

# The Al Islam eGazette

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## CURING FREUD'S ATHEISM

It is in remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort. (Al Quran 13:29)

Did you imagine that Allah had created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us? (Al Quran 23:116)

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and his colleagues defined man as a purely "Psychological man" driven by his past experiences and memories as opposed to "Religious man" who has a constant attraction and a drive towards his Creator and Protector, the God of monotheism. Freud theorized that personality is developed by the person's childhood experiences. He was not vague about his claims for atheism. He actually predicted that as the masses of people become more educated, they would 'turn away' from the 'fairy tales of religion.' Among other details, we will examine how his views were shaped by the anti-Semitism of his time.

Carl Jung, a contemporary of Freud took an exception to his views, he wrote, "Freud has unfortunately overlooked the fact that man has never yet been able single-handed to hold his own against the powers of darkness — that is, of the unconscious. Man has always stood in need of the spiritual help which each individual's own religion held out to him."

Totally on the opposite pole of Freud in matter of religion, Carl Jung explained at length, in the chapter, "Psychotherapists or clergy" of his book, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*:

**"During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me. I have treated**

## Curing Freud's Atheism

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**One billion people world wide are suffering from anxiety and depression. (BBC survey)**

**many hundreds of patients. ... Among all my patients in the second half of life -- to say, over thirty-five -- there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook."**

Sigmund Freud wrote in a letter to Carl Jung, dated January 17, 1909, "The more the fruits of knowledge become accessible to men, the more widespread is the decline of religious belief." In his essay on war & death, he wrote, "Religion is an illusion, and it derives its strength from its readiness to fit in with our instinctual wishful impulses."

Both Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung were psychologists of great repute. So, are we to believe in "Psychological man" of Freud or the "Religious man" of Carl Jung?

To answer this question we need to travel back a little, to the year 1896, the places are Qadian and Lahore in Indo-Pakistan, subcontinent.

### PHILOSOPHY OF THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM

The year was 1896; a person by the name of Swami Sadhu Shugan Chandra had spent three or four years of his life attempting to reform the Kaaisth Hindu caste. In 1892 he came to the conclusion that unless people were gathered together under one roof, his efforts would be in vain. He therefore proposed to convene a religious conference, with the first one taking place in 1892 in Ajmer. In 1896, considering Lahore to be a suitable venue, he began preparations for the second such religious conference. The Conference of Great Religions was held at Lahore on December 26-29, 1896. Representatives of various religions accepted Swami Sahib's invitation, and the Conference of Great Religions was held during the Christmas holidays of 1896. Each

of the speakers was required to address five questions published in advance by the committee. The five questions were:

1. The physical, moral and spiritual states of man
2. What is the state of man after death?
3. The object of man's life and the means of its attainment,
4. The operation of the practical ordinances of the Law in this life and the next
5. Sources of Divine knowledge.

After receiving prophetic revelation from God, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>, Messiah of this age and the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam on the 21st of December, publicly declared that his essay would be the most overpowering one. A translation of his declaration is presented below:

### A GRAND PIECE OF NEWS FOR SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH

"In his announcement Swami Shugan Chandra has invited the leading divines of Muslims, Christians and Aryas, in the name of God, to set forth the excellences of their respective faiths in the conference proposed by him. We wish to inform Swami Sahib that to do honour to the name of God, as mentioned by him, we are ready to comply with his request and, if God so wills, our paper will be read in the proposed conference. Islam is a faith which directs a true Muslim to demonstrate perfect obedience when he is called upon to do something in the name of God. We shall now see how much regard his brothers the Aryas and Christian divines have for the honour of Parmeshwar or for Jesus and whether they are ready to participate in the conference which is to be held in the name of the Glorious Holy One.

In the conference of Great Religions which will be held in Lahore Town Hall on the 26th, 27th and 28th of December 1896, a paper written by this humble one, dealing with the excellences and miracles of the Holy Quran, will be read out. This paper is not the result of ordinary human effort but is a sign among the signs of God, written with His special support. It sets forth the beauties and truths of the Holy Quran and establishes like the noon-day

sun that the Holy Quran is in truth God's own Word and is a book revealed by the Lord of all creation. Everyone who listens to this paper from the beginning to the end, to my treatment of all the five themes prescribed for the conference, will, I am sure, develop a new faith and will perceive a new light shining within him and will acquire a comprehensive commentary on the Holy Word of God. This paper of mine is free from human weakness, empty boasts and vain assertions.

I have been moved by sympathy for my fellow human beings to make this announcement, so that they should witness the beauty of the Holy Quran and should realise how mistaken are our opponents in that they love darkness and hate light. God, the All-Knowing, has revealed to me that my paper will be declared supreme over all other papers. It is full of the light of truth, wisdom and understanding which will put to shame all other parties, provided they attend the conference and listen to it from beginning to end. They will not be able to match these qualities from their scriptures, whether they are Christians or Aryas or those of Sanatan Dharm or any others, because God Almighty has determined that the glory of His Holy Book shall be manifested on that day. I saw in a vision that out of the unseen a hand was laid on my mansion and by the touch of that hand a shining light emerged from the mansion and spread in all directions. It also illumined my hands. Thereupon someone who was standing by me proclaimed in a loud voice: *Allahu Akbar, Kharibat Khaibar* (God is Great, Khaibar has fallen). The interpretation is that by my mansion is meant my heart on which the heavenly light of the verities of the Holy Quran is descending, and by Khaibar are meant all the perverted religions which are afflicted with paganism and falsehood, in which man has been raised to occupy the place of God, or in which divine attributes have been cast down from their perfect station. It was thus disclosed to me that the wide publication of this paper would expose the untruth of false religions and the truth of the Quran will spread progressively around the earth till it arrives at its climax. From this vision my mind moved towards the reception of revelation and I received the revelation:

*God is with you, and God stands where you stand.* This is a metaphor conveying the assurances of Divine support.

I need write no more. I urge everyone to attend the conference in Lahore even at some inconvenience and listen to these verities. If they do so their

reason and their faith will derive such benefit as is beyond their expectation. Peace be upon those who follow the guidance.

Ghulam Ahmad

Qadian, 21 December 1896."

In answering the five questions of the conference Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> laid down the Islamic perspective of the "Religious man" he described as "Soul at rest." His paper was narrated to a spell bound multi-religious audience of 7000-8000, who heard the paper until it finished in more than 5 hours. It was later published in book form titled, the *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*. An excerpt from the book states:

"The soul at rest flows towards God; that is indicated by the divine direction, 'the righteous will be greeted with: O soul at rest, return to thy Lord, thou well pleased with Him and He well pleased with thee. So enter among my chosen servants and enter my Garden.' (Al Quran 89:28-31) The soul that has found comfort in God to return to its Lord. It undergoes a great transformation in this very life and is bestowed a paradise while still in this world."

To read the whole book, the response of the 7000 to 8000 audience at the time of first reading and some additional excerpts from newspapers about the book go to:

<http://www.alislam.org/library/books/Philosophy-of-Teachings-of-Islam.pdf>

The Islamic concept of "Soul at rest" has much more in common with the "Religious man" of Carl Jung, (a concept developed decades after the writing of the *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*) than "Psychological man" of Sigmund Freud. Jung's work on himself and his patients convinced him that life has a spiritual purpose beyond material goals. Our main task, he believed, is to discover and fulfil our deep innate potential, much as the acorn contains the potential to become the oak, or the caterpillar to become the butterfly. Based on his study of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Gnosticism, Taoism, and other traditions, Jung perceived that this journey of transformation is at the

mystical heart of all religions. It is a journey to meet the self and at the same time to meet the Divine. Unlike Sigmund Freud, Jung thought spiritual experience was essential to our well-being.

### SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM

In the seventeenth century people turned to the discoveries of astronomy to demonstrate what they considered the irreconcilable conflicts between science and faith of Christianity; in the eighteenth century, to Newtonian physics; in the nineteenth century, to Darwin; in the twentieth century and still today, Freud is the atheist's touchstone.



Sigmund Freud

Scientific materialism is at odds with this basic religious bias in human nature. It preaches that the whole universe is by itself and is in no need of a Creator or an Intelligent Being, who attends to its constant needs. Let us trace a few historical facts leading to development of scientific materialism.

Sir Charles Lyell (1797-1875) a Scottish geologist was largely responsible for the general acceptance of the view that all features of the earth's surface are produced by physical, chemical, and biological processes through long periods of geological time. His achievements laid another foundation for Darwin's theory of evolution in biology.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) proposed his evolutionary theory, drawing part of his inspiration from Charles Lyell and Adam Smith. Who is Adam Smith? He is a towering figure in the history of economic thought two centuries after his death. He is primarily known for a single work, *An Inquiry into the nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), the first comprehensive system of political economy. He proposed that individuals in trying to improve and promote their personal situation work hard and find

out the most advantageous methods to employ their capital and labour. They work with the intention of their personal gain and not for the advantage of the society. But if the mechanisms of personal struggle are allowed to run freely, good performers eliminate the less efficient and in so doing cause an unintended public advantage. He suggested that law makers should minimize their intrusions and let personal struggle or free market help nations become rich and powerful. He wrote, "I have never known much good done by those who affected trade for the public good." It has been proposed that it is in Adam Smith's economics transferred to nature that Charles Darwin found his principle of natural selection.

Darwin propounded his theory chiefly in two works—*On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) and *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871). His theory has indeed had a profound influence on subsequent scientific thought and development of western society. One of his staunch disciples Richard Dawkins confesses that it was not possible before Darwin to be an intellectually satisfied atheist.

After these philosophers came the open advocates of atheism. Among them was Ludwig Büchner's (1824-1899). He became a popular spokesman for scientific materialism in his time. His materialistic interpretation of the universe in *Kraft und Stoff* created uproar for its rejection of God, creation, religion, and free will and for its explanation of mind and consciousness as physical states of the brain produced by matter in motion. His continued defence of atheism and atomism and his denial of any distinction between mind and matter (*Natur und Geist*, 1857; "Nature and Spirit") appealed strongly to freethinkers. All these works of scientific materialism were resisted by religious people of their time. However, as Darwin's theory and other aspects of scientific materialism gathered momentum and more general acceptance, opposition from the Church to the intellectual and scientific community subsided in order to maintain credibility and influence with the populace. The end result is that all these different theories of scientific materialism have really established a strong hold in present day western leaders of thought.

Initially God was framed out of the realities of astronomy and then in the time of Charles Lyell the reality was so encased that God was removed from geology. Then came Charles Darwin and God was edged out of biology. The final stroke came when the concept of God was removed from human psychology.

What started as an objective and innocuous process of study of nature over time took a somewhat sinister dimension in the first part of the twentieth century. It culminated in exclusion of God from human psychology and thinking. According to the Islamic teachings, man is in constant need of succour from God All Mighty. The concept of Allah is engraved in our psychology and in our blue print. It is mentioned in Surah A'raf, "When Thy Lord brought forth offspring from the loins of sons of Adam, He made them witness against their own selves by asking them: Am I not your Lord? And they said: Indeed we do bear witness to that." (Al Quran 7:173). Mankind cannot find inner peace but in Him. The Holy Quran says, "It is in remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort." (Al Quran 13:29)

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and his colleagues defined man as a purely "Psychological man" driven by his past experiences and memories as opposed to "Religious man." Man's mental state was to be defined in terms of id, ego and superego. His consciousness was to be defined as the 'conscious' and the 'subconscious'. The strict definition of 'subconscious' as promulgated by Freud's disciples was based on past experiences and memories alone. It excluded and framed the concept of 'Revelation' and 'God' out of the picture. These became taboo subjects not to be discussed in scientific forums. Regarding revelation and experiences of the mystics he said that these could be reduced to a 'regression to primary narcissism.'

### CARL JUNG

According to Encyclopedia Britannica:



Carl Jung—a Swiss Psychologist

"As a boy Jung had remarkably striking dreams and powerful fantasies that had developed with unusual intensity. After his break with Freud, he deliberately allowed this aspect of himself to function again and gave the irrational side of his nature free expression. At the same time, he studied it scientifically by keeping detailed notes of his strange experiences. He later developed the theory that these experiences came from an area of the mind that he called the collective unconscious, which he held was shared by everyone. This much-contested conception was combined with a theory of archetypes that Jung held as fundamental to the study of the psychology of religion. In Jung's terms, archetypes are instinctive patterns, have a universal character, and are expressed in behavior and images.

... Jung devoted the rest of his life to developing his ideas, especially those on the relation between psychology and religion. In his view, obscure and often neglected texts of writers in the past shed unexpected light not only on Jung's own dreams and fantasies but also on those of his patients; he thought it necessary for the successful practice of their art that psychotherapists become familiar with writings of the old masters." "Carl Jung." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2008. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 20 Nov. 2008 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/308188/Carl-Jung>>.

His advice has been largely ignored in the last century to the detriment of humanity. He wanted to take a more holistic view of human personality. For example he said, "In therapy the problem is that it is less a question of treatment than of developing always the whole person, the patient's own latent creative possibilities never the symptom alone."

### 'UNCONSCIOUS CONFLICTS' OF FREUD

On most days Freud could have a pretty good debate with himself and this is without getting into his views about sexuality. It is important to understand these issues to fully appreciate where the fields of psychology and psychiatry stand today. There is a popular saying, "There are no atheists in foxholes." Dr Armand M Nicholi Jr writes, "Some of my students dogmatically deny the existence of God — but at the same time

acknowledge that whenever their plane hits turbulence, they find themselves praying. Many facets of Freud's life likewise appear to be in contradiction to his atheism." Freud, who very eloquently described that 'conflict' leads to neurosis. He was perfectly right in stating the limitations that 'unconscious conflicts' create for humans. So, what are we to make of this conflict in Freud's life and writings?

To review the basic conflicts in Freud's writings about religion please review an article, *Freudian Conflicts and Slips*:

[http://www.alislam.org/library/articles/Freudian\\_conflicts\\_and\\_slips-20081230MN.pdf](http://www.alislam.org/library/articles/Freudian_conflicts_and_slips-20081230MN.pdf)

## FRUITS OF EXTENDING SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM TO PSYCHOLOGY

**One billion people world wide are suffering from anxiety and depression. — BBC survey**

Sigmund Freud in his psychoanalytic theory of the human personality, proposed three agencies, namely 'superego,' 'id' and 'ego.' 'Id' can be considered equivalent to what is described in the *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* as 'the Self that Incites to Evil.' Superego can be considered to be equivalent to 'conscience' or 'the Reproving Self.' As Sigmund Freud's theory is completely secular it does not provide any term equivalent to 'Religious Man' or 'the Soul at Rest' in the *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*.

Present day field of psychology does not provide any adequate explanation for human conscience. What ever incomplete explanations it offers by removing God from the picture ensures that people consider conscience as only an illusion arising from childhood experiences, a barrier in the wish fulfilment and an agency to be ignored. The natural consequence of this is that it does not recognize universal Moral Code in humans and contributes to the lawlessness of the contemporary society.

Psychology, by ignoring 'the Soul at Rest' denies the fact that humans are in constant need of consolation. By taking away consolation from

the masses, it leads to the self fulfilling prophecy of a billion people in the world suffering from anxiety and depression. The Holy Quran has so profoundly stated this issue in one line:

**It is in remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort.** (Al Quran 13:29)

Peace of mind cannot be achieved without reference to the infinite Providence of God. In line with the quote of Carl Jung about treatment of neurosis the concept of peace of mind needs to be transcendentalized and always tackled in reference to God. These issues are examined in greater detail in the following links. To review an article, *Al Salam: the source of peace*, find the USA Gazette for February 2007, at the following link:

<http://www.ahmadiyyagazette.us/Source/GazetteFeb07.pdf>

The review the June 2008 eGazette about Human Vulnerability with several additional links, go to:

<http://www.alislam.org/egazette/>

According to Freud the worldly and the physical pleasures are fleeting, making unhappiness inevitable in their exclusive pursuit. This leaves mankind no choice but to realize the profound teaching of the Holy Quran that man has to find everlasting satisfaction in his relationship to the Absolute, the Infinite and the Eternal and Ever Lasting God:

**O soul at rest, return to thy Lord, thou well pleased with Him and He well pleased with thee. So enter among my chosen servants and enter my Garden.'** (Al Quran 89:28-31)

## FRIDAY SERMONS

The Friday sermons of Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>aba</sup>, Khalifatul Masih V of 11-May-2007, 18-May-2007, 25-May-2007 and 01-Jun-2007 were on the Divine attribute of As Salam (The Source of Peace). Go to the following link to listen in Urdu or to read English summary:

<http://www.alislam.org/archives/y?y=2007>

## EPILOGUE

So, are we to believe in “Psychological man” of Freud or the “Religious man” of Carl Jung?

The short answer is both. We need to judiciously change our “Psychological man” into “Religious man.” We need to analyze our past experiences to guide us onto the bridge to the future. **For the Christians the basic conflict to analyze is, “What is there in their past experience?” that keeps them moving between the two choices of Christianity and atheism** and the majority of them never truly evaluate the religion of the future namely Islam! The atheists need to explore, as to why, whenever their plane hits turbulence, they find themselves praying? For the non-Ahmadi Muslims the challenge is what keeps them from developing a rational view of religion and accepting the institution of revelation which after all is the life blood of religion. For Ahmadi Muslims the conflict is to find the connection to their vulnerabilities and their strengths in their past experiences and use them as an anchor to travel fast towards the bridge of their future spiritual development.

Psychoanalysis can help us navigate through our conflicts or subconscious vulnerabilities but it has its limitations. Freud noticed that increased knowledge of psychoanalysis generally did not make them more moral than other professional groups. “That psychoanalysis has not made the analysts themselves better, nobler, or of stronger character remains a disappointment for me,” Freud confessed in one of his letters to Putnam. “Perhaps I was wrong to expect it.” It is the belief in One God and ‘universal brotherhood’ of mankind and actions in line with these beliefs that polishes human character, morality and spirituality as suggested by the Messiah of this age.

The one billion suffering from different neurosis are a testimony to the vision of Carl Jung that man is a spiritual being and not meant to be a robot. Man is in constant need of spiritual nourishment. That is where

the book the *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* comes to our rescue. Criticism of Freud’s rhetoric on spirituality is not to diminish his scientific contributions to the field of psychology especially the understanding of the subconscious mind.

Atheism is in conflict with itself. If man is a production of an accident and human life has no meaning and purpose what is the logic or rationality in the arguments that the atheists propose to put forward? Man’s life is not without purpose!

**Did you imagine that Allah had created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us?**

(Al Quran 23:116)

In the United States more than a quarter million people every year find life worthless and meaningless and attempt to end it, and about 30,000 succeed. Christianity and atheism fail to soothe them. We owe it to them that there be a third choice, in the Christian world, a new and fresh alternative of Islam as Ahmadi Muslims understand it!

## KHILAFAT DVD DOCUMENTARIES

We now have the [MTA](#) documentaries available for sale at [Al Islam Store](#) and can be ordered from anywhere in the world. These include all six DVDs about The Promised Messiah and five Khulafa-e-Ahmadiyyat; Documentaries are Islam Ahmadiyyat—The Revival of Faith and The Life of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I to V.

The documentaries have rare video footage and historic photos along with the commentary and interviews on historical events of Islamic Ahmadiyya history in DVD quality. A must have for *tabligh*, new comers, young and old to learn about the life, character and achievements of The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and five successors in the last 120 years.

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