



# The Light

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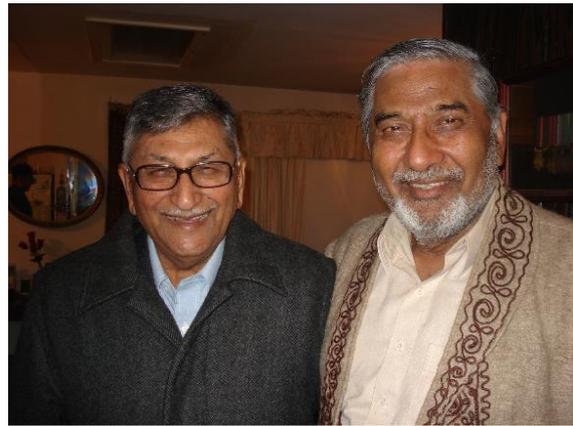
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The late Masud Akhtar (left) with his brother retired Wing Commander Ahmad Nawaz.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Dedication

**This issue is dedicated to the memory of Chaudhry Masud Akhtar, our first assistant imam, who, on 21 September 2016, after lifelong service to the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement left mortality to become immortal.**

### The Call of the Messiah

by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,

The Promised Messiah and *Mahdi*

Beware! Do not follow other nations blindly. Be careful! Having seen how other nations have attained a considerable measure of success in their worldly endeavours, do not be tempted to follow in their footsteps. Listen carefully and take notice for these people are alien to and unmindful of that God Who calls you all to Himself.

What is their god but a frail human being? This is the reason why they have been left in such a state of gratification. I do not wish to stop you from striving for worldly goods, but you should not follow the ways of those who think this present world is everything. In everything you do, whether it pertains to the things of this world or of the next, you should seek help and succour from Allah alone. And, this should remain the eternal guiding principle of your life. But this seeking of help should not be from your lips alone. It should be your conviction deep down at the bottom of your heart being that every blessing comes only from heaven. You will be truly righteous only when, at the time of every difficulty, before making your plans, you close your door upon yourself. Then fall down before the throne of Allah, Most High, crying for His grace, help and succour. Then the Holy Spirit will come to your help and through unseen means a way will be opened for you. Have mercy on your own souls. Be not like those who have cut themselves wholly away from Allah. They

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depend on material means to such an extent that to seek Divine help they do not even formally utter with their lips the word "If Allah wills". May Allah open your eyes so that you begin to see that your God is the support on which all plans rest. When the central beam of the roof falls, can the minor supports maintain their position? Most certainly not. They will all come down in an instant and in all likelihood, with much loss of life. In the same way, your plans cannot remain in position without help from Allah. If you will not cry for His help, if you will not make entreating Him the most fundamental principle of your life, you will have no success and will ultimately die with great regret.

Do not start wondering why other peoples are meeting with success although they have not the slightest idea of your Most-perfect and All-powerful God. The answer is this, and this alone, that having forsaken Allah, they have been put to trial by means of material means. Oftentimes, a trial from Allah comes in such a way that whoever forsakes Him, and gives himself up to carnal pleasures and setting his mind wholly on material wealth, finds that the doors of worldly advancement are opened to him even though from a religious and spiritual point of view he is altogether destitute and naked. He finally dies while engrossed in this world only to be thrown into an eternal hell. Sometimes this trial takes another form in that such a person remains unsuccessful even in the task of amassing wealth. But the latter trial is not so dangerous as the former, since the former breeds an inordinate measure of pride and engenders a superiority complex. In any case, both these groups are of those on whom falls the wrath of Allah. The true fountainhead for all kinds of prosperity is Allah. Therefore, when these people are unaware of this Living and Sustaining Being and in fact become heedless of Him and turn their backs upon Him, how can real prosperity be their lot? Blessed are they who understand this secret and in extreme distress is he who fails to grasp it.

(From *Noah's Ark*)

## Religious Views of Organ Donation and Transplantation

*By Adeeba Ali*

(Editor's note: This research paper has been edited for publication.)

"If you save a life it is as though you have saved the whole of humanity" (Qur'an 5:32). Never has there been a statement of such a profound nature that has influenced my life than these few words stated above. If as human beings we all thought like this, wouldn't this world be a better place to live? Organ donation and organ transplantation are ways of emulating this verse. Let us consider the stand different religions take.

### Christianity

There are several denominations within Christianity and all encourage organ donation. In Catholicism it is strongly encouraged as the current Pope, Pope Francis who stated that "organ donation is a testimony of love for our neighbour." In addition, the previous Pope, Pope Benedict XVI, had a donor card. However, it was announced by the Vatican that his body parts could not be donated as they belonged to the church.

There are several verses in the Bible to suggest that organ donation is allowed. For example, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31) and "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39).

Reverend Dr John Wilkinson, author of *Christian Ethics in Health Care*, stated that "the first ethical principle on which organ donation and transplantation may be justified is that of love for one's neighbour".

In addition, the Methodist Church UK stated, "The Methodist Church has consistently supported organ donation and transplantation in appropriate circumstances, as a means through which healing and health may be made possible".

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The former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams released a poem promoting organ donation called 'Host Organism'.

Jehovah's Witnesses are a non-Trinitarian denomination of Christianity. Their doctrine introduced in 1945, stated that blood should not be received or donated.

This doctrine is based on the following verses: "For the life of a creature is in the blood..." (Leviticus 17:11) and "Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain...from blood" (Acts 15:20).

In 1967 Jehovah Witnesses document stated that: "... removing the organ and replacing it directly with an organ from another human...is cannibalistic". This is a clear indication that organ donation and transplantation was not permissible.

However, despite not donating or receiving blood, they do allow organ transplantation only if the blood is removed from organs and tissues before being transplanted.

This statement was changed in 1980 to the following: "While the Bible specifically forbids consuming blood, there is no Biblical command pointedly forbidding the taking in of other human tissue... It is a matter for personal decision". Thus, the first published case of transplantation of a Jehovah's Witness was in 1986 in California.

## Judaism

There are specific concerns regarding organ donation amongst Jewish scholars and Rabbis. According to an article entitled "Religious aspects of organ transplantation" when a member of the Jewish faith dies, it is important that they be buried within 24 hours.

Rabbi Shumuly Yanklowitz is an Open Orthodox Rabbi and an author. He presented on "ELI Talks" which are 12-minute presentations online on "inspired Jewish ideas". His topic was "How Far Will You Go to Give? Judaism and Organ Donation" and he addressed some of the

common concerns with regard to organ donation in the Jewish community. The common concerns are as follows: firstly, the emotional attachment to the body, secondly superstition, ayin ha-ra (evil eye) the belief that if one talks about death it will bring about death, thirdly the treatment of the corpse.

Jewish law has three prohibitions which are *nivul hamet* (desecration of the body) a law based on Deuteronomy 21:22-23, which states that if a criminal is put to death by hanging..." but thou shalt surely bury him that same day." Rabbis interpret this verse to mean that mutilation or mistreatment of the deceased is a violation of the scriptural law; *halanat hamet* (delay of the burial of the body) and *Hannat hamet* (prohibition of benefiting from the corpse). As a result of the above this has led some Jewish scholars to disagree with deceased donation.

The definition of death has been debated by many Jewish scholars. The Talmud describes death as the "departure of the soul", however this cannot be observed or measured. The traditional Jewish definition of death requires that all brain, respiratory and cardiac output have ceased. However, some believe death occurs when the whole brain, including the brain stem, dies and others believe it is when the heart alone ceases.

Goses is a Halachic term that describes a person who is gravely ill and likely to die within 72 hours. Jewish law prohibits any interference with the Goses to prevent acceleration of death. In addition, there is "reluctance to intervene medically with the Goses to prevent death", solely for the purpose of taking their organs.

In Israel where 75% of the population are Jewish, only 10% of the population have an organ donor card. In 2008 the Israeli government implemented two laws to try to alleviate this issue, firstly a definition of time of death and secondly to award a range of benefits to live donors. However, some Haredi Jewish communities responded to this law by introducing anti-donor cards which read: "I do not give permission to take from me, not in life or in death, any organ or part of my body for any purpose".

Regardless of these concerns and prohibitions many Jews and Rabbis read the following verse and believe it surpasses all the above: "Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world ... and whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world" (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:9; Yerushalmi Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 37a). In addition, Pikuach Nefesh describes the principle in Jewish law that the preservation of human life overrides virtually any other religious consideration.

## Hinduism

Hindus constitute more than one sixth of the world population, with 1 billion followers. Hindus believe in transmigration of the soul and in reincarnation. Hence the physical integrity of the dead body is not viewed as vital. In the Rigveda, the word "Daan is the original word in Sanskrit for donation meaning selfless giving". The president of the National Council of Hindu Temples and ambassador for peace, Mr Om Parkash Sharma MBE stated "organ donation is in keeping with Hindu beliefs as it can help to save the life of others".

There are many deities within Hinduism, but Ganesha is the most worshipped in the Hindu pantheon. Ganesha is also known as the "elephant god" as he has the head of an elephant. This is seen as the earliest depiction of xenotransplantation within Hinduism.

Consequently, organ donation and organ transplantation are encouraged due to all of the above reasons in Hinduism.

## Islam

In Islam there are many denominations, however Sunni and Shi'a are the two largest groups. Within both these branches of Islam there are differences of opinion with regards to organ donation. Some Sunni Islamic scholars do not believe that organ donation is permissible in Islam. Such is the opinion of Mufti Zubair Butt, a Sunni Islamic scholar and hospital chaplain, who featured on the BBC Radio 4 programme "Beyond Belief". He stated that: "We as

humans do not own our bodies, we are caretakers of our bodies" and "organ donation can be seen as mutilation of the body."

A document published by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore entitled "Organ Transplant in Islam" contains many fatwas about organ donation and transplantation since 1973. In 1973 a fatwa stated that kidney and other organ donations were prohibited. However, in the search to find a cure for kidney disease this ruling was overturned in 1986 and now supports the use of organ donation and organ transplantation as it saves lives.

In 1989 Egyptian scholar Dr Muhammad Syed Tantawi passed a fatwa which states: "Live organ donations are permissible by consensus of jurists ... taking organs from the body of a dead person to transplant to someone who needs it, whether to save his life or to cure him, is permissible...".

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi is a Shia scholar. He published a review article on the opinion of several Shia scholars on organ donation and organ transplantation. With regards to live donation the late Ayatullah al-Khu'i stated that donation of minor organs is permissible, such as the skin, bone marrow and blood as they can regenerate. However, kidneys were classed as major organs and were not allowed to be donated, whilst still living.

Ayatullah Sistani allowed the donation of all organs as long as "the person donating was not made handicapped". Ayatullah Khamenei allowed deceased donation as long as the body was not mutilated, so donation of internal organs is permissible.

The Qur'an states "If you save a life it is as though you have saved the whole of humanity" (Qur'an 5:32) and in a Hadith the Prophet Muhammad (s) stated "Whosoever helps another will be granted help from Allah." These two statements clearly portray the importance of saving a life in Islam, thus there is an indication that individuals have the freedom to decide whether they want to donate their organs or not.

In a study funded by the Wellcome Trust into attitudes towards biomedical issues in the curriculum of UK secondary schools found the following:

A science teacher stated that “Most Muslims would only consider transplantation from another Muslim”. The school had reported that there were issues with religion telling students one thing and wider culture suggesting otherwise.

Xeno-transplantation could raise issues if organs originate from pigs, as the consumption of pork is forbidden in Islam.

Qualitative research has confirmed that many religious people strongly believe that their religion prohibits organ donation. However, in many cases it was shown to be assumed rather than known to be the case. 68% of Christians and 81% of Muslims say they don't know how their religion views organ donation. Throughout my research I can firmly say that no religion explicitly forbids organ donation.

Mrs. Parveen Awan, a Pakistani Muslim woman, featured on BBC Radio 4 where she told the story of her son who was born with a condition that caused acute kidney failure. In the interview, she was asked if she was aware that some Muslims disagree with organ donation. Her response was “I didn't even know there was an issue regarding organ donation in Islam”. As a result, her personal experience with a lack of organ donation, Parveen has gone on to raise awareness within her community in Blackburn.

Interestingly Parveen raised the issue that they had to wait a very long time for a kidney as



Mr Masud Akhtar (left), with Mr Shahid Aziz in San Francisco, July 1999.

not many people from her ethnic group are on the organ donor register.

This begs the question: Are religious beliefs the only factor that is influencing individuals to donate their organs and undergo transplants, or does culture play an important role as well?

(to be continued)

## Chaudhry Masud Akhtar

By Shahid Aziz, M.Sc.

Chaudhry Masud Akhtar is now Chaudhry Masud Akhtar – *marhoom*. *أنا لله و أنا إليه راجعون* - We all come from Allah and to Him shall we return.

He has left behind much work that still needs to be completed, and, now, I do not have anyone to talk to about it. Work such as the English translations of the Promised Messiah's books, which he was keen to see in print. That is why we are told that if we think of doing some good we should do it immediately and not put it off to some other day. He has left behind a family which mourns him and it consists of not just his wife and children but people all over the world who knew and loved him.

Masud *bahi* tried his hand at many professions and fields in Pakistan. He tried law, civil service, business etc. but because of his honesty he found it a struggle. As a lawyer, he was constantly clashing with his seniors who wanted him to give clients 'optimistic' advice regarding the chances of success rather than 'realistic' advice. During his tenure as a customs officer he was constantly under pressure either to accept bribes or do an influential person a favour by allowing in goods without charging proper taxes. His venture into business was no more successful because he was now expected to give bribes to various officials and he refused to do so. He closed his factory in 1972 and his last action was to hide his Bengali employees who were in danger of being killed by the people in the “West Pakistan”, and to arrange army transport for them back to what had now become Bangladesh. The Holy Quran tells us that saving one life is the equivalent to saving the whole humanity.

*I Shall Love All Mankind.*

Masud *bhai* saved humanity many times over.

In 1974, the Pakistani parliament amended the constitution of Pakistan and added in it that Ahmadis are non-Muslims. There were some in the jamaat who felt that we should now remove the word 'Ahmadi' from our name. Masud *bhai* was, at time, president of the Young Men's Association. Despite severe pressure, the Young Mens' Association together with stalwarts like, Hazrat Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, Maulana Abdur Rehman Misri and Dr Allah Bakhsh stood firm.

I first met him in 1978, when he came to the UK as assistant imam to help Dr Nazir ul Islam. We met at Heathrow from where Dr Islam and Masud *bhai*, as he later became to me, were taken to Ahmadiyya House, 56 Longley Road, Tooting, London SW17. Masud *bhai* shared a bed-room and other facilities with Dr Islam. The bed-room was a damp, dark and dingy room. There was no heating in the house and they used a fire to heat the bed-room, the kitchen remaining unheated. The kitchen consisted of an old and rusty cooker and a cracked and dirty sink. In fact, it was their kitchen and bathroom.

As if that were not enough, there was a tenant in the room next to them who could not be evicted because of the terms and nature of his tenancy. He was an alcoholic and once under the influence, he would begin to try and breakdown the door of the bedroom, attack Dr Islam and Masud *bhai* both verbally and physically. Masud *bhai* bore all the difficulties with patience. Although at one stage when things became too stressful, he moved to Slough to live with us for a few weeks. But mostly, Dr Islam and Masud *bhai* carried on under these unbearable conditions for about a year. They cooked, cleaned, washed clothes, prepared speeches and articles, went out to meet members and others, led Jum-mah prayers and taught the Quran and everything else that a missionary is required to do, from this room.

When Hazrat Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan visited the UK and went house to house visiting members and then went to Holland to consolidate the jamaat there, Masud *bhai* accompanied Hazrat Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan.

Masud *bhai* then returned to Pakistan, where he was employed by the Center to help with foreign missions, while he awaited the clearance of his family sponsored visa to the US. When Masud *bhai* and his family, eventually moved to the US he had a stopover in the UK and stayed with us for a few days.

Upon arriving in the US, he set about making the jamaat there more active. He was first involved in the activities of the California jamaat. Then, when literary activities were initiated from Ohio, he became editor of *The Islamic Review*. He had to write the editorial, collect articles, get them type-set, proof read, have the magazine printed and distributed. He made sure that it was posted to all the university libraries where there is a department of Islamic studies. He made a valuable contribution to the work of propagation of Islam, not just in the US, but also other countries. He did all this in addition to trying to find his feet in a foreign country, earning a living and looking after his family. He showed no hesitation in doing even the humblest of honest jobs to make ends meet.

He had such affection for our elders and their children that as soon as he arrived in San Francisco, he set about looking for Sheikh Abdus Samad, the long lost son of Hazrat Maulana Abdul Haque Vidyarthi. He traced Sheikh Abdus Samad's daughter in the hope that she may know where he father was. She was also searching for her father and she had hoped that Masud *bhai* may find him. It was not to be, and Masud *bhai* eventually gave up.

The UK jamaat decided to abandon Ahmadiyya House because it was impossible to carry out any missionary activity from there because of the tenant's antics. At this time, Hazrat Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan sahib had arrived in the UK and we proposed that the Centre purchase another building to use as a Center. He set us a target of £10,000 to be raised from the UK. He correctly said that we should show him sufficient spirit of dedication and sacrifice before he appeals to others for help. The next time he came we showed him that we had met the target he had set us. He then went to the US to appeal for funds for the UK jamaat to enable the purchase

of a building to be used as a Center. Masud *bhai* did everything in his power to help Hazrat Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan sahib raise funds.

When we held a convention for the opening ceremony of Dar us Salaam UK, he wanted to be here to see it but for various reasons he could not. It greatly saddened him that he missed that historic occasion. He was full of hope that this will come to replace what had been lost at Working.

It was not long before he was asked by the Center to make further sacrifices for the jamaat and he did so without flinching. He went to South Africa for both cases where we put our case for being Muslims to the High Court there. He hadn't been in the US for very long and his family was not yet fully settled. Despite this, when the call came he showed no hesitation in answering it. For the first case, the first time he went to South Africa, he did not have to stay for long because the defendants made a special plea to court and the case was adjourned.

However, when he went to South Africa for the Second Case, he stayed there for 9 long months, I think. When I arrived in Cape Town to interpret in the court, he was already there with Hafiz Sher Muhammad, working on the translation of our evidence to the court by writing out the translation by hand. Fortunately, just before leaving the UK, I had implemented a project for my employers, which involved use of computers for day to day office work. At my request, the jamaat arranged two computers for us to use. Masud *bhai* did not like computers! So, he continued to write out his translation by hand and we hired someone to key it in. He worked tirelessly with Hafiz sahib to make sure that the judge had the right material made available to her in English. And, after I left he took over interpretation in the court.

We worked together, laughed together, went out together and slept in the same room. About second or third day, he asked me how I slept and I said it was fine. He laughed loudly and said: "I know I snore and you need your sleep because you have to stand in the court all day and interpret". The next night he went and slept on the

sitting room floor. I was embarrassed but he told me not to worry.

He did another kindness to me. The hearing lasted longer than expected. My annual leave ran out and I was wondering whether to resign. He advised me to return to my job because a good job is a blessing from Allah. It was at that point that he mentioned that he had to wind up his real-estate business to be able to help in the case and there was no point in everyone losing their livelihood. I was astonished at his sacrifice. He said the translation work had been done and he could handle interpretation on his own – and so he did. We kept in close touch by phone and fax for the remaining part of the case.

After Masud *bhai* returned to the US we were in touch by phone and letter. In 1999, my wife and I decided to visit him in California and to attend the annual convention at Ohio at the same time. He was very glad to hear this news. He kindly accommodated us for most of our stay. Masud *bhai* took us around San Francisco as did his son, Bilal. One day, he took us on the 32-mile drive, which is a scenic drive just outside San Francisco. However, he was so busy talking about the glory that was Ahmadiyya Buildings that he lost his way and the 32-mile drive became a 132-mile drive! During our stay, we talked about the Center, about the jamaats, about propagation of Islam, the situation in Pakistan and mostly, how much he regretted not being able to find Sheikh Abdus Samad, who was his friend from the time when Masud *bhai* would visit Hazrat Maulana Abdul Haque in Muslim Town at Lahore during the 1950s.

When we held a convention in the UK I specially invited him. He was more than happy to come but his sons were concerned about the impact of the long flight on his health. Masud *bhai* insisted on coming and I promised to look after him. He had missed the opening of Dar us Salaam and he did not want to miss this. He came with Akbar Abdullah *marhoom* and, both of them, stayed at my home, initially. When the convention formally started, Akbar moved to the hotel booked by the jamaat for guests but Masud *bhai* refused to go. He had found my books and loved reading them. Whenever my wife or I went to see if he needed anything he would be reading one of Promised Messiah's

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Masud *bhai* and I in California, July 1999.



books. He would look up, jab the book with his finger and say we need to tell people these things. I regret that he was not well treated by the UK jamaat and despite my efforts he was not given a chance to speak. When I expressed my anger, he just smiled and told me not to worry about it because it wasn't important. I enjoyed his stay with us and I put him on the plane. As we embraced and hugged, little did I know that we were never to meet again.

Masud *bhai* was fond of telling stories of our elders, particularly of the time of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali and his time at Ahmadiyya Buildings. When the Center's magazine HOPE was started Masud *bhai* made a valuable contribution to it by translating life histories of our elders and adding to them extra material that he knew.

But his passion was the English translation of the Promised Messiah's books. In the past, some of the Promised Messiah's books had been serialized in The Light from Lahore. He arranged for these to be compiled together as completed books. He had them typed and sent to me the Braheen I Ahmadiyya and Ayyam I Sulah. The main text of the Braheen has been published and translated into French. Ayyam was serialised in The Light from the UK and it is being compiled into book form.

When he heard about the French translation of the Braheen he was over-joyed. He rang me to congratulate me. He kept saying this is the

work we should be doing. He thanked Allah for allowing him to live long enough to see this desire come to fruition. In our last telephone call which lasted for about one hour I requested him to write down his family history. He told me about his forefathers and family on the phone but regretted that he was no longer able to sit and write. I asked him to record it and I'll get it typed but it was not to be.

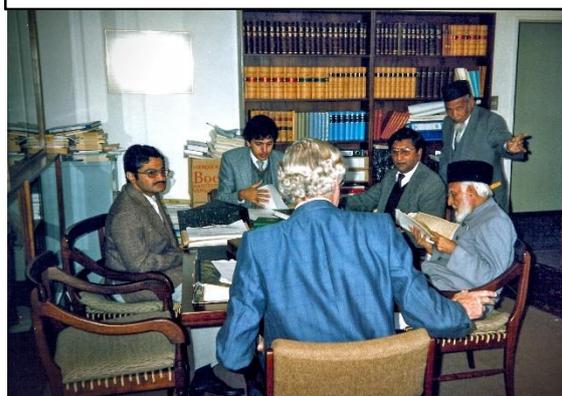
Allah blessed his sacrifices and rewarded him by bestowing upon his children great rewards in this world and he lived long enough to see them all happily settled. To thank Allah, they have set up a fund to pay the school and college fees for Ahmadi children in Pakistan.

I have lost a brother but the jamaat has lost a sincere, dedicated and devoted person who, in this age of mammon, showed us that there are still people around who care little for material things.

*khuda hafiz, Masud bhai. You are now in a better place and in better company. In the company of those whom you loved so much. I pray we meet in the Hereafter and you embrace me and, just like on the telephone so many times, I hear you say: "assalamu alikum, ki haal a, tai aj kal ki ker rai o?" O Allah, give my brother the highest stations in the Hereafter and let his children follow in his footsteps. (Amin)*

**Second South Africa case - A Case Conference**

Mr De Villiers (back to camera), from left Shahid Aziz, Rishad Khan, Masud Akhtar Chaudhry, Skeikh Iasseim (standing) and Hafiz Sher Muhammad.



**Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (UK)**

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

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## Conclusion

My research has demonstrated that no religious scripture directly forbids organ donation or organ transplantation. Lack of religious information and disagreement between religious leaders has contributed largely to the shortage of organ donors especially amongst ethnic minorities.

The ethos of all faiths points towards saving lives, this act of altruism is greater than all the concerns that religious people may have with regards to organ donation and transplantation. Ironically this has not filtered down from the leaders to the followers.

All major religions of the world encourage organ donation and transplantation. There is no disputation that there are some concerns within each faith, especially the Abrahamic religions regarding defiling of God's creation, defining death and timing of burial. However, the similarity between all faiths is that saving a life is greater than all the other minute concerns. Thus the overall conclusion with regards to religion is that organ donation and transplantation is acceptable, as long as it is to save a life.

In the US, the shortage of organs among black African Americans has been fuelled by mistrust between the rich and the poor and large scale government experiments which left the black African American population to suffer.

Culture is largely influenced by religion and religious leaders. To overcome religious bias to transplantation one study suggested teaching controversial issues as part of the school curriculum.

The need to respect elders and value their opinion has contributed to a generational gap in knowledge in the information and social media age. With an increase in the need for organs, many organisations have been set up to raise awareness about organ donation, especially among ethnic minorities in the hope of eradicating the shortage.

Recently the co-founder of the African Caribbean Leukemia Trust, Beverly De-Gale featured on BBC Breakfast News where she shared her story of losing her son to leukemia. Many who have lost a loved one due to a shortage of either blood, stem or organ donor within ethnic minority communities, have begun to campaign and raise awareness of this predicament. Could this shortage of organs result from apathy or a sheer don't care attitude as it is not affecting me or my family? This question still remains to be answered.

In conclusion patients can have a good quality of life with an organ transplant and improvements in medical therapy. This is evident from the longevity of many transplant patients. So all the information we have today points to good outcomes for patients. The question remains whether we would want a second chance of life if we were ill and thus would we give a second chance of life if needed?

## Life Sketch of Hazrat Maulana Aziz Bakhsh

(1870- November 1955)

***Translated and adapted by Akhtar Masud Choudary, Secretary, AAAIL, Hayward, California, USA***

(Editor's note: This article is published to commemorate the work of the late Akhtar Masud who was the assistant imam of the UK branch of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. Besides this, he made many other sacrifices for the cause. He regarded Hazrat Maulana Aziz Bakhsh as a role model.)

Based on the account by Dr Allah Bakhsh in the Urdu book, *Yad-i Raftigaan*.

Hazrat Maulana Aziz Bakhsh was born in 1870, the third of five sons of Hafiz Fateh Din, headman and ziladar of Murar Village, Kapurthalla State, India, and one of the elder brothers of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali. An

account of the two brothers' early life and education is given in Maulana Muhammad Ali's biography, *The Mighty Striving*, available at: [www.ahmadiyya.org/books/m-kabir/](http://www.ahmadiyya.org/books/m-kabir/)

## Education

After the completion of their high school education, in which the brothers obtained first and second positions respectfully and earned a Government stipend as well as a Kapurthalla State stipend for furthering their education, they were admitted to Government College, Lahore, the most prestigious institution in the University of the Punjab, which at that time was the only university covering, in addition to the Punjab Province, the federal area of Delhi, the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the North West Frontier Province, and Baluchistan.

Both brothers passed their BA examinations in 1896, obtaining First Division marks, but Maulana Muhammad Ali also excelled by standing first in the University in mathematics and earning a gold medal. After that, Maulana Muhammad Ali passed his MA and LL.B. examinations, obtaining a Masters' degree in English and Law, and Maulana Aziz Bakhsh joined Teachers Training College and attained his Bachelor of Teaching degree. After completing his studies, Maulana Aziz Bakhsh got a teaching job in Jampur Government High School in the then Dera Ghazi Khan District of the Punjab Province. (Jampur has now become a District.)

## Work

Maulana Aziz Bakhsh was a brilliant and very hardworking teacher who fully devoted himself to imparting the best education to his students. He would even put in extra hours in order to help them.

This hard work had an adverse effect on his health and so he applied to the British Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan for another job. He was offered a position of District Office Record Keeper in Dera Ghazi Khan that was available, and he accepted. He spent the next eighteen years in that position. Many times his wife, his sons and his friends advised him that with his educational qualifications he could

have become an Extra Assistant Commissioner in the Revenue Department, and he should try for it, but he always replied that begging for favours was against his nature, therefore he could not do it. He was a living example of *tawakal al-Allah* (complete reliance on Allah alone) and of not thirsting after worldly gains. A Deputy Commissioner once expressed surprise that a graduate with two university degrees was working in his office.

## Spreading Islam

The fact was that Maulana Aziz Bakhsh did not consider worldly gains to be the object of his life. His whole attention in those days was focussed on the matters of Islam and the Jama'at. After returning from his office he used to spend hours in preaching and discussions. He was the first Ahmadi in the town of Dera Ghazi Khan. Due to his influence and preaching in the beginning, some other Government employees joined the Jama'at. Some of them were Choudry Nazar Muhammad and his father-in-law Choudhry Dil Ahmad, Mian Muhammad Akbar, Hakim Abdul Khaliq, Master Muhammad Usman, Mian Wali Muhammad, Munshi Faiz Muhammad, Mian Rasul Bakhsh, and Ghulam Hussain, Inspector of Schools.

## Issue of masjid

Maulvi Aziz Bakhsh was living in Mohalla Patafian in the old Dera Ghazi Khan city. An abandoned masjid was lying vacant near his house, with no one having used it in a long time. It was in a dilapidated state, so Maulana Aziz Bakhsh, along with the other persons who had become Ahmadis because of his efforts, got together to repair the masjid. After it was restored, they started offering their prayers there and holding dars-e-Qur'an and other religious meetings in it. The opponents of the Ahmadiyya Movement did not tolerate this for long and soon they installed one of their own maulvis, resulting in two *salahs* being offered in the masjid – one by the Ahmadis and the other by the non-Ahmadis.

## Court case

Offering prayers separately was not the only

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object of the enemies of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Soon a situation of disorder and lawlessness was created by them. The matter drew the attention of the District Magistrate. The parties were summoned to court where the District Magistrate first of all enquired from Maulana Aziz Bakhsh whether he had any objections to other persons also offering their prayers in the masjid. He said no. When the same question was put to the opponents they said that they objected to Ahmadis offering their prayers in the masjid as it belonged to Hanafis and so Ahmadis



could not offer their prayers in it. They said the Ahmadis should be asked if the masjid belonged to them and Hindus started offering *salah* in it if they will not object. The District Magistrate asked Maulana Aziz Bakhsh his position on it and he replied that instead of objecting to Hindus offering *salah* in the masjid the Ahmadis would be very pleased that they were. On hearing this reply, those present in the court were taken aback and the Magistrate rebuked the opposing maulvis saying, "Go away. This is all your troublemaking and nothing else." The Ahmadis therefore kept on offering their prayers in that masjid for many years.

### Jalsa

Every year Maulana Aziz Bakhsh used to attend the annual Jalsa at Qadian. In 1906 or 1907, he proceeded on three months leave and, along with his family, spent this time in Qadian to obtain the spiritual benefits of the company of the Promised Messiah. (Dr Allah Bakhsh writes: I was six or seven years old at the time. The atmosphere of righteousness and piety in Qadian of that time exerted a strong influence upon us.)

### Death of Promised Messiah

The telegram carrying the news of the passing away of the Promised Messiah on 26 May 1908 was delivered by the mailman to Maulana Aziz Bakhsh in the masjid at Dera Ghazi Khan while he was performing *wudu*. His son, Dr Allah Bakhsh, writes that he remembers seeing that on reading it, tears started flowing from the Maulana's eyes. This was the state of love and devotion the followers of the Promised Messiah had for him. He was dearer to them than anything else in the world.

(To be continued)

### Relocation

In 1910, the Indus River changed its course and the old city of Dera Ghazi Khan was submerged. As a result, a new city of Dera Ghazi Khan was established at a new location. Maulana Aziz Bakhsh and other Ahmadis purchased plots of land at this new location and plots were also purchased for a masjid and a library for the Jama'at. Maulana cared so much for being near the masjid that he selected the plot adjacent to it even though this location, being away from the road, would be less valuable if he were to sell it in future. After his house and the masjid were built, he installed a window in his sitting room which opened onto the courtyard of the masjid. The buildings of the homes of the other Ahmadis and of the Anjuman library were located alongside the roadway of the area. Funds for the construction of the new masjid and the library were raised through great efforts.

### Donations to library

Maulana Aziz Bakhsh was an avid reader of Ahmadiyya literature. He used to buy books, newspapers, and magazines of the Jamaat and after reading them, he used to get them bound and place them in the library of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat. He used to keep complete files of newspapers and magazines. (Note by Zahid Aziz: Some of the collections of Ahmadiyya newspapers from the Promised Messiah's time in the Central Anjuman's Library at Lahore today came from the archives kept by Maulana Aziz Bakhsh.)

**Dars**

Every day he used to give dars-e-Qur'an after the morning prayer and dars-e-Hadith in the evening in the masjid. His only engagement after his work hours was the enlightenment of people about Islam and Ahmadiyyaat. This was a passion for him, the main object of his life.

**Personality**

The righteousness, piety, honesty and taqwa of Maulana Aziz Bakhsh were known to everyone in the whole district, so much so that one Deputy Commissioner recorded his opinion in the words, "The honesty of Maulana Aziz Bakhsh is proverbial."

**Split after Maulana Nur-ud-Din's death**

On hearing the news of the passing away of Maulana Nur-ud-Din in 1914, Maulana Aziz Bakhsh went to Qadian. A large number of Ahmadis of Dera Ghazi Khan wrote letters of allegiance (bai'at) to Mirza Mahmud Ahmad. Only Munshi Nur Muhammad Chandia, who was an officer in the Irrigation Department and the father and grandfather of Abdur Rahim Khan Chandi and Nur Muhammad Khan Chandi (Advocate of Lahore) respectively, Agha Muhammad Nasir Khan, BA, who later joined the Frontier Service, Sher Muhammad Sabzwar, Munshi Muhammad Bakhsh and two or three other members who were residents of rural areas, joined the Lahore Jama'at. However, until the time when Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad enjoined on his followers not to offer prayers behind those who were not his followers, both groups, the Qadian and the Lahori, continued offering prayers behind Maulana Aziz Bakhsh. After Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad's pronouncement, both groups continued offering prayers in the same masjid, but the Qadianis held their separate prayers, led by someone belonging to their group.

**Lonely after death of wife**

In 1920, Maulana Aziz Bakhsh's wife, who had been bedridden for many years, passed away. During those years, in addition to his other duties, he used to prepare food for his family as well as nurse his ailing wife. After her

death, he was lonely as both his sons, KS Rahim Bakhsh and Dr Allah Bakhsh, were students at the University of the Punjab and King Edward Medical College respectively, and his daughter was already married to Ghulam Muhammad, the eldest son of Maulana Aziz Bakhsh's eldest brother, Khairuddin. Hazrat Ameer Maulana Muhammad Ali suggested the Maulana Aziz Bakhsh should go to Lahore and spend some time with him. Maulana Aziz Bakhsh took three months' leave from his job and went to Lahore, where he worked as honorary secretary for that time. After these three months, he returned to his job in Dera Ghazi Khan.

**Retirement**

By this time, he had become Superintendent of the Deputy Commissioner's office. In 1923, he was selected for an administrative post and transferred to Lyalpur (now Faisalabad). He worked in that position for about three years and retired from Government Service in 1928, earning a monthly pension of three hundred and fifty rupees, which was a handsome amount in view of the economic conditions of those days. He had in mind to settle down in Ahmadiyya Buildings in Lahore, but a financial need cropped up at that time as his youngest son, Dr Allah Bakhsh, was selected for further education in the medical profession in Europe for two years and he needed funds to meet his boarding and lodging expenses. Maulana took a job as Secretary of the Anjuman Tarraqi-e-Taleem Amritsar to meet these expenses.

In 1930, when Hazrat Ameer Maulana Muhammad Ali appealed to retirees to devote their lives for the service of Islam, Maulana Aziz Bakhsh quit his job, purchased a home in Ahmadiyya Buildings, settled there permanently, and devoted the remaining years of his life by rendering honorary services in various departments of the Anjuman in addition to imamat of the five daily prayers in the Central Masjid.

**Lifestyle and habits**

Hazrat Maulana Aziz Bakhsh was a person of sufistic tendencies. A strong belief in, and love of, Allah was a passion with him. Hence *ibadat* and offering of prayers in congregation in

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the mssjid was a practice which was so dear to him that nothing could stand in his way to fulfil this habit.

In 1953 martial law was declared in Lahore and curfew was imposed due to the anti-Ahmadiyya agitation provoked by the Ulama, and no one was allowed out of his house from dusk to dawn. Even in such conditions the Maulana went to the masjid for tahajjud prayers at 2.00 a.m. Once he was stopped by the military patrol and asked why he had come out of his home. He replied that he was going to the masjid to offer prayers. The soldiers were so impressed that they escorted him to the masjid. Later, their officer commented that Ahmadi are safe there because of this saintly old man.

Once, when he was almost 85, he fell down in the masjid and his eardrum was fractured. Dr. Ghulam Muhammad prescribed a penicillin injection but Maulana refused to get it saying he accepted the will of Allah and if some days of his life are the pleasure of Allah then he will survive. In spite of extreme pain in this condition he did not miss going to the masjid for prayers. He was living on the second floor of the building and had to climb more than twenty stairs five times a day to go to the masjid. In his old age it was very difficult yet he did not consider it a problem. Once, when Dr. Allah Bakhsh suggested to him that instead of undergoing this hardship he should offer his prayers at home, Maulana replied, "Son, you do not know how many favours and excellences Allah has bestowed upon me. My eyesight and hearing are working perfectly and my mental capacities are in perfect condition in spite of my old age. Are these lesser favours for which I can be extremely thankful to Allah?"

Whenever his sons offer to take him to Murree (Hill Station) to pass the summer he used to turn them down by saying that the top floor of his house is quite airy and vast and serves as a substitute to the hill station. Whenever his attention was drawn to the humidity during July to August, which would be more unbearable in houses located in narrow streets, Maulana used to counter by saying perspiration has a healthy effect.

He was a living example of being thankful to Allah in all conditions, whether favourable or unfavourable. Complaining was not in his nature and even when hardships befell him, he used to bear them with pleasure and thankfulness.

Once, he was staying in Delhi in the home of Choudhry Shah Din, a near relative. Shah Din was worried about losing his job as he was serving on a temporary basis. On seeing him worried, Maulana Aziz Bakhsh advised him not to lose hope of Allah's mercy and favours. In the evening, when Maulana again saw him in the same worried and gloomy mental state, he admonished him by saying to be so gloomy on such an account amounted to shirk and lack of faith in Allah and a true believer should remain thankful to Allah in all conditions, whether it be affluence or hardship. The pleasure of Allah was the pleasure of Maulana Aziz Bakhsh and he used to advise others to behave in the same way.

Worldly gains or desire of wealth, position of power or even attainment of good jobs had no value in Maulana Aziz Bakhsh's view. He was a dervish who was a very humble and contented person. He did not know the word ego. It had no place in his life. He was completely selfless and exceptionally honest. Seeking the pleasure of Allah at all times was his sole passion in life. During his service he did not seek even the smallest favour from anyone, whether his superior officers or members of the public.

Once, a Baluch sardar said: "Maulvi Sahib, I will send you a buffalo for milk." Maulana Aziz Bakhsh refused the offer by saying; "No, thank you. I have a goat whose milk suffices for my family's needs."

### **Compassionate person**

Maulana Aziz Bakhsh was a very compassionate person and used to help needy persons without their having to ask. His second wife, who was a widow of an Ahmadi Muslim when Maulana married her a few years after the passing away of his first wife, was British. She narrated that once Maulana came to know that an employee of the Anjuman who used to work in

the office was short of food for his family. Maulana Aziz Bakhsh gave him wheat flour, rice and other cooking necessities, including coals, from his own home.

Dr Allah Bakhsh narrated that once Maulana enquired from him whether he had twenty rupees in his pocket, which he could borrow from him. Dr Bakhsh had only ten rupees at the time, which he offered to his father. Maulana said that he pays twenty rupees monthly to a widow and that that was the day when she was to come to get her stipend and he did not want her to return empty-handed.

A blind person used to deliver three daily newspapers to Maulana Aziz Bakhsh's home. Dr Allah Bakhsh enquired from Maulana why he was buying three newspapers when he does not read them. Maulana replied that the blind man will survive economically. Maulana not only bought the newspapers from him but he also used to feed the blind man every day when he delivered the papers.

Similarly, when Muhammad Yamin (Muhammad Saleh Nur's father), a bookseller of Qadian, used to visit to sell any new book, Maulana Aziz Bakhsh used to buy it in spite of the fact that he already had copies. He used to buy the books in order to help Muhammad Yamin's business.

Abdul Ghani Butt once narrated to me (Masud Akhtar Choudhry) an example of Maulana Aziz Bakhsh's compassion. Abdul Ghani Butt was sitting with Maulana Aziz Bakhsh in his home during winter. It was a rainy day and while a continuous drizzle was coming down a fishmonger was selling fish and shouting, "Fish for sale." Maulana asked Abdul Ghani Butt to call out and stop the fish seller.

Abdul Ghani Butt did as he was asked. Maulana Aziz Bakhsh then went to the fishmonger and asked him to weigh his entire stock of fish that he was carrying in a basket on his head and Maulana purchased the whole lot. Abdul Ghani Butt was surprised as he knew that Maulana Aziz Bakhsh and his wife were two elderly people for whom only one fish or so would suffice.

He could not help but ask Maulana what he intended to do with the approximately forty pounds of fish he had bought. In reply, Maulana said: "Abdul Ghani, do you not see that it is a cold winter day and that it is raining too? I thought God knows how long he will remain exposed to this severe cold in this rain to earn a livelihood for his family. Therefore, I thought it fit to buy the whole lot so that he could go home and spend the day under his roof with his family. Now, you help me to distribute these pieces of fish. Please give one each to the homes of Ahmadis residing in Ahmadiyya Buildings, a few pieces to the *mahmam khana* (guest house kitchen), and take one or two for your family."

### **Maulana Muhammad Ali**

Maulana Aziz Bakhsh was very devoted to the Promised Messiah, and, as was already mentioned, on receiving the news of the Promised Messiah's passing away, tears flowed from his eyes even though he was performing ablution. Similarly, he had great love for, and devotion to, Hazrat Ameer Maulana Muhammad Ali. Although Hazrat Ameer was his younger brother and both of them had grown up in each other's company from childhood to their college years in Lahore, yet Maulana Aziz Bakhsh was an admirer of his younger brother's academic and spiritual achievements, and brotherly love was submerged into the love of a follower for his spiritual leader. It was a matter akin to *fana-fi-sheikh*.

Even in those days when the physical weakness of old age had made it harder for him to walk he kept up his habit of visiting Hazrat Ameer at Muslim Town almost every week. He used to take something as a gift, would take his lunch with Hazrat Ameer, and go to the Muslim Town masjid for Zuhr prayer with him. After the prayer, he would lie down on the floor, which was covered with date palm leaves, to rest. When Hazrat Ameer asked him to rest on a proper bed at home, he used to say: "When I can rest here in the masjid, what is the need of going to bed at home?"

When Hazrat Ameer Maulana Muhammad Ali passed away in 1951, Maulana Aziz Bakhsh

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was very grieved. He said it was his turn but that Hazrat Ameer had preceded him. Maulana Aziz Bakhsh led the funeral prayer and once again people saw tears flowing from his eyes when he was praying for Divine mercy and reward to be bestowed on the departed soul of his spiritual sheikh, though he was his younger brother.

He published fourteen sermons of the late Maulana Muhammad Ali in book form, which included his last *khutbah* of December 1947, and thirteen from January to April 1948. He had expressed a hope that all the sermons delivered by Maulana Muhammad Ali would be compiled and printed in book form as they contained a wealth of knowledge and spiritual insight. (The late Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, when he became Ameer-e-Jama'at, started work on this project and the first two volumes were published during his tenure. The Central Anjuman has now completed this work in a total of 24 volumes.)

Maulana Aziz Bakhsh was a living example of a person who imbibed the example of the lifestyle of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, and his life presents a picture of what a true follower of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet looks like. May Allah shower His choicest blessings on his soul. Ameen.

[A speech on the life of Hazrat Maulana Aziz Bakhsh, given by Shahid Aziz, can be downloaded at

<http://www.aaiil.org/text/snd/uk/2006/soundislamahmadiyyauk2006.shtml>]