



# *The Light* — U.K. edition

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*Assalamu alaikum:* Our next meeting —

Date: **Sunday 4th October**

Time: **3.00 p.m.**

Speaker: **Habiba Anwar**

***Dars-i Quran and Hadith:***

Every Friday after *Jumu'a* prayers.

**Meetings of the Executive:**

First Sunday of every month at 2.00 p.m.

**Meeting of the Jama'at:**

First Sunday of every month at 3.00 p.m.

Friday prayers and monthly meetings are  
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*Speech at U.K. Convention, 12 July 2009:*

## **Issues Faced by Young Muslim Women Today**

by **Habiba Anwar**

I have been asked to speak on issues faced by young Muslim women today. This is not an easy topic to summarize in 20 minutes or so, as the world we live in today currently has a female population of over 3 billion, so the sheer variety of issues faced by us everyday is so vast that it would be impossible to sum them up in a few words. Nevertheless, I do hope to cover what I believe are the main issues in my short talk.

Here in the UK, recent years have seen a new generation of Muslims rising. These Muslims are unlike their parents or grandparents who migrated here from other parts of the world; these Muslims were born here and grew up here, study here, make friends here, experience all of their first experiences here, graduate, work and marry here and establish a life for themselves here. If I look out across this hall

today, I can see many of these Muslims. I myself am one of these Muslims, and the issues that we face are so different from those that our parents faced at our age that they are often overlooked, which over time can cause you to feel alienated, confused, torn between cultures and unsure of what is right and wrong.

Young women especially are facing a critical time right now. I feel that we are facing what you may call an identity crisis. What society tells us it expects from us is in such stark contrast to what we are told our religion expects from us. Yet we must live with both; we cannot not integrate in the society we live in, and we will not abandon our religion. So at some point in our lives, we are faced with having to chose one or the other. It's a choice we should not have to make; the women of the time of our Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) bore testament to the fact that women can successfully integrate in the societies they live in, and be ideal Muslims at the same time. The two are not mutually exclusive, yet both society and Muslim communities today are constantly sending women the message that they must chose between them.

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In the West, women have been placed on a pedestal today that was unimaginable 100 years ago. Thanks to the hard work, persistence and determination of groups of women around the world, we can now vote; we can pursue any career a man can pursue; 12 out of the 500 biggest companies in the world are now run by women CEOs; until 1958, women were excluded from the House of Lords by law, but such a law today would be considered sexist and discriminatory to the highest degree — that is how far we have come in just half a century. Though there are still hurdles and what many refer to as underlying discrimination, especially in the workplace, generally women have much more rights today than they have ever had before.

But some of these rights are not or should not be new to the Muslim community. Let me give you an example; property inheritance rights for women were established in the UK as late as in the 19th century, prior to which a woman could not own or inherit her own property. Islam, however, established inheritance laws for women centuries beforehand. Chapter 4, verse 7 of the Holy Quran reads:

*For men is a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, and for women a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, whether it be little or much...*

And this is covered in detail in other parts of this chapter, with specific rulings on divisions. Nevertheless, one of the constant attacks on Islam that is thrown at both men and women is that Islam is an oppressive religion in which the growth and input of women is stifled. Muslim women are nothing more than possessions of the men in their lives; their fathers, their brothers, their husbands, their sons. That is the perception so commonly advocated whenever the status and position of a Muslim woman is discussed in the West. More than often, Muslims stand up and correct these claims and we point out that whereas in the West, women's

liberation has only just begun, Islam introduced the original concept of equality over 1400 years ago. Taking aside the physical and material rights that the Quran generously grants to women, perhaps even more importantly, Allah gave spiritual equality to women and has specifically addressed women in those for whom he has prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward. In Chapter 33, verse 35 of the Holy Quran, it is made clear that whatever is required of men to gain spiritual nearness to Allah is required of women; belief in Allah, truthfulness, patience, humbleness, charitableness, fasting, guarding of their chastity and remembering Allah. Both men and women are specifically addressed as being required to fulfill these essential characteristics.

Islam is in no way a man's religion; there is no glass ceiling preventing women from progressing in their faith beyond a certain point; neither is there any segregation in the rewards for men from those for women. In Chapter 3, verse 194, Allah says:

*I will not suffer the work of any worker among you to be lost whether male or female, the one of you being from the other.*

And these are just a few chosen quotations relating to spiritual equality in the eyes of Allah. If you look into other aspects of life, you will find many examples in the Quran of the elevation of women.

So, on the face of it, to be a young Muslim woman in the 21st century should be easier today than ever before. Society is celebrating women and their achievements. Journalists, lawyers, doctors, engineers, scientists, you name a profession and women have succeeded in it. And the true interpretation of Islam liberated women centuries ago. So both should, in theory, go hand in hand. I should be able follow my religion and integrate in the society I live in with ease, shouldn't I? Society tells me that as a woman, I have the right to educate myself, to work, to inherit property, to have a choice in whom I marry, and so much more, and Islam already allows me these things. So I should be able to live as a Muslim woman in the manner that Islam has intended for me, and still be accepted in and fully a part of society, shouldn't I?

Unfortunately, I don't think this is the case at all. In fact I think that the single biggest issue being faced by young Muslim women today is the pull they feel between society and religion. As parallel as you would think they should be by now is how polarized they in fact are. As I already mentioned, we seem to be faced with a choice that perhaps previous generations did not have to face. We must either choose to be closer to our faith and to live in

line with what Islam requires of us, or liberate ourselves from those requirements in order to be, “accepted”. The more Islam seems to grow and gain attention, the harder it has become for young women to move closer to their religion and be accepted in society at the same time.

Let me give you some examples. If a young Muslim woman decided to dress in a certain way, for example, if she decides to cover her hair when she is outside of her house, she tends to be categorized immediately. Of course, as soon as someone sees her, they can identify her as a Muslim straight away. But in addition to that, common stereotypes are affixed on her too, such as, this woman must be extremely conservative and orthodox in her views, and probably does not interact with any male members of her community, sees things in a very black and white manner and is generally quite unapproachable. Then there are some who assume that she must be dressing in that way because she has been forced to, or the cliché that she is oppressed. I don’t deny that in certain cases, these assumptions may well be true, but in most cases they are not. So how does this majority fight these stereotypes and prove they are not narrow-minded and unapproachable, are capable of engaging in intelligent dialogue and are just as much fully functioning human beings as women that dress differently to them? More importantly, why should they have to prove themselves, and why do these stereotypes exist in the first place?

Muslims themselves, including Muslim women, are largely responsible for this and the issues we face today. The problem is that our communities no longer adhere to the correct teachings of Islam. There was a wonderful lecture I recently listened to on this topic in which the speaker talked about cause and effect. When you see certain effects, you try to pinpoint the cause, which is difficult to determine and thus often incorrectly judged. So, when a non-Muslim community looks at an Islamic community and sees certain dysfunctions, they assume that the *cause* is Islam. But as Muslims, when we look at them with a true understanding of our religion, we know that the cause is in fact the *abandonment* of Islam.

For example, there is a practice in many Muslim countries in the East whereby women are forbidden from appearing in public. This is largely tied to culture, but often you hear this tradition being justified from an Islamic point of view, that Islam does not allow or encourage the free mixing of males and females, and thus women should be confined to their homes. To justify it as part of your culture is one thing, but to say that Islam does not

allow women to leave their homes is one clear example of the abandonment of the true principles of Islam. Chapter 24, verse 30 of the Holy Quran reads:

*Say to the believing men that they lower their gaze and restrain their passions. That is purer for them. Surely Allah is Aware of what they do.*

If the intent of Islam was to confine women to their homes, then why would there be a need for men to lower their gaze? Above that, there are numerous examples from the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (SAW) of women who played extremely important roles in society—something they could never have achieved through seclusion.

Similarly, there is no decree in Islam that forbids women from working, but there is a common perception that according to the correct principles of Islam, it is not *appropriate* for Muslim women to seek employment. This is despite the fact that during the time of the second caliph of Islam, Hazrat Umar, a *woman* was appointed as the marketplace supervisor, which today would be the equivalent of the post of Director of Consumer Affairs. Nevertheless, a recent report shows that only 49% of second generation British Muslim women are active in the UK labour market. There may be numerous reasons for this, but the generally negative outlook towards working Muslim women by Muslim communities is certainly an undeniable factor.

Now this is not to say that because Islam allows a woman to seek employment, she must do so. The point is she should have the freedom to choose. If she wants to work, it should be her prerogative to do so. And if she doesn’t want to work, that should be her choice too, not something forced upon her as incorrectly part of her religion.

Instead, Islamic principles today have been interpreted in a rather patriarchal fashion, whereby the choices women make are not their choices at all, but the choices made for them by the interpretations of Islam presented by the Muslim communities they live in. It is almost as if a woman’s intelligence is no longer trusted, as if left to her own determination, perhaps she would make the wrong choice and thus it has to be made for her. Both the general Western society and Muslim communities tells her she must dress, act, walk, talk and live in a certain way in order to be accepted by either of them. How do you find the right balance? This is the issue, this is the question, this is the central concern of young Muslim women today. It is much easier to pick one way or another; either accept the sometimes skewed Islamic interpretations of how a Muslim woman

should live, or embrace how society wants you to live. To find the correct balance is the hardest task we face.

I am one of these women myself and am finding my own balance, so I certainly cannot end my talk with the solution or the way forward, nor was it my intention to do so. I just wanted to highlight the key issues we are facing on behalf of the young Muslim women not only here today, but part of our worldwide *Jama'at*, so that our respected elders and brother and sisters can help us make the right choices ourselves, and I pray that Allah guides us to the right choices, and enables us to be fortunate enough to become honorable Muslim women in the spirit intended by Islam. As at the end of the day, whether male or female, our purpose on this earth is the same: to recognize the existence of Allah, the almighty, before our chance to do so is over. May He enable us all to be better Muslims, and take away the issues that all young Muslims are facing all over the world — *Ameen*.

*Speech at U.K. Convention, 12 July 2009:*

## **Muslim Youth in Britain — Education and Workplace**

by **Bushra Ahmed**

In Britain there are approximately 1.8 million Muslims, of whom 60% are youths. In some of the adolescent Muslims, there is unrest caused by certain government policies towards Muslims. It is causing a degree of frustration in the Muslim communities.

To explain this, let us look at the differences in history of the East compared with the West. In brief, while the West was in the dark ages, Islamic civilization thrived. Then when the Renaissance or the Revival of the West came, Islamic civilization, for the most part, began ebbing away.

Here, history, therefore, presents a situation of one man's meat is another man's poison. Due to this scenario, here and there, there is a clash of culture between East and West. For economic reasons, colonization was embarked on by the West and as a result, East and West slowly grew apart and became adversaries. It became difficult to live together in harmony, in terms of the majority. It became a case of survival of the fittest and the struggle of superiority and domination of one particular kind or another.

However, coming to the current situation of Britain and in general the West, during my childhood I remember, there were sporadic placements of Indian restaurants and hardly any "halal" meat noticeable. But as time passed, Britain slowly became used to the taste for curry and spices and it has now developed and in many other respects it is heading towards a more tolerant and cosmopolitan society. On a larger scale we have witnessed demonstration of cultural cohesion in USA — the sole superpower of the day — where the first ever black head of state has been elected.

From an Islamic perspective, Allah has created different races for identification, so that we cooperate with and learn from each other.

The Quran says: "O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you" (49:13). The concept of becoming clannish is harmful and leads to prejudiced attitudes as one group tends to harm another group, due to fight for supremacy. Whereas, in fact, one particular race is not the best. It is a team effort. In all walks of life, in sports, for example, we need varying abilities of people to make a good team.

In the context of UK specifically, Asians have a lot to offer. They are very hard working. They are good listeners and always ready to help. So integration means advancement of society as a whole.

Notwithstanding such hard realities the West does not accept us with open arms. Promotion is not easy for Asians and when the economy falls short and a company opts for redundancies Asians become the first to be considered.

Be that as it may, I realised the value of our culture and religion later on. During University, I attended many Islamic lectures. The principles taught made sense to me. I learnt of Islam's point of view and it had a tremendous impact and it was positive. I witnessed Islam being practised to the letter by my university lecturer who took two minutes out from his lecture to offer *Zuhr* mandatory prayers in a spare room and this is imprinted in my memory and impressed me a great deal. Impressed also I was by one of my sisters during her working career. After arriving home from a hard day she would first say all missed prayers of the day before coming down for dinner.

All these examples intrigued me and I have tried my best to discipline myself in all five pillars of Islam.

In a political context, one thing that has great impact on our lives was 9/11. Nowhere can an essay go without the mention of 9/11 in USA, and also July 7 in UK. Initially people who were angry vent their hostility by a number of racist attacks. Yet, soon though, the world witnessed a metamorphosis and the number of converts to Islam increased. Curiosity of the situation saw many questions being asked. And of course we know that all our answers lie in the Quran. Once that is exposed, satisfaction comes guaranteed. The two infamous events initiated vindictive attacks on Islam and its Holy Founder. And it proved to be a God-given opportunity to take across the true message of Islam to inquisitive people in the Western world.

Inside the UK specifically, the failing of banks in recent past has added frustration to matters and the rise in unemployment has created more crime including racism. But I believe we should carry on striving in this jihad to carry the flag of Islam and ultimately it will benefit all.

This exposure of Islam has also become intriguing to workplaces and in particular work colleagues, here. My mother informs me that her employers have recently built a special room for prayer called the faith room where employees from different religions do their own participation of prayer. Also while still in her workplace, once the question arose about religion. My mother laid down the argument whereby saying that all religions are all entering the same destination via different routes. This pricked up many earlobes and was appreciated by all. So our ideas should be flexible and negotiable. This is the first step to da'wah.

Coming back to our generation, concerning my sister and her workplace, she informed us that a well-known bank of England has introduced new Islamic uniforms for their Muslim employees.

Sticking to workplace themes, the time for the biggest da'wah of all is during the holy month of Ramadan, whereupon work colleagues are interested to know about Ramadan. This is why basic Islamic knowledge is important. Ramadan holds the biggest opportunity to demonstrate effect of Islam on our daily life and commitment to the teachings of Islam, especially once they see us still alive after the end of Ramadan!

It may be pertinent to mention now my personal experience as a British youth. Well I did not have a great start: I went to a Catholic school because in those days their schooling was good and adhered to very strict rules. During this period I studied and worked hard and managed to help weaker students. This helped minimize any racism. My friends

supported me most of the time. So it is not only colour that creates racism but also our bad examples. To use techniques and tact to handle racism is always positive. It may see us through the cruelest of situations.

To the next stage, after school I was appointed as a school leaver librarian. Therein my colleagues could not figure out why I would not wear summery dresses and why I was all covered instead? In my struggle, I did not give in and was adamant.

Now I hop on to the generation after us. As we have found our footing, now it is up to us to correct our mistakes and teach the future generation the values of our culture and religion.

In Muslim youth magazines and books, youngsters are taught to study Islam properly and the interesting parts should be discussed, to give them the full flavour of our religion.

It is the right kind of exposure which leads to greater knowledge and thus to being a good Muslim. The right guidance is needed. Our younger folks should be given the unique opportunity to stick with their faiths which can lead to life changing experiences later on. It will lead to a better society wherever you are. The responsibility is on our shoulders as is stated in *Surah Taghabun*, ch. 64, verse 15: Your riches and your children are only a trial, but in the presence of Allah is the highest reward. This should instil in us the sense of responsibility of every parent towards our future generation.

We must steer clear of bad influences for us and the third generation. We must put every effort to see the global dawn of Islam everywhere. Kill the incorrect myths and arm the children with knowledge and be firm and logical. It is toughness of the mind that is required here.

We teach our children physics and mathematics but forget to educate them into Islamic studies. This must never happen. From Ibn-e-Sina (known as Avicenna in the West) to Ibn-e-Taimiyya, Islamic scholars of the past have been famous scientists and had simultaneously mastered the Islamic teachings, knowledge and practices. We must train our children to be God-fearing and not follow the examples of Western scholars who pride themselves in being atheists. This will not help a society in the long run and will cause all round disaster.

Islam truly is a blessing and we are in more ways than one lucky to be guided. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, had predicted that one day Islam will rise from the West. My dream is to see East and

West merge. Together we can work towards one common cause under the banner of Islam and praise our Creator together. We should all stand side by side in a united front in the name of Allah. And, I believe, one day Islam will prevail upon the world to realise the truth of Islam as the religion of peace and togetherness.

I would like to end my talk with a beautiful verse of the Quran which invites all believers in revealed religions to come to each other in a friendly atmosphere and to initiate dialogue and create peace and amicability among the various nations of the world. The Quran says:

“Say: O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between us and you, that we shall serve none but Allah and that we shall not associate anything with him.” (3:64)

*Speech for the Convention:*

## **Jihad — acceptance of the interpretation of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**

by Ch. Masud Akhtar, U.S.A.

Chairperson, brothers and sisters, *Assalamu alaikum*

As we all know, the majority of Muslims reside in those 54 states mostly spread over Asia and Africa where they have their own governments. However, there is hardly any piece of land on this planet where Muslims are not found nowadays. Issues affecting Muslims vary from state to state and are, therefore, not only numerous but also multi-dimensional and covering all of those in a talk would require 20 hours, and not 20 minutes as allowed to speakers here. I, therefore, have chosen to speak about the special aspects of a subject which relate to Islam and Ahmadiyyat and that subject is the focus of everyone’s attention, all over the world. I mean terrorism which is being perpetrated by some Muslim Jihadist groups. But before speaking on it I would like to add this much about all other issues affecting Muslims, that their ultimate origin is traceable, directly or indirectly, to Muslims residing in these 54 states where they have self rule.

An open minded and unbiased study of the problem of the present day acts of terrorism perpetrated by the so called jihadist groups of Muslims will convince every sensible person that its roots are traceable to the false and distorted version of the

Islamic jihad being preached to Muslim Ummah by the Muslim clerics since over three centuries.

Quranic ‘jihad’ literally means *struggle* or exerting one’s utmost efforts for the advancement and dissemination of Truth or Divinely Revealed Religion. It does not envisage use of force pursuant to that end, except for political, national or other goals, but even if those be just and fair they do not qualify to be considered falling under the definition of Islamic jihad. In order to set the record right the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, on May 22, 1900, published his book *Jihad and the British Government* wherein by quoting relevant verses to jihad from the Holy Quran he explained the real meaning and true concept of Islamic jihad and also tried to remove the commonly prevalent misconception in the Muslim Ummah about the roles of the Promised Mahdi and the Promised Messiah, the notion that they will slaughter all non-Muslims and will spread Islam at the point of the sword. Hazrat Mirza sahib wrote that it was forbidden in Islam to kill any person, whether of your own or another faith without due cause and reason and to consider such an act as Islamic jihad was a travesty. He gave three reasons for the prohibition of jihad with the sword against the British government.

First, British rule had established peace and complete religious freedom which had made possible for everyone to follow religious injunctions and to freely propagate religion and even to criticise the faith of the rulers without any let or hindrance from the government. Thus there being no persecution by the government on account of one’s faith and beliefs, therefore, there was no need or due cause for waging war against such government, as verse 193 of Surah Al-Baqarah states:

“And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah”.

So Islam allows fighting only when there is religious persecution. In the absence of such persecution fighting is not warranted or permissible.

The second reason advanced by Hazrat Mirza sahib for not fighting against the British government was the complete absence in the Muslim community of organisation, capability, a proper fighting force, monetary resources and appropriate armaments. The absence of these requisite tools of waging and winning a war or organising hostilities will be tantamount to suicide, and suicide is prohibited in Islam as verse 195 of Surah Al-Baqarah clearly commands:

“...and cast not yourself to perdition with your own hands.”

Hazrat Mirza sahib further pointed out that the absence of means of war in the Muslim Ummah appeared to be part of a Divine plan since peace and religious freedom had rendered war for the sake of religion redundant. Had there been a necessity for waging war for the defence of the religion of Islam, then, Allah, Who is the guardian of the religion of Islam, would definitely have furnished Muslims with the means to wage an armed struggle for the defence of the Divine faith.

The third reason advanced by Hazrat Mirza sahib was referring Muslims to a prophecy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) pertaining to the Promised Messiah, that he would end the religious war. The words used in the hadith, *yaz'ī al-harb*, do not mean abrogating the injunctions relating to war but could mean only that the Promised Messiah would issue a temporary decree stopping war in the name of religion as the circumstances of the time would not warrant a war fulfilling the requirements of waging a war permissible under the teachings of the Quran. This is what Hazrat Mirza sahib stated very clearly when he said: “The conditions for waging a war do not exist at the present time in this country”. Please note how specific he was as to time and place in this statement.

The publication of this book caused a storm of vituperations and false charges levelled against Hazrat Mirza sahib by the Muslim clerics. They called him a sycophant and an agent of the British government who had annulled the Quranic injunction of Jihad. In fact, all these charges were false and were the product of malice, prejudice and enmity against Hazrat Mirza sahib prevalent among the ignorant Muslim clerics whose erroneous teachings of religion Hazrat Mirza sahib was engaged in destroying in his capacity as the *Mujaddid* of the century. How could a person be a “British agent” who was engaged day in and day out fighting the shallow beliefs of Christianity, the religion of the British rulers, and was calling the Christianity of European origin as anti-Christ, which he, in his capacity as the Promised Messiah, had been raised to destroy! Had the British government gone out of its mind to choose such a man as its agent?

Now, when a century has passed over these and other writings of the Promised Messiah and as the events are unfolding these days as a result of the terrorist acts of misguided groups of Muslims, the stand taken by the Promised Messiah is being vindicated in as much as for the first time in history the British Prime Minister and many other Euro-

pean political leaders and rulers and the American President, in public addresses and speeches, have acknowledged that Islam is a religion of peace and does not teach terrorism and use of military force against followers of other religions. These are the same Christians whose ancestors left no stone unturned in maligning Islam and accusing it of having spread at the point of the sword. On the other end, Muslim rulers and even most Muslim clerics are now crying at the top of their voice that Islam is a religion of peace which does not permit terrorism for the achievement of its purposes and that the use of force for someone’s assumed beliefs against others is not permissible.

Has not this change of attitude on the part of the Christians intelligentsia as well as Muslim clerics and the Muslim common man proved the truth of the teachings of the Promised Messiah? This is how Almighty Allah’s decree that Truth always prevails against falsehood appears to be at work at all times in the world.

*Speech sent for the Convention:*

## Spiritual life and death

by Col. Mahmud Shaukat, U.S.A.

My speech is inspired by a small personal incident, and this incident, I believe, foretold of events in the future. It happened over 50 years ago when the late Syed Assadullah Shah sahib, a very pious Ahmadi and a recipient of *ilham* (Divine revelation), used to stay with the late *Hazrat Ameer* Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan. People went to Shah sahib for praying for them. My father also requested him to pray for his sons. The answer to his prayers was: “Two will also die”. The record of this *ilham* and of others is kept in the late *Hazrat Ameer*’s papers, with dates and signatures. This *ilham* was not about the physical death, an end which everyone will surely meet, but regarding the spiritual death. Later events confirmed this, when in 1974 Ahmadi were declared non-Muslim by the government of Pakistan. My two brothers (I being the third) gave an advertisement in a leading English newspaper that they, the two of them, were Muslims and not Ahmadi etc. Mark the words of the *ilham*: “the two will die”. This is no slur on their decision because they did what they sincerely believed. But for me, when I believe in the rightness and genuineness of Hazrat Mirza sahib’s mission, a turning away from Ahmadiyyat would have been a total spiritual death. I am very thankful to God that He saved me from this very ignoble death. Shah sahib’s *ilham* was

fulfilled and God's decree and command was carried out.

God gives spiritual life to dead people, He then guides them and leads them to a good life. He also makes them guides and beacons of light and torchbearers to others. I will recite to you a verse of the Quran bearing on the subject:

“Is he who was dead, then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one who is in darkness whence he cannot come forth? Thus their doings are made fair-seeming to the disbelievers.” — 6:122

In this verse God says that He gives life, spiritual life, to people who are dead, and then their lives are transformed and they become beacons of lights to others.

The late Hazrat Amir, Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan, used to describe one of his experiences when reciting this verse. This happened when he was very ill, in the 1930s. He was in a hospital in Southern India, in a place called Madrapati. He was being taken to the operation theatre when the words of this verse came to him and he started reciting this when he was being wheeled in to the theatre. The words gave him hope and consolation, but the words were prophetic, because after the operation he got a new lease of life and he was completely cured of the then incurable disease of tuberculosis. He served and treated many people, cured their diseases and physical maladies. The government appreciated his good work and honored him with titles and recognition. But the real life for which he was raised and spared was the spiritual life with which he guided people to Islam and Ahmadiyyat, far and wide. This was the spiritual life that he was promised.

The above reference is very faith inspiring, but my purpose in quoting this verse to you is to show that God likes that His servants should lead a good spiritual life. God calls those whose lives are empty and devoid of spirituality as dead. He calls such people at other places in the Quran as blind, deaf, dumb and like animals. This is all described in a metaphoric sense. In this verse God speaks of “raising” people to life. God did not make people dead spiritually, making them dead was not God's action, but by their own wrongdoing and by not following His guidance. He rather raises the spiritually dead people to life out of His love and compassion for humanity, due to His mercy (*Rahmaniyyat*), as He says in the Quran “Your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself” (6:54).

He, on account of His mercy and compassion, forgives people, overlooks their trespasses and pardons their thanklessness. He, out of His love for humanity, sends prophets, messengers, reformers and saints to guide people to Him and save them from fear, ignorance and superstition, sins and cruelty, and leads them to a life of peace, happiness and contentment. God says in the Quran: “He invites you to forgive you your faults and to respite you till an appointed term” (14:10).

Ahmadiyyat is that spiritual light which He has sent in the present times calling people to Islam and the Quran. Some noble souls accepted the truth and followed the Reformer, while a majority of the people rejected his call and opposed him. His followers were persecuted and ostracized. But Hazrat Mirza sahib was always sure of the success of his mission. He was confident that God's mission and God's messengers were never unsuccessful. God says in the Quran: “Allah has written down: I shall certainly prevail, I and my messengers. Surely Allah is Strong, Mighty” (58:21).

Hazrat Mirza sahib formed a party whose aim, he said, was to carry the teachings of the Quran and Islam to the four corners of the world. He laid down this aim of his *Jama'at* in accordance with the Divine injunction given in the Quran: “And from amongst you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful” (3:104).

You are that people, the torchbearers who have pledged to carry the light of Islam and the Quran to all, especially to those who have never heard the words of God. You are to take the message of Islam to people in their own languages or in languages most people understand. Sow the seeds of Islam and the Quran in all the lands where these words were never heard before, these words of God will themselves do the work. You are under an obligation, you have to repay a debt. God has been merciful to you and has shown you the way and you have undertaken a compact with the Reformer. Please repay the debt now, when you have time. Help in the propagation of Islam and the Quran. Join in this noble task and don't let petty obstacles deter and slacken your determination and resolve. If you stay back you will be the losers. God's mission never remains unaccomplished. May God give you all that force and determination that you need to accomplish God's work. Please do not be disheartened, as the Quran says:

“How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah's permission! And Allah is with the steadfast” (2:249).