



The Light

International Organ of the Centre for the worldwide

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam

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teaching is, and how dangerous consequences accrue and arise from such doctrines. Yet these people, in spite of the fact that such shameful doctrines hang about their necks, raise objections against and attack Islam. Know they not that Islam has presented the very same God Whom the earth and the heaven put forward and present; in whom there is no artificiality or any change of plan.

Islam guides and takes to the One peerless Creator Who has no source, nor has He been born of a woman; neither death came upon Him, nor has He any son whose death may cause Him to grieve and mourn. Moreover, Islam has taught such ways and means of salvation which



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Call of the Messiah

by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,
the Promised Messiah and Mahdi

(Ayyam us Sulah, continued from last month.)

Bizarre Christian Doctrines

Just see, how absurd, unreasonable and senseless things are found in the Christian religion, an humble and unfortunate man, in the first instance, is exalted to the skies, unnecessarily defied, and then a false and wrongful doctrine is cooked up, that he became damned and accursed, and the Most High God became disgusted with him and he became disgusted with the Most High God, and the Most High God became his enemy and he became the enemy of the Most High God, and the Most High God turned away and receded from him and he turned away and receded from the Most High God. Furthermore, there is yet another doctrine that by reposing faith in such a damned death, exemption from accountability for all sins will be granted; he may be a thief, a murderer, a robber, an adulterer, a swindler, or a knave, a sinner of any kind, he will be redeemed delivered from punishment. Now just ponder over and think what religion is this, and what its

have come down to us ever since the world has existed, with the testimonies of the Law of Nature. In them there is nothing fake or spurious. Ignorance-cum-prejudice is such an evil that these people who are plunged deep in the worship of a mortal man, come out to rail at and accuse the worshippers of the One True God; there is, in the hands of these man-worshipping people, nothing but that they twist the sacred text, and impose wrong interpretation on the Books of God, and stretch their obduracy to the last point. But the very same Scriptures disprove, and overthrow these doctrines; and the Jews testify and assert up to this day that the Divine Unity of Israel goes hand in hand and agrees with the Divine Unity preached by the Holy Quran; and in this case, we and the Jews and certain Christian sects also, as well as the

I Shall Love All Mankind.

Law of Nature, are opposed to them. All these forms of worship, i.e. Creature-worship, have been born of man's evil deeds. Someone worshipped the stone; some worshipped man; another deified Kushalya's son; and other raised the son of Mary to the dignity of Godhead. Why should these people invite Muslims to accept falsehood? The God of the Muslims, it should be remembered, is that God who seems to be absolutely necessary by casting a glance on the earth and the heaven, and ever manifests His existence by means of fresh signs. A true Muslim, even now, can hear His voice as it was heard by Moses on the Mount Sinai, and can behold and see His living miracles directly. How can he, therefore, give the great name of God to lifeless and dead persons? Being worshippers of a mortal man, these people have been totally cut off and deprived of heavenly connections; and the help and support of the Most High God is not with them; instead of signs, they adduce and relate mere fictitious stories, and want to settle and decide neither with intellect nor by means of heavenly signs, but continue to spread *shirk* (association with God) and creature worship on this earth. And still they have the cheek to charge the Holy Quran, saying, why it has drawn man's attention towards physical purity. They know not that a prophet is, of a truth, the spiritual father, and he wants to deliver people gradually from every kind of uncleanness and impurity, and save them from every danger. So uncleanness of the first order which throws man into the savage state, is the physical impurity; and it is this uncleanness which gives rise to dangerous and deadly diseases.

Physical Purity

It was, therefore, necessary that the perfect Book of God should have commenced its teaching with this direction; and the Most High God did the same; weaning from the physical impurities and other boorish states. He intended, in the first instance, to convert savages into human beings; and then teaching them the rules of sublime morals and internal purity, change them into well-behaved, civilised beings; and next guiding them on to the subtle truths of Divine love and the state of losing one's self in Divine contemplation, make these civilized persons

into godly men; and having done all this, He said: *وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا* and know that God gave life to earth after its death. So the Word of the most High God guides man, through ways of wisdom, to the lofty tower of progress. He feels no shame nor any humiliation in dissuading man, fallen from humanity, from external impurity just as He weans from internal uncleanness. In



His Word He has urged human beings to both kinds of purity, saying *إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ* "Allah loves those who turn much to Him and He loves those who purify themselves." By means of the term *tawwabin* the Most High God has drawn attention to the internal purity and cleanliness whereas the term *mutahharin* inculcates external cleanliness and purity. It is certainly not meant by this verse that God loves that person who observes external purity; but by the conjunction of the term *tawwabin*, it has been made clear that God's love for His slaves, which is most perfect and complete in every respect, and will fetch deliverance on the day of Resurrection, is connected with the fact that besides external cleanliness and purity, man should turn towards God with a true and sincere heart. But the man who is a mere observer of external purity, can derive only this much profit in this world that he may be safe from many a physical ailment, and although he cannot see the result of the exalted and excellent love of God, but since he has done some work at least according to the will and pleasure of the Most High God, that is, he has kept his house, body and clothes pure, and clean from uncleanness and filth, he must necessarily reap this much benefit that he may be saved from some physical calamities, excepting if he had been doomed to punishment on account of the excess of his

sinful deeds; for, in this case, the Most High God will not even confer on him such a state that he may, fulfilling fully the conditions of external purity, reap the benefit of its consequences. In short, according to the Divine Word of promise, even that enemy becomes inheritor of a small and trifling portion of the term love during his earthy life, who strives for the external purity and cleanliness; just as experience also tells us that people who keep their houses scrupulously clean, and let not their drains to be dirty and unclean, and keep on washing their clothes, and pick and brush their teeth, and purify their bodies, and keep away from foul odour and stench, are often safe from pestilences and epidemics, so that as if in this way they reap the benefit of the promise of *يُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ* But those people who care not for the external purity, are at last seized and caught some day by dangerous diseases.

Pickthall, Quran, H.G. Wells And All The Musings About – 'Morning Star Of A Creedless Faith'

Ikram Jahangiri

**(From: The Lahore Ahmadiyya
Movement Blog)**

While browsing Woking Muslim Mission archives (www.wokingmuslim.org) in the journal *Islamic Review & Muslim India*, August 1917, p. 337, I came across an article by Marmaduke Pickthall 'Islam and Progress,' which he opens with the following paragraph:

"The opinion prevalent in Christian countries with regard to El Islam is that, as compared with Christianity, it is a religion essentially unprogressive, and to some extent degrading to the human intellect. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The sort of lethargy, comports ignorance and superstition, which has weighed upon the Muslim masses for the last three centuries, is the result of historical circumstances very similar to those which darkened Western Europe in the period before the Renaissance. It has little more than a geographical connection with the Muhammadan religion; and now, with the revival of a scientific

education, it is at an end. It would be a serious mistake to suppose, in view of the relatively backward state of the Islamic world, that El Islam itself is unprogressive in the modern meaning of the word. How can it be, when one reflects that modern progress is the outcome, not of any Christian doctrine, but free, thought, and that **Islam: unlike Christianity, prescribes free thinking as a duty for believers.**"

With the above read, the verse of Quran, in its chapter 'Al-Rum – The Byzantines,' resonated in my mind:

"So pay your whole-hearted attention to (the cause of) faith as one devoted (to pure faith), turning away from all that is false. (And follow) the Faith of Allâh (-Islam) to suit the requirements of which He has made the nature of humankind. There can be no change in the nature (of creation) which Allâh has made. That is the right and most perfect Faith, yet most people do not know (it)." [30:30; Noor-ud-din translation]

In the same issue of *Islamic Review*, a few pages down, in Editor's mail [p. 353] is a letter under the title – 'Morning Star of a Creedless faith – which apparently is excerpted from the letter of a Minister to the Unitarian Church:

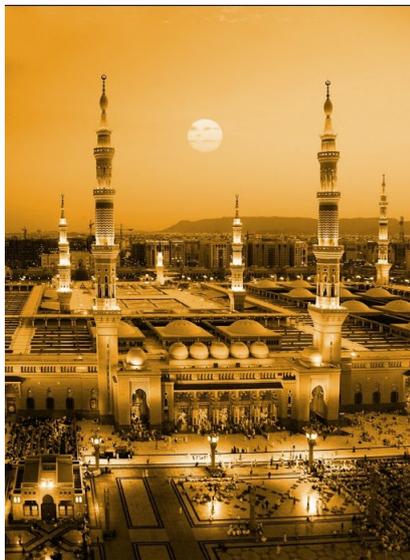
"There is so much in your Faith that rings harmonious with my own deepest belief that I hardly think it necessary to mention points on which there is a difference, and I cannot help thinking that an unprejudiced reading of such publications as the *Islamic Review* would do much to prepare the way for the rising of that **"Morning Star of a Creedless Faith" which, if I interpret aright, was the dream of Jesus and the Faith of your Holy Prophet.**"

'Morning Star of a Creedless Faith' is a quote within a chapter 'The Idea of a Church' in the book 'God, the Invisible King' by H. G. Wells (p. 185) that was published in the same year as *Islamic Review*. I could not help but reproduce it in its entirety below. I believe that H.G. Wells' opinion that the fizzling out of Christianity is inevitable is equally applicable to Islam of today. A century later, we find the same in a fossilized Islam what Wells saw in Christianity. Islam nowadays has been reduced to becoming the fodder of attention grabbing global headlines, further perpetuated by people like Bashir and others like him who present "Islam in a

Coffin” on this blog and elsewhere. I wonder if the Minister or H.G. Wells had access to Quran when the latter wrote “. . . nothing fades of itself. The deep stillness of the late night is broken by a stirring, and the morning star of creedless faith, the last and brightest of the stars, the star that owes its light to the coming sun is in the sky.” In Quran we find the following:

“By the heaven and the Comer by night! And what will make you know what the Comer by night is? The star of piercing brightness.” 86:1-3.

Tariq (from tarq, striking a thing) originally signifies a comer by night, because one who comes by night finds the doors shut, and knocking at the doors becomes necessary. The Comer



by night is here the Holy Prophet; the revelation of the Quran is also spoken of as taking place on a blessed night (44:3, 97:1). The reason is that the Holy Prophet appeared

when total darkness spread on the earth, and no one ever stood more in need of knocking at the doors which were shut against him and fastened with strong bolts. It is noteworthy that Jesus compares his advent to that of a thief: “. . . if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched . . . Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matthew, 24:43-44). It may be added that Tariq is also the name given to the morning star, because it comes at the end of the night.

The Comer by night is called the star of piercing brightness, indicating that the Comer by night is a star of such resplendent brightness that all darkness will be dispelled before him.

[Ref: English Translation of the Holy Quran with Explanatory Notes: Maulana Muhammad

Ali, Edited by Dr. Zahid Aziz]

The way I read Pickthall, the Minister and H.G. Wells, I find them all interpreting verse 30:30. Wells is factually hoping for The Comer by night, the star of piercing brightness in verses 86:1-3. He rejects the God through Christian lens. Yet, he defends the natural inclination of man towards a true religion based upon a true God. H.G. Wells should have read verse 30:30 which fully addresses his dilemma. At first glance, Wells, the Minister, and Pickthall might seem to be disparate in their views. But they are, in fact, in sync with each other’s points of view, all of which are directly in harmony with the Quran. Wells hoped for the revival of religious thought in the same manner as the Minister in his letter, what Pickthall saw in Islam and what Khawaja Kamaluddin, the founder of Islamic Review, presented to the world as the first Muslim missionary in the West. Wells writes:

The World Dawn – As yet those who may be counted belonging definitely to the new religion are few and scattered unconfessed, their realisations are still uncertain and incomplete. But that is no augury for the continuance of this state of affairs even for the next few decades. There are many signs that the revival is coming very swiftly, it may be coming as swiftly as the morning comes after a tropical night. It may seem at present as though nothing very much were happening, except for the fact that the old familiar constellations of theology have become a little pallid and lost something of their multitude of points. But nothing fades of itself. The deep stillness of the late night is broken by a stirring, and the morning star of creedless faith, the last and brightest of the stars, the star that owes its light to the coming sun is in the sky.

There is a stirring and a movement. There is a stir, like the stir before a breeze. Men are beginning to speak of religion without the bluster of the Christian formulae; they have begun to speak of God without any reference to Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence. The Deists and Theists of an older generation, be it noted, never did that. Their “Supreme Being” repudiated nothing. He was merely the whittled stump of the Trinity. It is in the last few decades that the Western mind has slipped loose from

this absolutist conception of God that has dominated the intelligence of Christendom, at least, for many centuries. Almost unconsciously the new thought is taking a course that will lead it far away from the moorings of Omnipotence. It is like a ship that has slipped its anchors and drifts, still sleeping, under the pale and vanishing stars, out to the open sea.

Convergent Religious Movements

In quite a little while the whole world may be alive with this renascent faith.

For emancipation from the Trinitarian formularies and from a belief in an infinite God



means not merely a great revivification of minds trained under the decadence of orthodox Christianity, minds which have hitherto been hopelessly embarrassed by the choice between pseudo-Christian religion or denial, but also it opens the way towards the completest understanding and sympathy and participation with the kindred movements for release and for an intensification of the religious life, that are going on outside the sphere of the Christian tradition and influence altogether. Allusion has already been made to the sympathetic devotional poetry of Rabindranath Tagore; he stands for a movement in Brahminism parallel with and assimilable to the worship of the true God of mankind.

It is too often supposed that the religious tendency of the East is entirely towards other-worldness, to a treatment of this life as an evil entanglement and of death as a release and a blessing. It is too easily assumed that Eastern teaching is wholly concerned with renunciation, not merely of self but of being, with the escape from all effort of any sort into an exalted vacuity.

This is indeed neither the spirit of China nor of Islam nor of the everyday life of any people in the world. It is not the spirit of the Sikh nor of these newer developments of Hindu thought. It has never been the spirit of Japan. Today less than ever does Asia seem disposed to give up life and the effort of life. Just as readily as Europeans, do the Asiatics reach out their arms to that fuller life we can live, that greater intensity of existence, to which we can attain by escaping from ourselves. All mankind is seeking God. There is not a nation nor a city in the globe where men are not being urged at this moment by the spirit of God in them towards the discovery of God. This is not an age of despair but an age of hope in Asia as in all the world besides.

Islam is undergoing a process of revision closely parallel to that which ransacks Christianity. Tradition and mediaeval doctrines are being thrust aside in a similar way. There is much probing into the spirit and intention of the Founder. The time is almost ripe for a heart-searching Dialogue of the Dead, "How we settled our religions for ever and ever," between, let us say, Eusebius of Caesarea and one of Nizam-al-Mulk's tame theologians. They would be drawn together by the same tribulations ; they would be in the closest sympathy against the temerity of the moderns ; they would have a common courtliness. The Quran is but little read by Europeans; it is ignorantly supposed to contain many things that it does not contain; there is much confusion in people's minds between its text and the ancient Semitic traditions and usages retained by its followers; in places it may seem, formless and barbaric; but what it has chiefly to tell of is the leadership of one individualized militant God who claims the rule of the whole world, who favours neither rank nor race, who would lead men to righteousness. It is much more free from sacramentalism, from vestiges of the ancient blood sacrifice, and its associated sacerdotalism, than Christianity. The religion that will presently sway mankind can be reached more easily from that starting-point than from the confused mysteries of Trinitarian theology. Islam was never saddled with a creed. With the very name "Islam" (submission to God) there is no quarrel for those who hold the new faith. . . .

All the world over there is this stirring in the dry bones of the old beliefs. There is scarcely a religion that has not its Bahaism, its Modernists, its Brahma Somaj, its "religion without theology," its attempts to escape from old forms and hampering associations to that living and world-wide spiritual reality upon which the human mind almost instinctively insists. . . .

It is the same God we all seek; he becomes more and more plainly the same God. So that all this religious stir, which seems so multifold and incidental and disconnected and confused and entirely ineffective today, may be, and most probably will be, in quite a few years a great flood of religious unanimity pouring over and changing all human affairs, sweeping away the old priesthoods and tabernacles and symbols and shrines, the last crumb of the Orphic victim and the last rag of the Serapeum, and turning all men about into one direction, as the ships and houseboats swing round together in some great river with the uprush of the tide. . . .

Can there be a True Church? Among those who are beginning to realise the differences and identities of the revived religion that has returned to them, certain questions of organisation and assembly are being discussed. Every new religious development is haunted by the precedents of the religion it replaces, and it was only to be expected that among those who have recovered their faith there should be a search for apostles and disciples, an attempt to determine sources and to form original congregations, especially among people with European traditions.

These dispositions mark a relapse from understanding. They are imitative. This time there has been no revelation here or there; there is no claim to a revelation but simply that God has become visible. Men have thought and sought until insensibly the fog of obsolete theology has cleared away. There seems no need therefore for special teachers or a special propaganda, or any ritual or observances that will seem to insist upon differences. The Christian precedent of a church is particularly misleading. The church with its sacraments and its sacerdotalism is the disease of Christianity. Save for a few doubtful interpolations there is no evidence that Christ tolerated either blood sacrifices or the myster-



ies of priesthood. All these antique grossnesses were superadded after his martyrdom. He preached not a cult but a gospel; he sent out not medicine men but apostles.

No doubt all who believe owe an apostolic service to God. They become naturally apostolic. As men perceive and realise God, each will be disposed in his own fashion to call his neighbour's attention to what he sees. The necessary elements of religion could be written on a postcard; this book, small as it is, bulks large not by what it tells positively but because it deals with misconceptions. We may (little doubt have I that we do) need special propagandas and organisations to discuss errors and keep back the jungle of false ideas, to maintain free speech and restrain the enterprise of the persecutor, but we do not want a church to keep our faith for us. We want our faith spread, but for that there is no need for orthodoxies and controlling organisations of statement. It is for each man to follow his own impulse, and to speak to his like in his own fashion.

Whatever religious congregations men may form henceforth in the name of the true God must be for their own sakes and not to take charge of religion.

The history of Christianity, with its encrustation and suffocation in dogmas and usages, its dire persecutions of the faithful by the unfaithful, its desiccation and its unlovely decay, its invasion by robes and rites and all the tricks and vices of the Pharisees whom Christ detested and denounced, is

full of warning against the dangers of a church. Organisation is an excellent thing for the material needs of men, for the draining of towns, the marshalling of traffic, the collecting of eggs, and the carrying of letters, the distribution of bread, the notification of measles, for hygiene and economics and suchlike affairs. The better we organise such things, the freer and better equipped we leave men's minds for nobler purposes, for those adventures and experiments towards God's purpose which are the reality of life. But all organisations must be watched, for whatever is organised can be "captured" and misused. Repentance, moreover, is the beginning and essential of the religious life, and organisations (acting through their secretaries and officials) never repent. God deals only with the individual for the individual's surrender. He takes no cognisance of committees.

Those who are most alive to the realities of living religion are most mistrustful of this congregating tendency. To gather together is to purchase a benefit at the price of a greater loss, to strengthen one's sense of brotherhood by excluding the majority of mankind. Before you know where you are you will have exchanged the spirit of God for esprit de corps. You will have reinvented the symbol; you will have begun to keep anniversaries and establish sacramental ceremonies. The disposition to form cliques and exclude and conspire against unlike people is all too strong in humanity, to permit of its formal encouragement. Even such organisation as is implied by a creed is to be avoided, for all living faith coagulates as you phrase it. In this book I have not given so much as a definite name to the faith of the true God. Organisation for worship and collective exaltation also, it may be urged, is of little manifest good. You cannot appoint beforehand a time and place for God to irradiate your soul.

All these are very valid objections to the church-forming disposition. Organisations under God – Yet still this leaves many dissatisfied. They want to shout out about God. They want to share this great thing with all mankind.

Why should they not shout and share ?

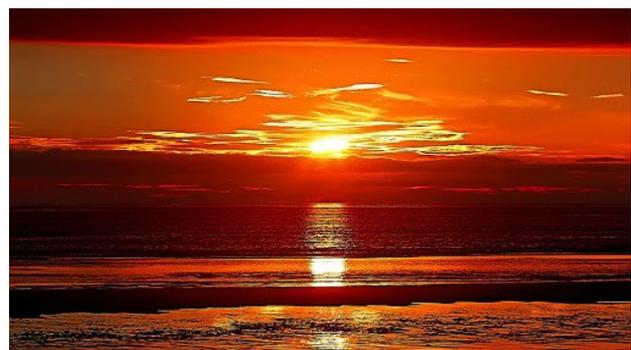
Let them express all that they desire to express in their own fashion by themselves or

grouped with their friends as they will. Let them shout chorally if they are so disposed. Let them work in a gang if so they can work the better. But let them guard themselves against the idea that they can have God particularly or exclusively with them in any such undertaking. Or that so they can express God rather than themselves.

That I think states the attitude of the modern spirit towards the idea of a church. Mankind passes for ever out of the idolatry of altars, away from the obscene rites of circumcision and symbolical cannibalism, beyond the sway of the ceremonial priest. But if the modern spirit holds that religion cannot be organised or any intermediary thrust between God and man, that does not preclude infinite possibilities of organisation and collective action under God and within the compass of religion. There is no reason why religious men should not band themselves the better to attain specific ends. To borrow a term from British politics, there is no objection to ad hoc organisations. The objection lies not against subsidiary organisations for service but against organisations that may claim to be comprehensive.

For example there is no reason why one should not — and in many cases there are good reasons why one should — organise or join associations for the criticism of religious ideas, an employment that may pass very readily into propaganda.

Many people feel the need of prayer to resist the evil in themselves and to keep them in mind of divine emotion. And many want not merely prayer but formal prayer and the support of others, praying in unison. The writer does not understand this desire or need for collective prayer very well, but there are people who appear to do so and there is no reason why they should



not assemble for that purpose. And there is no doubt that divine poetry, divine maxims, religious thought finely expressed, may be heard, rehearsed, collected, published, and distributed by associations. The desire for expression implies a sort of assembly, a hearer at least as well as a speaker. And expression has many forms. People with a strong artistic impulse will necessarily want to express themselves by art when religion touches them, and many arts, architecture and the drama for example, are collective undertakings. I do not see why there should not be, under God, associations for building cathedrals and suchlike great still places urgent with beauty, into which men and women may go to rest from the clamour of the day's confusions; I do not see why men should not make great shrines and pictures expressing their sense of divine things, and why they should not combine in such enterprises rather than work to fill heterogeneous and chaotic art galleries. A wave of religious revival and religious clarification such as I foresee, will most certainly bring with it a great revival of art, religious art, music, songs, and writings of all sorts, drama, the making of shrines, praying places, temples and retreats,



the creation of pictures and sculptures. It is not necessary to have priestcraft and an organised church for such ends. Such enrichments of feeling and thought are part of the

service of God.

And again, under God, there may be associations and fraternities for research in pure science; associations for the teaching and simplification of languages; associations for promoting and watching education; associations for the discussion of political problems and the determination of right policies. In all these ways men may multiply their use by union. Only when associations seek to control things of belief, to dictate formulae, restrict religious activities or the freedom of religious thought and teaching, when they tend to subdivide those who believe and to set up jealousies or exclusions, do they become antagonistic to the spirit of modern religion.

The State is God's Instrument – BECAUSE religion cannot be organised, because God is everywhere and immediately accessible to every human being, it does not follow that religion cannot organise every other human affair. It is indeed essential to the idea that God is the Invisible King of this round world and all mankind, that we should see in every government, great and small, from the council of the world-state that is presently coming, down to the village assembly, the instrument of God's practical control. Religion which is free, speaking freely through whom it will, subject to a perpetual unlimited criticism, will be the life and driving power of the whole organised world. So that if you prefer not to say that there will be no church, if you choose rather to declare that the world-state is God's church, you may have it so if you will. Provided that you leave conscience and speech and writing and teaching about divine things absolutely free, and that you try to set no nets about God.

The world is God's and he takes it. But he himself remains freedom, and we find our freedom in him.

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam

Founders of the first Islamic Mission in the UK, established 1913 as the Woking Muslim Mission.

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