, and not the sword, carried

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<sup>46</sup> De Lacy O'Leary. *Islam at the Crossroads*. Kegan Paul., London, p.8 (1923).

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume [of a book on the Prophet's biography], I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life. "<sup>47</sup>

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### *John Bagot Glubb*

Sir John Bagot Glubb, a Lieutenant General who passed away in 1986, wrote at the conclusion of his book:

"Whatever opinion the reader may form when he reaches the end of this book [which he was writing], it is difficult to deny that the call of Muhammad seems to bear a striking resemblance to innumerable other accounts of similar visions, both in the Old and New Testaments, and in the experience of Christian saints, possibly also of Hindus and devotees of other religions. Such visions, moreover, have often marked the beginnings of lives of great sanctity and of heroic virtue. To attribute such phenomena to self-delusion scarcely seems an adequate explanation, for they have been experienced by many persons divided from one another by thousands of years of time and by thousands of miles of distance, who cannot conceivably have even heard of each other. Yet the

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<sup>47</sup> Mahatma Gandhi. *Young India*. September 23rd 1924

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

accounts which they give of their visions seem to bear an extraordinary likeness to one another. It scarcely appears reasonable to suggest that all these visionaries 'imagined' such strikingly similar experiences, although they were quite ignorant of each other's existence. "<sup>48</sup>

Regarding the migration of the companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> to Abyssinia (the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was in Makkah at the time) he wrote:

"The list seems to have included very nearly all the persons who had accepted Islam and the Messenger of God must have remained with a much reduced group of adherents, among the generally hostile inhabitants of Makkah, a situation which proves him to have possessed a considerable degree of moral courage and conviction. "<sup>49</sup>

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### *John William Draper*

In his book *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, John William Draper wrote:

"Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born at Mecca, in Arabia the man who, of all others,

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<sup>48</sup> John Bagot Glubb. *The Life and Times of Muḥammad*. Hodder & Stoughton. 1970 (reprint 2002)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid,

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

exercised the greatest influence upon the human race... Mohammed, by Europeans surnamed “the Impostor... Mohammed possessed that combination of qualities which more than once decided the fate of empires. A preaching soldier, he was eloquent in the pulpit [when delivering speeches], valiant in the field. His theology was simple: ‘There is but one God.’ [That the sum total of the religion is that God is One.]... Asserting that everlasting truth, he did not engage in vain metaphysics, but applied himself to improving the social condition of his people by regulations respecting personal cleanliness, sobriety, fasting, prayer. Before all other works he esteemed almsgiving and charity.”<sup>50</sup>

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### *William Montgomery Watt*

A famous Orientalist, William Montgomery Watt, wrote in his book, *Muhammad at Medina*:

"The more one reflects on the history of Muhammad and of early Islam, the more one is amazed at the vastness of his achievement. Circumstances presented him with an opportunity such as few men have had, but the man was

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<sup>50</sup> John William Draper, M.D., L.L.D. *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*. Harper and Brothers Publishers., NY. P.244 (1863)

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

fully matched with the hour. Had it not been for his gifts as a seer, statesman, and administrator and, behind these, his trust in God and firm belief that God had sent him, a notable chapter in the history of mankind would have remained unwritten. It is my hope that this study of his life may contribute to a fresh appraisal and appreciation of one of the greatest of the sons of Adam. "<sup>51</sup>

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### *Bosworth Smith*

The famous Christian historian, Reverend Bosworth Smith, in his book *Muhammad and Muhammadanism*, wrote:

"Head of the State as well as of the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions and Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammed, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. "<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> William Montgomery Watt. *Muhammad at Madina*. Oxford University Press. pp. 335 (1981)

<sup>52</sup> Rev. Bosworth Smith. Character of Mohammad. In: *MOHAMMAD AND MOHAMMADANISM*. Smith, Elder & Co., London. p. 235 (1876)



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"Those who knew him best, his wife, his eccentric slave, his cousin, his earliest friend – he who, as Mohammed said, alone of his converts, ‘turned not back, neither was perplexed’ – were the first to recognize his mission [that is, his prophethood]. The ordinary lot of a prophet was in his case reversed; he was not without honour save among those who did not know him well. "<sup>53</sup>

"The practices that Mohammed forbade, and not forbade only, but abolished, human sacrifices [that is, sacrificing humans] and the murder of female infants, and blood feuds, and unlimited polygamy, and wanton cruelty to slaves, and drunkenness, and gambling, would have gone unchecked in Arabia and the adjoining countries. "<sup>54</sup>

"Nor could anyone have done what Mohammed did without the most profound faith in the reality and goodness of his cause [he had firm faith and conviction in his mission, claim and that he was sent from God; it is thus that a revolution was brought about]...there is everything to prove the real enthusiast arriving slowly and painfully at what he believed to be the truth. "<sup>55</sup>

"To say that Arabia needed renovation was to say in other words that the time for a new prophet had come, and why might not that prophet be Mohammed himself? Sprenger,

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 127

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 125

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 127

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

the most recent and exhaustive writer on the subject, has shown that for some hundred years before Mohammed the advent of another prophet had been expected and even predicted. "<sup>56</sup>

"On the whole, the wonder is to me not how much, but how little, under different circumstances, Mohammed differed from himself. In the shepherd of the desert [when he tended sheep], in the Syrian trader, in the solitary of Mount Hira, in the reformer in the minority of one, in the exile of Medina, in the acknowledged conqueror, in the equal of the Persian Chosroes and the Greek Heraclius, we can still trace a substantial unity. I doubt whether any other man, whose external conditions changed so much, ever himself changed less to meet them: the accidents are changed, the essence seems to me to be the same in all. "<sup>57</sup>

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### *Washington Irving*

Washington Irving, in his book *Life of Muhammad*, wrote: "His military triumphs awakened no pride, nor vain glory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manner and appearance

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 133

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 133

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as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect was shown to him. "<sup>58</sup>

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### *William Muir*

Sir William Muir was an Orientalist, who although saying quite a lot against Islam, wrote:

"Thorough and complete in all his actions, he took in hand no work without bringing it to a close. The same habit pervaded his manner in social intercourse. If he turned in a conversation towards a friend, he turned not partially, but with his full face and his whole body. In shaking hands, he was not the first to withdraw his own; nor was he the first to break off in converse with a stranger, nor to turn away his ear. A patriarchal simplicity pervaded his life. His custom was to do everything for himself. If he gave alms he would place it with his own hands in that of the petitioner. He aided his wives in their household duties...He was to all of easy access - even as the river's bank to him that draweth water from it. Embassies and deputations were received with the utmost courtesy and consideration. In the issue of prescripts bearing on their

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<sup>58</sup> Washington Irving. *The Life of Mahomet*. Bernard Tauchnitz., Leipzig. pp. 272-3(1850)

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

representations, or in other matters of state, Muhammad displayed all the qualifications of an able and experienced ruler. What renders this the more strange is that he was never known himself to write. A remarkable feature was the urbanity and consideration with which Muhammad treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty and kindliness, patience, self-denial, and generosity, pervaded his conduct, and riveted the affections of all around him. He disliked to say No. If unable to answer a petitioner in the affirmative, he preferred silence. He was not known ever to refuse an invitation to the house even of the meanest, nor to decline a proffered present however small. He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that he was the favoured guest. If he met anyone rejoicing at success he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted, he sympathized tenderly. Gentle and unbending towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in times of scarcity, with others, and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of everyone about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervaded all those illustrations of his character.

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

Muhammad was a faithful friend. He loved Abu Bakr with the close affection of a brother; Ali, with the fond partiality of a father. Zaid, the freedman, was so strongly attached by the kindness of the Prophet that he preferred to remain at Mecca rather than return home with his own father. 'I will not leave thee,' he said, clinging to his patron, 'for thou hast been a father and mother to me.' The friendship of Muhammad survived the death of Zaid, and his son Usama was treated by him with distinguished favour for the father's sake. Uthman and Umar were also the objects of a special attachment; and the enthusiasm with which, at Hudaibiyya, the Prophet entered into the Pledge of the Tree and swore that he would defend his beleaguered son-in-law even to the death, was a signal proof of faithful friendship. Numerous other instances of Muhammad's ardent and unwavering regard might be adduced. His affections were in no instance misplaced; they were ever reciprocated by a warm and self-sacrificing love. In the exercise of a power absolutely dictatorial, Muhammad was just and temperate. Nor was he wanting in moderation towards his enemies, when once they had cheerfully submitted to his claims. The long and obstinate struggle against his pretensions maintained by the inhabitants of Mecca might have induced its conqueror to mark his indignation in indelible traces of fire and blood. But Muhammad, excepting a few

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

criminals, granted a universal pardon; and, nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past, with all its mockery, its affronts and persecution, he treated even the foremost of his opponents with a gracious and even friendly consideration. Not less marked was the forbearance shown to Abdullah and the disaffected citizens of Medina [that is, the hypocrites], who for so many years persistently thwarted his designs and resisted his authority, nor the clemency with which he received submissive advances of tribes that before had been the most hostile, even in the hour of victory. "<sup>59</sup>

Although he wrote in several places in opposition to the Quran etc., here he wrote:

"It is strongly corroborative of Mahomet's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household; who, intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail otherwise to have detected those discrepancies which, more or less, invariably exist between the professions of the hypocritical deceiver abroad, and his actions at home. "<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Sir William Muir. *Life of Muhammad.(Volume IV)*. Smith, Elder and Company., London. pp. 303-307 (1861)

<sup>60</sup> Sir William Muir. *Life of Muhammad.(Volume II)*. Smith, Elder and Company., London. pp. 97-8 (1861)

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

*Thomas Carlyle*

Sir Thomas Carlyle, discussing the fact that Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> was illiterate, wrote:

"One other circumstance we must not forget: that he had no school learning; of the thing we call school-learning none at all. The art of writing was but just introduced into Arabia; it seems to be the true opinion that Muhammad never could write! Life in the Desert, with its experiences, was all his education. What of this infinite Universe he, from his dim place, with his own eyes and thoughts, could take in, so much and no more of it was he to know. Curious, if we will reflect on it, this of having no books. Except by what he could see for himself, or hear of by uncertain rumour of speech in the obscure Arabian Desert, he could know nothing. The wisdom that had been before him or at a distance from him in the world, was in a manner as good as not there for him. Of the great brother souls, flame beacons through so many lands and times, no one directly communicates with this great soul. He is alone there, deep down in the bosom of the Wilderness; has to grow up so, alone with Nature and his own Thoughts. "<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Thomas Carlyle. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. Wiley and Putnam., NY. p.47 (1846)

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Discussing the Prophet<sup>sa</sup>'s marriage and his domestic relations, Carlyle wrote:

"How he was placed with Khadija, a rich Widow, as her steward, and travelled in her business, again to the Fairs of Syria; how he managed all, as one can well understand, with fidelity and adroitness; how her gratitude, her regard for him grew: the story of their marriage is altogether a graceful intelligible one, as told us by the Arab authors. He was twenty five; she forty. He seems to have lived in a most affectionate, peaceable, wholesome way, with this wedded benefactress; loving her truly, and her alone. It goes greatly against the impostor theory, the fact that he lived in this entirely unexceptionable, entirely quiet and commonplace way, till the heat of his years, was done."<sup>62</sup>

"Our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming Impostor, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to anyone. The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only...It is really time to dismiss all that. The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred and eighty millions of men these twelve hundred years [He was writing this in the

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<sup>62</sup> Thomas Carlyle. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. Wiley and Putnam., NY. p.48 (1846)



## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

19th Century]... A greater number of God's creatures believe in Mahomet's word at this hour, than in any other word whatever. "<sup>63</sup>

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### *Alphonse de Lamartine*

Lamartine, a French philosopher, wrote in his book, *History of Turkey*:

"If the grandeur of the design, the pettiness of the means, the immensity of the results, be the three measures of human genius, who would dare to compare humanly the greatest men of modern times to Mahomet? The most famous of them have agitated but armies, laws, empires; they have founded [when they founded anything] but physical potencies, often crumbled to the earth before themselves. Mahomet has recast armies, legislations, empires, peoples, dynasties, with millions of men, throughout a third of the inhabited globe. More than this, he recast altars, gods, religions, ideas, creeds, souls. He has founded upon a book, of which every letter is become a law, a spiritual nationality which embraces peoples of every tongue and race..."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Thomas Carlyle. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. Wiley and Putnam., NY. pp.60-1 (1846)

<sup>64</sup> A. De Lamartine. *History of Turkey (English Translation)*. D. Appleton & Co., NY. p.154 (1855-7)

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"Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may ask, is there any man greater than he? "<sup>65</sup>

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### *John Davenport*

John Davenport wrote:

"Is it possible to conceive, we may ask, that the man who directed such great and lasting reforms in his own country by substituting the worship of the one only true God for the gross and debasing idolatry in which his countrymen had been plunged for ages... to have been a mere impostor, or that his whole career was one of sheer hypocrisy? Can we imagine that his divine mission was a mere invention of his own, of whose falsehood he was conscious throughout? No, surely, nothing but a consciousness of really righteous intentions could have carried Mohammed so steadily and constantly, without ever flinching or wavering, without ever betraying

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p.155 (1855-7)

## *Islam and the Freedom of Conscience*

himself to his most intimate connections and companions, from his first revelation to Khadija, to his last. "<sup>66</sup>

"Western princes had been lords of Asia instead of the Saracens and Turks, they would not have tolerated Mohammedanism as Mohammedans have tolerated Christianity, since they persecuted, with the most relentless cruelty, those of their own, faith whom they deemed heterodox. "<sup>67</sup>

"There is no doubt that amongst all Lawgivers and Conquerors, there is not a single one whose life story is found in more details and authenticity than that of Prophet Muhammad. "<sup>68</sup>

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### *Michael H. Hart*

Michael H. Hart, in his book, *A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, wrote:

"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in

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<sup>66</sup> John Davenport. *An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*. J.Davy & Sons., London. p.139 (1869)

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p.82 (1869)

<sup>68</sup> Ibid,

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history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level. "<sup>69</sup>

"How, then, is one to assess the overall impact of Muhammad on human history? Like all religions, Islam exerts an enormous influence upon the lives of its followers. It is for this reason that the founders of the world's great religions all figure prominently in this book. Since there are roughly twice as many Christians as Muslims in the world [this refers to the time he wrote this], it may initially seem strange that Muhammad has been ranked higher than Jesus. There are two principal reasons for that decision First, Muhammad played a far more important role in the development of Islam than Jesus did in the development of Christianity. Although Jesus was responsible for the main ethical and moral precepts of Christianity [those that differed from Judaism), St. Paul was the main developer of Christian theology, its principal proselytizer, and the author of a large portion of the New Testament.

Muhammad, however, was responsible for both the theology of Islam and its main ethical and moral principles. In addition, he played the key role in proselytizing the new faith, and in establishing the religious practices of Islam. Moreover, he is the author of

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<sup>69</sup> Michael H. Hart. *THE 100: A RANKING OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN HISTORY*. Carol publishing group., p.3.

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the Muslim holy scriptures, the Quran [in other words opponents will most certainly allege this], a collection of certain of Muhammad's insights that he believed had been directly revealed to him by Allah. Most of these utterances were copied more or less faithfully during Muhammad's lifetime and were collected together in authoritative form not long after his death. The Quran, therefore, closely represents Muhammad's ideas and teachings and to a considerable extent his exact words. No such detailed compilation of the teachings of Christ has survived. Since the Quran is at least as important to Muslims as the Bible is to Christians, the influence of Muhammad through the medium of the Quran has been enormous. It is probable that the relative influence of Muhammad on Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. On the purely religious level, then, it seems likely that Muhammad has been as influential in human history as Jesus. "<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *ibid*, pp.8-9

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*Karen Armstrong*

Karen Armstrong wrote in *Muhammed: A Biography of the Prophet*:

"Muhammad had to start virtually from scratch and work his way towards the radical monotheistic spirituality of his own. When he began his mission, a dispassionate observer would not have given him a chance. The Arabs, he might have objected, were just not ready for monotheism: they were not sufficiently developed for this sophisticated vision [that is *Tauḥīd*, belief in the Unity of God]. In fact, to attempt to introduce it on a large scale in this violent, terrifying society, could be extremely dangerous and Muhammad would be lucky to escape with his life. Indeed, Muhammad was frequently in deadly peril and his survival was a near-miracle. But he did succeed. By the end of his life he had laid an axe to the root of the chronic cycle tribal violence that afflicted the region and paganism was no longer a going concern. The Arabs were ready to embark on a new phase of their history."<sup>71</sup>

Referring to Christianity and the West, Armstrong wrote:

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<sup>71</sup> Karen Armstrong. *Muḥammad - A Biography of the Prophet*. Harper Collins Publishers., NY. p.53-54 (1993)

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"Finally it was the West, not Islam, which forbade the open discussion of religious matters. At the time of the Crusades, Europe seemed obsessed by a craving for intellectual conformity and punished its deviants with a zeal that has been unique in the history of religion. The witch-hunts of the inquisitors and the persecution of Protestants by the Catholics and vice versa were inspired by abstruse theological opinions, which in both Judaism and Islam were seen as private and optional matters. Neither Judaism nor Islam share the Christian conception of heresy, which raises human ideas about the divine to an unacceptably high level and almost makes them a form of idolatry. "<sup>72</sup>

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### *Annie Besant*

Annie Besant wrote in the book, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad*:

"It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p.27 (1993)

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many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher."<sup>73</sup>

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### *Ruth Cranston*

Ruth Cranston wrote in *World Faiths*:

"Mohammad never instigated fighting and bloodshed. Every battle he fought was in rebuttal. He fought in order to survive... and he fought with the weapons and in fashion of his time. Certainly no Christian nation of 140,000,000 people [as this book was published in 1949] who today dispatch 120,000 helpless civilians with a single bomb, can look askance at a leader who at his worst killed a bare five or six hundred. "

"The slayings of the Prophet of Arabia in the benighted and bloodthirsty age of the seventh century look positively puerile compared with our own, in this 'advanced' and enlightened twentieth. Not to mention the mass slaughter by the Christians during the Inquisition and the Crusades – when, Christian warriors proudly

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<sup>73</sup> Annie Besant. *The Life and Teachings of Moḥammad*. Theosophical Publishing House., India. p. 4 (1932)



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recorded, they 'waded ankle-deep in the gore of the Muslim infidels. "<sup>74</sup>

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### *Godfrey Higgins*

Godfrey Higgins wrote:

"Nothing is so common as to hear the Christian priests abuse the religion of Mohamed for its bigotry and intolerance. Wonderful assurance and hypocrisy! Who was it expelled the Moriscos from Spain because they would not turn Christians? Who was it murdered the millions of Mexico and Peru, and gave them all away as slaves because they were not Christians? What a contrast have the Mohamedans exhibited in Greece! For many centuries the Christians have been permitted to live in the peaceable possession of their properties, their religion, their priests, bishops, patriarchs and churches..."<sup>75</sup>

"In all the history of the Caliphs, there cannot be shewn anything half so infamous as the Inquisition, nor a single instance of an individual burnt for his religious opinion;

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<sup>74</sup> Ruth Cranston. *World Faiths*. Harper and Row Publishers., NY. P.155 (1949)

<sup>75</sup> Godfrey Higgins. *Apology for Mohammed*. Lahore. pp. 123-4 (1829)

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nor, do I believe, put to death in a time of peace for simply not embracing the religion of Islam. "<sup>76</sup>

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### *Edward Gibbon*

In *History of the Saracen Empire*, Edward Gibbon wrote:

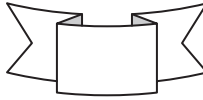
"It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion [that it has always remained established] that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina, is preserved after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran....The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam [that is, *there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger*]. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol [in other words, this was the image of God which the Muslims never formed into an idol].; the honours of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, P. 52 (1829)

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virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion. "<sup>77</sup>



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<sup>77</sup> Edward Gibbon, Simon Oakley. *History of the Saracen Empire*. Alex Murray & Son., London. P.54 (1870)

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### *Note on the use of Abbreviations*

The name of Muḥammad<sup>sa</sup>, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol <sup>sa</sup>, which is an abbreviation for the salutation *Ṣallallāhu ‘Alaihi Wasallam* (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The names of other Prophets and Messengers are followed by the symbol <sup>as</sup>, an abbreviation for *‘Alaihis-Salām* (on whom be peace). The actual salutations have not generally been set out in full, but they should nevertheless, be understood as being repeated in full in each case. The symbol <sup>ra</sup> is used with the names of the companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and those of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. It stands for *Raḍī Allāhu ‘anhu/‘anhā/‘anhum* (may Allah be pleased with him/her/with them). <sup>rh</sup> stands for *Raḥimahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (may Allah have mercy on him). <sup>at</sup> stands for *Ayyadahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (may Allah, the Mighty help him).

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