
THE
REVIEW
OF RELIGIONS

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**PAN AFRICAN
ADDRESS**

by **HEAD of the AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY**

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The Promised Messiah

AND IMAM MAHDI AND FOUNDER OF
THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS



The Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw) prophesied that the Promised Messiah^(as) would be raised near a white minaret, east of Damascus. This prophecy was fulfilled with the advent of the Promised Messiah^(as) from Qadian, India, a city directly east of Damascus.



Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi was born to a noble family in Qadian, India. From an early age he had a keen interest in religion and developed a love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw). He was also known for his honesty, friendliness and resolve. Over time his knowledge and understanding of religion and its application to society deepened. Being a Muslim it was his firm belief that all religions were true at their source but with the passage of time had drifted away from their original teachings; he upheld the dignity of religion and demonstrated its relevance to everyone.

His earnest defence of religion was ultimately blessed when he started to receive direct revelation from Allah – a blessing that he continued for the rest of his life.

His mission was to revitalise the truth that all religions held within them and to revive the teachings of Islam. It was through this that he would bring mankind together and establish everlasting peace.

In 1889, under Divine Guidance, Hadhrat Ahmad^(as) founded the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community – a community that has since grown in its stature and strength and has remained active in conveying the message of Islam to the ends of the earth.

Hadhrat Ahmad^(as) had established himself as a respected

writer and had written over 80 books. His writings have been translated into more than 60 languages and continue to inspire readers to this day. One of his greatest scholarly works was *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, prepared as a paper and read out at the Conference of Great Religions in 1896.

He also wrote a fascinating treatise in 1899 entitled *Jesus in India*, a book that uncovered remarkable evidence of Jesus^(as)'s journey to India. In 1902 the Promised Messiah^(as) initiated *The Review of Religions* which has covered a vast array of topics on religion, philosophy and contemporary issues of the day. It is the longest running English magazine in defence of Islam and the values it teaches.

From 1889 until the time of his demise in 1908 tens of thousands of people accepted him. This blessing has continued and will continue through his Khalifas (successors).

Currently under the fifth successor, we are seeing that the tide of acceptance is worldwide and that the message of Prophet Ahmad^(as) has really reached the ends of the earth.

Honest Government



O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be *always* just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is Aware of what you do.

ISLAM, THE HOLY QUR'AN, CH.5:V.9



Do not ask for the position of authority, for if you are granted this position as a result of your asking for it, you will be left to discharge it yourself; but if you are given it without asking you will be helped [by God].

ISLAM, THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD^(SAW), HADITH OF SAHIH MUSLIM



O ye who are rich, who are kings, who are millionaires! Among you there are few who fear God and remain truthful and steadfast in all his ways. Most are such who attach their hearts to the riches of this world, spending all their lives in this preoccupation, without giving any thought to death.

ISLAM AHMADIYYAT, THE PROMISED MESSIAH AND MAHDI^(AS), KISHTI-E-NUH, P27



God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, He dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth upon a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY, 2 SAMUEL 23:3-4



Neither for the sake of oneself nor for the sake of another, not desiring son, wealth, or kingdom, should a person seek his own success by unjust means. Then only is a man indeed virtuous, wise, and righteous.

BUDDHISM, DHAMMAPADA, 84



Concerned alone with the upholding of the world, You should act. Whatever the best man does, others do that also. The world follows the standard he sets for himself

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Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Sends Important Message to Pope Benedict XVI



The letter from Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^(aba), Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community was delivered personally by the President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Kababir, Muhammad Sharif Odeh, who met the Pope as part of an official delegation from Israel consisting of renowned religious scholars of various faiths. A copy of the Holy Qur'an with translation was also gifted to the Pope.



To His Holiness Pope Benedict the XVI,

It is my prayer, that may Allah the Almighty bestow His Grace and Blessings upon you.

As Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I convey to His Holiness the Pope the message of the Holy Qur'an: *Say, 'O people of the book! Come to a word equal between us and you – that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partner with Him, and that some of us take not others for lords beside Allah.'*

Islam, nowadays, is under the glare of the world, and is frequently targeted with vile allegations. However, those raising these allegations do so without studying any of Islam's real teachings. Unfortunately, certain Muslims organisations due only to their vested interests have portrayed

Islam in a totally wrong light. As a result, distrust has increased in the hearts of the people of Western and non-Muslim countries towards Muslims, to the extent that even otherwise extremely well-educated people make baseless allegations against the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(pbuh).

The purpose of every religion has been to bring man closer to God and establish human values. Never has the founder of any religion taught that his followers should usurp the rights of others or should act cruelly. Thus, the actions of a minority of misguided Muslims should not be used as a pretext to attack Islam and its Holy Founder^(pbuh). Islam teaches us to respect the Prophets of all religions and this is why it is essential for a Muslim to believe in all of the Prophets who are mentioned in the Holy Bible or in the Holy Qur'an, until and including Jesus Christ^(pbuh). We are the humble servants of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(pbuh) and so we are deeply grieved and saddened by the attacks on our Holy Prophet^(pbuh); but we respond by continuing to present his noble qualities to the world and to disclose even more of the beautiful teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

If a person does not follow a particular

teaching properly whilst claiming to subscribe to it, then it is he who is in error, not the teaching. The meaning of the word 'Islam' itself means peace, love and security. *There should be no compulsion in matters of faith* is a clear injunction of the Qur'an. From cover to cover, the Holy Qur'an teaches love, affection, peace, reconciliation and the spirit of sacrifice. The Holy Qur'an states repeatedly that one who does not adopt righteousness is far removed from Allah, and therefore, is far removed from the teachings of Islam. Hence, if anybody portrays Islam as an extreme and violent religion filled with teachings of bloodshed, then such a portrayal has no link with the real Islam.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community practises only the true Islam and works purely to please God Almighty. If any Church or other place of worship stands in need of protection, they will find us standing shoulder to shoulder with them. If any message resonates from our mosques it will only be that of Allah is Great and that we bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Him and Muhammad^(pbuh) is the Messenger of Allah.

A factor playing a major role in destroying the peace of the world is that some people

perceive that as they are intelligent, well-educated and liberated, they are free to ridicule and mock founders of religions. To maintain peace in society it is necessary for one to eliminate all sentiments of hostility from one's heart and to increase one's levels of tolerance. There is a need to stand in defence of the respect and reverence of each other's Prophet. The world is passing through restlessness and unease and this requires that by creating an atmosphere of love and affection, we remove this anxiety and fear, that we convey a message of love and peace to those around; that we learn to live with ever greater harmony and in a way better than before; and that we recognise the values of humanity.

Today, small-scale wars are erupting in the world, while in other places, the superpowers are claiming to try and bring about peace. It is no longer a secret that on the surface we are told one thing, but behind the scenes their real priorities and policies are secretly being fulfilled. Can peace in the world be established in such circumstances is the question. It is with regret that if we now observe the current circumstances of the world closely, we find that the foundation for another world war has already been laid. If after the Second World War a path of

equity leading to justice was followed, we would not witness the current state of the world, whereby it has again become engulfed in the flames of war. As a consequence of so many countries having nuclear weapons, grudges and enmities are increasing and the world sits on the precipice of destruction. If these weapons of mass destruction explode, many future generations will never forgive us for having inflicted permanent disabilities upon them. There is still time for the world to pay attention to the rights of the Creator and of His Creatures.

I believe that now, rather than focusing on the *progress* of the world, it is more important, indeed it is essential, that we urgently increase our efforts to *save* the world from this destruction. There is an urgent need for mankind to recognise its Creator as this is the only guarantor for the survival of humanity; otherwise, the world is rapidly moving towards self-destruction. If today man really wants to be successful in establishing peace, then instead of finding fault with others, he should try to control the Satan within. By removing his own evils, a person should present a wonderful example of justice. I frequently remind the world that these excessive enmities towards others are completely usurping human values

and so are leading the world towards obliteration.

As you have an influential voice in the world, I urge you to also inform the wider world that by placing obstacles in the way of the natural balance established by God, they are moving rapidly towards annihilation. This message needs to be conveyed further and wider than ever before and with much greater prominence.

All the religions of the world are in need of religious harmony and all the people of the world need a spirit of love, affection and brotherhood to be created. It is my prayer that we all understand our responsibilities and play our role in establishing peace and love, and for the recognition of our Creator in the world. We ourselves have prayer, and we constantly beseech Allah that may this destruction of the world be avoided. I pray that we are saved from the destruction that awaits us.

Yours sincerely,

Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Khalifatul Masih V

Head of the Worldwide

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



Should Britain Bring Back Christian Values?

SARAH WASEEM, UK

The United Kingdom has its roots deeply embedded within the Christian tradition. The Queen is the Head of the Church of England, a title dating back to King Henry VIII's struggle to separate the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. Whilst King Henry had personal reasons for wanting this separation from Rome (he wanted to divorce his wife Catherine in order to marry Anne Boleyn) he was also concerned about the power of the Catholic Church over Britain. The Act of Supremacy effectively declared the UK as a sovereign state with the King as Head of both the country and the Church giving the monarch the power to redress, reform, or amend all errors, which would previously have been dealt with by another spiritual authority. In a speech in December 2011 marking the 400th anniversary of the King James

Bible, UK Prime Minister David Cameron spoke of the Christian values which he said had shaped the British way of life, arguing that they should be more prevalent in British life and politics:

"We get the irrepressible foundation for equality and human rights... a foundation that has seen the Bible at the forefront of the emergence of democracy, the abolition of slavery... and the emancipation of women – even if not every church has always got the point!"

Responsibility, hard work, charity, compassion, humility, self-sacrifice, love... pride in working for the common good and honouring the social obligations we have to one another, to our families and our communities... these are the values we treasure. Yes, they are Christian values."

Indeed, these are praiseworthy values

*UK Prime Minister
David Cameron spoke
of the Christian values
which he said had shaped
the British way of life.*

that serve to create the largely cohesive and coherent society that the UK is. Most commendably of all, while the Monarch is the Head of the Church of England, there is complete freedom of worship, for all. However, Prime Minister Cameron's point that the Bible has been at the forefront of the establishment of values is open to contention. For instance British women only obtained the right to vote in 1928. University education was not possible for them until the mid nineteenth century and then only at very few places. It is hard therefore to see what role the Bible played in bringing about the emancipation of British women. In contrast Islam guaranteed women the right to education and inheritance nearly fifteen hundred years ago. Britain's role in international affairs has also, at times, been at odds with certain Biblical injunctions. Operation 'Desert Storm'

does seem to fly in the face of Jesus' teaching 'If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.' Could this be an instance of political expediency overriding Biblical values! Prime Minister Cameron went on to say: *"I have never really understood the argument some people make about the Church not getting involved in politics. To me, Christianity, faith, religion, the Church and the Bible are all inherently involved in politics because so many political questions are moral questions."*

Religion can certainly provide a moral compass to inform policy makers. Because of the Islamic injunction to care for the less needy, Hadhrat Umar^(ra), the Second Khalifa or Successor to the Prophet Muhammad^(saw), instituted a system of child welfare to support mothers with newborn babies. Much of

Should religious leaders involve themselves in politics?

the social reform programmes carried out in the Britain by the Quaker movement comes from their interpretations of Biblical teachings.

But should religious leaders involve themselves in politics? We have seen in many Muslims countries the danger of allowing religious leaders to determine political agendas such as in Pakistan, Indonesia and Bangladesh. The influence of the ‘mullah’ has actually led to an eradication of basic human rights through the introduction of legislation such as blasphemy laws which are not really based on true Islamic Law at all. By the same token, when politicians have involved themselves in religious affairs; that too has led to the suppression of human rights. In the former Soviet Union, it was not possible for believers to practice their faith openly. In Europe and

more latterly Canada, we are witnessing the erosion of the rights of Muslim women through the introduction of legislation banning *burqas*.

Islam has always advocated the separation of religion from government. In last month’s *The Review of Religions*, this issue was discussed succinctly (‘Islam, Democracy and Khilafat: A Response to the Economist’, December 2011). Briefly, the basic requirement for any government is to operate on the principle of absolute justice. However religion plays no part in the administration of justice which must be done regardless of faith. Islam guarantees religious freedom. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^(aba), Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim community has stressed:

“Allah has said that a requirement for a

*Islam has always advocated
the separation of religion
from government.*

just government is that it should separate religious matters from matters of State, and every citizen should be afforded his due rights. This principle is absolute and without exception, to the extent that you must act justly even with those people who have displayed hatred towards you, and who due to this opposition have persecuted you repeatedly in every possible way.”

Our Prime Minister might find it informative to reflect on Islamic injunctions concerning the relationship between politics and religion.

Sarah Waseem has a Doctorate in Philosophy and has been on the Editorial Board of *The Review of Religions* for over 15 years.

ENDNOTES

1. Address on 25th June 2011, ‘Is Islam for Germany?’ (See July 2011 Edition of *The Review of Religions*)

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The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam

PART 13



Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as),
the Promised Messiah and Mahdi

TRANSLATED FROM URDU BY
SIR MUHAMMAD ZAFRULLA KHAN

Second Insight

The second insight concerning the life after death, which the Holy Qur'an has set forth is that: in the hereafter, all the spiritual conditions of this world will be manifested physically, both in the intermediate state and in the resurrection. In this context one verse is that he who continues blind in this life will be blind in the hereafter and even more astray.¹ This means that the spiritual blindness of this life will be manifested and felt physically in the hereafter. In another verse it is said that: seize this hellish one and put a collar round his neck and burn him in hell and bind him in a chain the length of which is seventy cubits.² These verses show that the spiritual torment of this world will be manifested physically in the hereafter. For instance, the collar of worldly ambition which had bent his head towards the earth will become physically perceptible in the life after death. Similarly the chain of worldly preoccupations will become visible round his feet, and the fire of worldly desires will appear in full blaze.

A vicious person conceals a whole hell of worldly greed and desires inside himself, and perceives the burning sensation of this hell at the time of his failures and frustrations. So when he is cast away from

his mortal desires and becomes subject to eternal despair, God Almighty will cause his sorrow to be manifested physically in the shape of fire; as is said: a barrier will be placed between them and that which they yearn after, and that will be the root of their torment.³ The chain of seventy cubits is an indication that a wicked one often attains the age of seventy years and sometimes, leaving aside his years of childhood and extreme old age, he is granted a period of seventy years which he could employ for work wisely and

These verses show that the spiritual torment of this world will be manifested physically in the hereafter.

with good sense. But an unfortunate one spends these seventy years caught in the coil of worldly preoccupations and does not desire to be free of them. Thus God Almighty affirms in this verse that the seventy years that such a one spends in worldly pursuits will be manifested as a chain of seventy cubits in the hereafter, one cubit for each year. It must be kept

The three branches mentioned here represent bestiality, savageness and wild imagination.

in mind in this connection that God Almighty does not afflict any creature of His with a misfortune from Himself. He merely confronts a person with his own evil deeds. At another place He has said: O the wicked! The errant proceed towards three-pronged shadow, which has three branches they can neither provide shelter nor can they protect from scorching heat.⁴ The three branches mentioned here represent bestiality, savageness and wild imagination. In the case of those who do not regulate these faculties and thus convert them into moral qualities, they will manifest themselves in the hereafter as three branches of a tree, which are bare of leaves and can afford no shade or protection against fire, so that such people would be consumed by the fire. As a contrast, God Almighty has said concerning the dwellers of heaven: on that day you will see that the light of the believers which remain hidden in

the world will manifest itself by, running before them and on their right hands.⁵ In another verse it is said: on that day some faces will be bright and others will be dark.⁶

A third verse sets out: the Garden promised to the righteous is as if it has rivers of water that corrupts not; and rivers of milk of which the taste changes not; and rivers of wine, which do not inebriate, a delight for those who drink; and rivers of pure honey, which has no impurity.⁷ It is clearly stated here that heaven should be understood as metaphorically comprising inexhaustible streams of these bounties. This means that the water of life which a person of spiritual understanding drinks in this life will be manifested visibly in the hereafter. The spiritual milk by which he is sustained, like a suckling in this life, will become physically visible in heaven. The wine of God's love which inebriated him all the time spiritually in this life, will be manifested in the shape of rivers in heaven. The honey of the sweetness of faith which a person possessing spiritual understanding swallowed spiritually in this world, will be manifested and felt physically in heaven. Every dweller of heaven will proclaim his spiritual condition openly through his gardens

and rivers. God will unveil Himself on that day for the dwellers of heaven. In short, spiritual conditions will not remain hidden in the hereafter but will be physically visible and perceptible.

Third Insight

The third insight concerning the hereafter is that there will be unlimited progress therein, as God Almighty has said: the light of the believers will run before them and on their right hands. They will supplicate: “Lord, perfect our light for us and cover us with Thy grace, surely Thou hast power over all things.”⁸ Their supplication that their light may be perfected is an indication of limitless progress. It means that when they have arrived at one stage of illumination, they will perceive a higher stage ahead of them and viewing it they will consider the stage in which they are as being inferior and will supplicate for the attainment of the higher stage, and when they arrive at that stage they will perceive a still higher third stage ahead of them and they will supplicate for its achievement. Thus their yearning for constant progress is indicated by the expression: Do Thou perfect our light. In short, this chain of progress will continue indefinitely. There will be no falling away, nor will they be

expelled from heaven, but will daily advance further forward.

It may be asked that as they will have entered heaven and all their sins would have been forgiven then what further need would there be for supplicating for forgiveness? The answer is that the true meaning of *maghfirat* (seeking forgiveness), is to suppress and cover up an imperfect or defective condition. Thus the dwellers of heaven will seek the attainment of perfection and their complete absorption in light. Observing a higher condition they will consider their condition defective and would desire its suppression, and then observing a still higher condition they would desire that their lower condition should be covered up and thus they will continuously seek unlimited *maghfirat*. This seeking of *maghfirat*, or *istighfar*, is sometimes made the basis of adverse criticism of the Holy Prophet^(saw). I trust that now it will have become clear that the desire for *maghfirat* is a matter of pride for man. He who is born of woman and does not make *istighfar* his habit, is a worm and not man, he is blind and not seeing, he is unclean and not pure.

In short, according to the Holy Qur’an, hell and heaven are both reflections of

According to the Holy Qur'an, hell and heaven are both reflections of a man's life, and are not something new that comes from outside.

a man's life, and are not something new that comes from outside. It is true that in the hereafter they will be manifested physically, but they will be reflections of the spiritual conditions of man in this life. We do not conceive of heaven as containing material trees, nor of hell as full of brimstone and sulphur. According to Islamic teachings heaven and hell are the reflections of the actions that a person carries out in this world.

ENDNOTES

1. *But whoso is blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter, and even more astray from the way.* (Ch.17:V.73)
2. *'Seize him and fetter him, 'Then cast him into Hell. 'Then put him into a chain the length of which is seventy cubits.* (Ch.69:Vs.31-33)
3. *And a barrier will be placed between them and that which they long for...* (Ch.34:V.55)
4. *Aye, move on towards a shadow which has three sections. Neither affording shade, nor protecting from the flame.* (Ch.77:Vs.31-32)
5. *And think of the day when you will see the believing men and the believing women, their light running before them and on their right hands...* (Ch.57:V.13)
6. *On the day when some faces shall be white, and some faces shall be black...* (Ch.3:107)
7. *A description of the Garden promised to the righteous: therein are rivers of water which corrupts not; and rivers of milk of which the taste changes not; and rivers of wine, a delight to those who drink, and rivers of clarified honey...* (Ch.47:V.16)
8. *...and those who have believed with him. Their light will run before them and on their right hands. They will say, 'Our Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us; surely Thou hast power over all things.'* (Ch.66:V.9)

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The Life and Character of the Seal of the Prophets^(saw)



PART I4

Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad^(ra)

CHAPTER VII – *Days of Struggle*



Continued serialisation of the English rendering of Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad^(ra)'s outstanding biography, *Seerat Khatamun Nabiiyyin*, on the life and character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw). *Seerat Khatamun Nabiiyyin* has been translated into English for the first time, and is being serialised in *The Review of Religions*. This section analyses the miracle of the splitting of the moon, did the moon literally break apart?

TRANSLATED FROM THE URDU
BY AYYAZ MAHMOOD KHAN

Miracle of the *Shaqgul-Qamar* (Splitting of the Moon)

The Holy Prophet^(saw) was perhaps still in the Valley of Abu Talib when the renowned miracle of the *Shaqgul-Qamar* took place. A few among the infidels sought a miracle of the Holy Prophet^(saw) so he showed them the miracle of the moon breaking into two pieces. The Holy Qur'an makes mention of this occurrence in the following words:

*The Hour has drawn nigh, and the moon is rent asunder. And if they see a Sign, they turn away and say, 'A passing feat of magic and such has been done before.' They denied our messengers and followed their own greed and lust, but for everything is an appointed time. We have given them such news as provides them a warning and means of awareness.*¹

Mention of this miracle is found in the following words in Hadith:

'The infidels of Makkah sought a sign from the Holy Prophet^(saw), upon which he showed them the moon in two pieces. Thus, they saw one piece of the moon to one side of Mount Hira, and the other piece to the other side.'²

A few among the infidels sought a miracle of the Holy Prophet^(saw) so he showed them the miracle of the moon breaking into two pieces.

In another narration related by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud^(ra), the following words are recorded:

'We were at Mina with the Holy Prophet^(saw) when the moon was rent asunder, upon which the Holy Prophet^(saw)



Earth as viewed from the moon during the Apollo 8 mission. Did the moon really split into two, or was it made to appear to have split? (Photo: NASA)

said, 'Look and bear witness.' One piece of the moon was towards the top of the mountain and the other towards the bottom.²³

In addition to this, there are many other narrations recorded in Hadith and books of *Sirat* regarding the *Shaqgul-Qamar*, in which other details have also been recorded. However, the more authentic narrations are those which have been mentioned above. Moreover, since our purpose is not to take up this issue here in the form of a debate, the mere allusion of the above mentioned narrations will

suffice. However, it is necessary to present a brief explanatory note regarding this issue, in order to present the actual truth behind this miracle. Did the moon in fact split into two pieces or were the eyes of the spectators supernaturally overpowered such as the moon appeared to them split in two? Moreover, what was the purpose behind this miracle?

Hence, on this subject, it should be known that before the power of God, nothing is impossible. One who believes that this entire universe came into being by the Hand of God cannot show reluctance in believing, even for a moment, that if God Wills, He can annihilate the whole of it by a single command. However, as far as this occurrence is concerned, the established belief is that the moon did not actually split into two pieces; rather, it appeared to spectators as if it had been rent asunder, by the power of God. This is not surprising, because if a trained individual can project a visible object in an unreal state, through mental power i.e., by hypnotism, then before the power of God and the spiritual power of His messenger, it is not impossible that at that time, the eyes of the spectators were overpowered by a supernatural power, and they saw the moon split into two pieces. In any case, to us, the definite

In 1928, an occurrence took place in South America in the country of Le Plata, where a star was seen splitting into two pieces. The name of this star was the Nova Pictoris.

reality is that the moon did not actually break into two, but only appeared to spectators as breaking into two pieces.

If one ponders closely, the words of Hadith also allude to this actuality, that this was the Divine influence of God, which was impressed upon the sight of spectators. Most research scholars have accepted this explanation as true. However, if hypothetically, we accept this miracle in its physical sense, even then there is no room for objection. The powers of God are infinite, and human sights cannot comprehend even its simplest dimensions. Just recently in 1928, an occurrence took place in South America in the country of Le Plata, where a star was seen splitting into two pieces. The name of this star was the Nova Pictoris, and the largest observatory in southern Africa, situated in Johannesburg, also



Lighthouse of La Plata in Pasajes, South America.
Photo: Juan Ignacio Polo/Dreamstime.com

confirms this occurrence. Scientists assert the possibility that in the past perhaps other heavenly bodies have also broken into two.⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising if in the era of the Holy Prophet^(saw), by the supernatural power of God, a piece of the moon broke off, or if the moon was broken into two pieces and then joined together. No scientist can object to this. However, the truth of the matter is that which has been mentioned above.

Now the second question remains: what was the purpose of this miracle? In actuality, this is the real and significant question, because only it can reveal the reality and grandeur of this miracle. As such, in this regard, it should be

comprehended that according to *'Ilm-e-Ta'bir-e-Ru'ya*,⁵ the moon is symbolic of sovereignty and reign, whether it be just and equitable or cruel and despotic.⁶ Numerous examples of this interpretation can be found in history. Thus, we shall see ahead that when Safiyyah^(ra), the daughter of a Jewish Cheiftain of Khaibar, Huyaiyy bin Akhtab, saw a dream that the moon had fallen in to her lap, her father also interpreted that one day Safiyyah^(ra) will come into the matrimonial tie of an Arab ruler. Therefore, it so happened that after the victory of Khaibar, Safiyyah^(ra) came into the matrimonial tie of the Holy Prophet^(saw).⁷ Similarly, when Hadhrat 'A'ishah^(ra) saw in a dream that three moons had fallen into her chamber, the course of events substantiated this dream, by the same interpretation, the actual purport of which was that the Holy Prophet^(saw), Hadhrat Abu Bakr^(ra) and Hadhrat 'Umar^(ra) were to be buried there.⁸

In this case, the purpose of showing the miracle of the moon being rent asunder to the infidels of Makkah was an insinuation that now their rule was about to end and the rule of Islam would be established in its place. In other words, when the infidels of the Quraish demanded a sign from the Holy Prophet^(saw), God

the Almighty showed them the moon rent asunder, so as to inform them that you ask for a sign, while the hour of your death draws near. Therefore, with reference to this miracle, where the Holy Qur'an uses the words (i.e., the Hour draws nigh), the purpose is to hint towards this very actuality. In other words, when the infidels demanded a sign, by showing them the miracle of the *Shaqqul-Qamar*, they were informed that, with the end of your reign, the rule of Muhammad^(saw) shall now be established, which shall be evidence of the Holy Prophet^(saw) being sent from Allah. Moreover, since the Quraish understood this indication well, they powerlessly cried out, meaning, 'O Muhammad[sa]! If this actually happens, considering your current state of weakness, then this shall be great magic indeed.' In short, the true purpose behind the miracle of the *Shaqqul-Qamar* was to illustrate before the infidels of Makkah that now your rule comes to an end. It is this very elucidation which makes the *Shaqqul-Qamar* a grand miracle. Although literally breaking the moon into two pieces without purpose would prove to be a wonder in light of astronomy, it would hold no weight in the spiritual realm. For this reason, past research scholars the like of Imam Ghazali and Shah Waliullah

Muhaddith Dehlvi, have also expressed a similar ideology that this was merely a supernatural influence, under which the infidels witnessed the moon breaking into two pieces, but the moon did not actually break into two.⁹ Moreover, when the moon did not actually break into two, rather, only seemed that way to spectators, without question, there must be a deeper wisdom behind it. That very wisdom is the one we have mentioned above.¹⁰ *Allah knows best.* The miracle of the *Shaqqul-Qamar* took place approximately five years prior to the migration, in 9 Nabawi.¹¹

ENDNOTES

1. Al-Qamar (54:2-5)
2. * *Sahih Bukhari*, Kitabu Manaqibil-Ansar, Babu Inshiqaqil-Qamar, Hadith No. 3868
- * *Sahih Muslim*, Kitabu Sifatil-Qiyamati wal-Jan-nati wan-Nar, Babu Inshiqaqil-Qamar, Hadith No.7076
3. * *Sahih Bukhari*, Kitabut-Tafsir Suratul-Qamar, Babu Wanshaqqal-Qamar, Hadith No. 4864
- * *Sahih Muslim*, Kitabu Sifatil-Qiyamati wal-Jan-nati wan-Nar, Babu Inshiqaqil-Qamar, Hadith No.7072
4. Refer to Hindustan Times Delhi dated April 29, 1928
5. Science of the Interpretation of Visions (Publishers)
6. *Ta'Tirul-Anam fi Ta'biril-Manam*, p. 279, Babul-Qaf, under the word "Qamar", Beirut (1996)
7. * *Usdul-Ghabab*, Vol.6, p. 172, Babu Safiyyah bint Huyaiy bin AkhTab, Darul-Fikr, Beirut (2003)
- * *Sharhul-Allamatiz-Zarqani 'alal-Mawahibil-Ladunniyyah*, by Muhammad bin 'Abdul-Baqi Az- Zarqani, Vol.4, pp. 428-429, Babu Safiyyati Ummil-Mu'minin, Darul-Kutubil-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, First Edition (1996)
8. *Mu'atta Imam Malik, Kitabal-Jana'iz*, Babu Ma Ja'a fi Dainil-Maiyyiti, Hadith No. 546
9. *Siraton-Nabisa* (Urdu), by Shibli Nu'mani, 'Allamah Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, Vol.3, p.295, Bab Shaqqul-Qamar, published by the Hudhaifah Academy, Urdu Bazar, Lahore (2000)
10. For an elaborate discussion on this issue, refer to *Surmah-e-Chashm-e-Aryab, Rubani Khaza'in*, Vol.2, pp. 108-116, written by the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community. (Author)
11. *Tarikhul-Khamis*, by Husain bin Muhammad bin Hasan Dyar Bakri, Vol.1, p. 298, Inshiqaqul-Qamar, Muwassasatu Sha'ban, Beirut



Noah^(as) and the Flood



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The story of Noah^(as) and his Ark has intrigued people for thousands of years. Here, we explore the differing accounts of the story, possible locations for the flood and catch up on current research.

Introduction

The story of Noah^(as) is familiar to followers of the three major religions— Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The main outline is this: the prophet Noah^(as) is instructed by God to build an ark, to save him and his followers from the great flood that will punish the disbelievers. Other cultures have similar flood stories involving different characters. But questions abound. When did the flood take place? What kind of civilisation did Noah^(as) live in? Can modern-day archaeological research shed any light on this incident?

While we have little information for the period before the flood, there is much archaeological evidence available from the period after the flood. We have some idea of when the flood may have occurred. The most recent Ice Age is thought to have ended around 10,000 BCE. As the ice melted, there would have been a gradual rise in sea levels. Moreover, academic research into the possibility of such a great deluge suggests that the ice would have taken a long time to fully melt and this would not necessarily have been a gradual process, so that surges



Photo: Storm clouds. The two most prominent accounts of the great flood are found in the Qur'an and the Bible; however their respective accounts differ.

of melting ice might have resulted in climatic disasters (Wilson, p.8).

Due to the scarcity of direct historical evidence from that time, while we know the core of the story, it is harder to piece together historical details. It is worth exploring the differing accounts, the environment in which Noah^(as) lived and the status of current research.

Various Accounts of the Flood

While there are various accounts of the flood, the two most prominent are those found in the Bible and the Holy Qur'an. These shall be examined in detail, whilst other accounts will also be studied—most of which show a remarkable similarity to these two accounts.

Biblical Account

The Biblical account of the flood is contained in the first book of the Torah, Genesis 6:9 – 9:29. According to the Bible, at Noah's^(as) birth, his father Lamech said: 'Out of the ground that



The Subsiding of the Waters of the Deluge.
An oil painting from 1829 by Thomas Cole.
(Photo: Smithsonian American Art Museum)

the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands.’ (Genesis 5:29)

God saw that mankind had become corrupt and violent and had moved away from the worship of God. Therefore, God planned to punish mankind: ‘For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on

the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life.’ (Genesis 6:17)

God then advised Noah^(as) to build an ark, gave him instructions on how to build it and explained that he should take his family, food, provisions and seven pairs of every kind of living species to preserve them.

Once Noah^(as) had done this, the great

While there are various accounts of the flood, the two most prominent are those found in the Bible and the Holy Qur'an.

flood came: ‘... on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.’ (Genesis 7:11-12)

And the story continues:

‘The flood continued forty days on the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered.’ (Genesis 7:17)

The deluge, after swelling for 150 days, eliminated all life on Earth. Eventually God sent a wind and the waters receded, allowing the ark to reach land again: ‘The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.’ (Genesis 8:4)

Finally, in order to confirm that the waters had receded and that he could leave the Ark, Noah^(as) sent out a raven and then a dove, but the dove returned as it had nowhere to land. A few days later, Noah^(as) sent the dove again and this time it returned with an olive leaf. God advised Noah^(as) to repopulate the planet, so he built an altar and made sacrificial offerings to God. Then God made a covenant with Noah^(as) to protect him and his followers from future global floods.

Qur’anic Account

The Qur’anic account of Noah^(as) (*Nuh* in Arabic) and the flood is described in detail in chapters 11 (*Hud*) and 71 (*Nuh*). The Qur’an starts the story with Noah^(as) warning his people to reform and to worship the One True God. Following the disdain of the local chiefs, Noah^(as) warned them of an impending punishment if they did not change their ways and again offered them a practical way to a better life. But his people rejected him.

The Qur’an refers to the warning of a grievous day as opposed to a grievous punishment, and the Arabic term used, means a day that would be remembered for generations to come as a future

warning. (Ahmad, Vol. 3, p.1068)

Noah said, "My Lord, they have disobeyed me, and followed one whose wealth and children have only added to his ruin. And they have planned a mighty plan. And they say to one another, 'Forsake not your gods under any circumstances. And forsake neither Wadd, nor Suwa, nor Yaghuth and Ya'uq and Nasr.' And they have led many astray so increase Thou not the wrongdoers but in error." (Ch.71: Vs.22-25)

After this, Noah^(as) constructed the Ark following Divine guidance, whilst the local chiefs mocked him. Then the deluge arrived: *Till, when Our command came and the fountains of the earth gushed forth. (Holy Qur'an, Ch.11:V.41)*

Thereupon We opened the gates of heaven, with water pouring down; and We caused the earth to burst forth with springs, so the two waters met for a purpose that was decreed. (Holy Qur'an, Ch.54:Vs.12-13)

And it (the Ark) moved along with them on waves like mountains. (Holy Qur'an, Ch.11: V.43)

Finally, the deluge subsided: *And the water was made to subside and the matter was ended. And the Ark came to rest on*

The Qur'an starts the story with Noah^(as) warning his people to reform and to worship the One True God.

al-Judi. And it was said, 'Cursed be the wrongdoing people. (Holy Qur'an, Ch.11, V.45)

And We left it (the Ark) as a Sign for the coming generations; but is there anyone who would receive admonition? (Holy Qur'an, Ch.54: Vs.16)

We can glean several points from the Qur'anic account. One important point here is the clarification that the deluge came both from the clouds and from the land. Water cascaded from all sources to create the great flood. The above verse describing the waters meeting seems to suggest the coming together of two great rivers or lakes. The significance of this point will become clear later on, when we discuss possible locations for the flood.

Secondly, the Qur'an refers to the resting place of the Ark as al-Judi, which means a



Durupinar Site near Mount Ararat in Agri, Turkey – some have advocated the structure as Noah^(as)'s Ark, whereas other researchers have dismissed it as merely a natural formation.

high place. Early Muslim commentators, such as Yaqut al-Hamwi, believed the mountains to be the range to the east of Mosul rather than Ararat. (Ahmad, Vol. 3, p.1079)

Third, the Qur'an implies that the deluge was a regional flood which punished the

specific tribes who ignored Noah^(as). In contrast, the Bible implies that the deluge covered the whole globe, drowning everyone. (Yahya, p.16)

Finally, the Holy Qur'an also seems to imply that in the future, archaeologists will find evidence of the Ark. Indeed, Chapter 54, Verse 16 clearly seems to indicate that the Ark has been preserved as a Sign for future generations.

Other flood accounts

There are many local flood stories from the region between Europe and Asia which record similar events in the same area at around the same time. These include:

Epic of Gilgamesh – This epic was first discovered as a series of tablets in Nineveh; Tablet XI deals with the great deluge. Gilgamesh was a king of the city of Uruk (c. 2500–2800 BCE). Gilgamesh visits the sage Ut-Napishtim, who has survived a great deluge, in order to learn the secret of eternal life, and learns of Ut-Napishtim’s tale. The god Ea threatens a great flood and orders Ut-Napishtim to build a boat of six decks to keep all of the species alive. The storm arrives with thunder and heavy rain, and the flood flattens the land. He releases a dove, then a swallow, and finally a raven, which does not return, signifying that the water has receded, and then he leaves his boat to make a sacrificial offering, just like the Biblical account.

Atrahasis Epic – Atra-Hasis (extremely wise) was a Sumerian King from before the flood in the city of Shuruppak. This account was captured on tablets and dates back to around 1630 BCE. The flood

The Qur’an refers to the resting place of the Ark as al-Judi, which means a high place.

account is very similar to the Gilgamesh epic.

Other similar accounts such as those of Xisuthros (Greek account of the last King of Sumer before the flood) and Deucalion (Greek legendary character from Arcadia who survives the flood brought on by Zeus) exist, but are variations of those cited above. Elsewhere, in Persia, the Zoroastrian account of Yim and the Hindu story of Manu in India also cover the same events though with different details. There does seem to be a core common story which is likely to have some basis in actual historical events.

The Context of Noah^(as)

Although we cannot know with certainty when the events surrounding the Ark took place, it is generally accepted by scholars that it must have happened over 5000 years ago, possibly between 5000 – 3000 BCE. At that time, there

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were several cultures established in Mesopotamia, in the same region where the flood is thought to have occurred. Moreover, these were cultures that had developed enough to have some sort of spiritual understanding (for a Divine warning to have any meaning to them), technology to live in towns and build boats, and almost certainly contact and trade with other tribes. In the general area the flood has thought to have occurred — Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), Mesopotamia (Iraq), and Persia (Iran) — there are settlements from 5000 – 3000 BCE that might correspond to ones that Noah^(as) might have had contact with. That roughly 2000-year time frame has been divided by historians into several time periods — the Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages – signifying man’s development in the use of natural resources. A rough guide to cultural developments in various regions through these ages is shown in the following table:

In the Middle East, people began to establish villages and towns from around 8000 BCE, soon after the last Ice Age. Man began working copper around 7000 BCE, farming around 6500 BCE, pottery in 6000 BCE, irrigation around 5000 BCE, bronze casting in 4000 BCE and the first megalithic (stone age) ancient temples and tombs appeared across Europe from 3500 BCE. It is in the early Bronze Age that significant evidence of spirituality begins to emerge in Egypt as well as Persia. Wheels and ploughs began to be used around 3500 BCE (Barraclough, p.16). So during this period, the human race was making gradual progress.

In the period leading up to the epoch being considered before the flood, there were emerging civilisations and towns. Some of these may have been known to Noah^(as) (towns that he might have visited and traded with, and which would shed light on his own town) and are summarised here:

Çatal Hüyük – The largest Neolithic settlement in southeast Turkey from 7500 – 5700 BCE was a major settlement of over 8000 people, and technologically very advanced. Recent archaeological

EPOCH	ANATOLIA	MESOPOTAMIA & PERSIA	ELSEWHERE
<i>Neolithic (Stone Age)</i> 8000 – 4000 BCE	Çayönü (8000 BCE) Çatal Hüyük settlement (7500 – 5700 BCE)	Tell Halaf (Syria) (6000 – 5200 BCE) - Nagar 5500 BCE Tell Ubaid (Iraq) (5500 – 4000 BCE)	Jericho Development (Palestine) 4500 BCE
<i>Chalcolithic</i> (Bronze-Stone Age) 4000 – 3100 BCE		Uruk (3900 – 3100 BCE)	
<i>Early Bronze Age</i> 3100 – 2000 BCE		Ur (2700 – 2500 BCE) Gilgamesh – King of Uruk (c. 2500 BCE) Akkadian Period (2350 – 2100 BCE) Ur III Period (2100 – 2000 BCE) Lagash Dynasty (2122 – 2102 BCE)	Egyptian Dynasty I-II (3000 – 2700 BCE) Egyptian Old Kingdom (2700 – 2200 BCE) -2590 BCE – First Pyramid built at Giza Jericho Development (Palestine) 2600 BCE Egyptian First Intermediate Dynasty (2200 – 2040 BCE)
<i>Middle Bronze Age</i> 2000 – 1550 BCE	Hittites (1700 – 1480 BCE)	Early Old Babylonian (2000 – 1800 BCE) Hurrians – 2000 BCE Old Babylonian (1800 – 1600 BCE)	Egyptian Middle Kingdom (2040 – 1640 BCE) Israel Abraham (as)

This is thought to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns on Earth, dating from 9000 BCE to the present day.

digs suggest that the people had a pagan religion rich in symbolism and shrines.

Nagar – This is a site at Tell Brak in northeast Syria, corresponding with the ancient city of Nagar, which was active from around 5500- 1500 BCE. It came to prominence as a city around the same time that Uruk was emerging in Mesopotamia, and was on a trade route from Turkey to Mesopotamia. The site is thought to have shrunk greatly after a climatic event.

Jericho – This is thought to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns on Earth, dating from 9000 BCE to the present day. Although settlements on the site came and went, there were key stages of development around 4500 BCE, 2600 BCE and 1700 BCE. So Jericho would have been a significant town throughout this period.

Ur – The great Sumerian city of Ur went

through several phases of development. The 3rd dynasty of the city was established around 2050 BCE by the king Ur-Nammu, who oversaw the building of temples, including the ziggurat of Ur, and a new code of laws. Excavations by Woolley (a British archaeologist active around 1922) in the early 20th century uncovered phases of cultures at the Ur site which were separated by vast mud deposits—it is likely that these mud deposits might have been the result of a flood. Such a flood would have been on a great scale and would probably have involved both the Euphrates and Tigris rivers which run either side of Ur.

Akkadian Empire – This was a significant development in which King Sargon defeated neighbouring tribes to create the first empire from Akkad in central Mesopotamia (c.2334 – 2279 BCE). He established Akkadian (a semitic dialect) as the official imperial language and established a common culture. While he himself was considered a just ruler, those who succeeded him gradually diminished the unity of the empire. Indeed, his grandson Naram-Sin (c.2273 BCE) styled himself ‘God of Akkad’; thereafter the Akkadian empire went into decline. (Hattstein, p.22)

Gudea of Lagash – Following the collapse of the Akkadian empire, a new dynasty was established in Ur, and at the same time, King Gudea established a dynasty in Lagash (c.2122 – 2102 BCE) as a pious ruler who established peace and built temples.

As we have already seen, the story of Noah^(as) is about a settled society of towns and cities which had moved from monotheism to the worship of many gods, and hence Noah^(as) was sent as a Warner to reform them.

But in order to have needed reformation, these towns must have moved from being righteous societies to ones which had abandoned righteousness. This transformation is more likely to have occurred in the Chalcolithic or Early Bronze Ages. So whilst some of the towns and cities mentioned previously are known to have been technologically advanced, the society that we are searching for would also have been spiritually advanced at one stage, only to regress later.

Potential Ark sites and quests

Given the interest in the Ark story across cultures and faiths, it is no surprise that there has been much active archaeological

In order to have needed reformation, these towns must have moved from being righteous societies to ones which had abandoned righteousness.

research into the location of the flood and the final resting place of the Ark. Most work has been done around sites on Turkey's borders with Iran and Armenia around the Ararat mountain range, and also a site at Durupinar.

Early Arab explorers and historians, such as Al-Masudi, have referred to the Ark story. In his account, the angel Gabriel provided Noah^(as) with the Ark containing the bones of Adam^(as), and then with eighty people on board, the Ark circumnavigated Makkah before coming to rest at the foot of Mount Judi where they founded a city called Thamanin. (Glasse, p.303)

Even travelers in the middle ages were intrigued by the flood story:



Backdrop of Mount Ararat towering over Yerevan, capital of Armenia. Much of the archaeological research into the location of the flood has been carried out around the Ararat mountain range. (Photo: Serouj Ourishian)

‘In the heart of the Armenian mountain range, the mountain’s peak is shaped like a cube, on which Noah’s ark is said to have rested, whence it is called the Mountain of Noah’s Ark.’ (Marco Polo, 1254-3124 CE)

Even in the modern-day, research is being carried out to try and discover the location of the ark:

Alborz Mountains (Iran) – In 2006, Bob Cornuke and his team from the Bible Archeology Search and Exploration Institute began to explore an area around Takht-e-Suleiman in the Alborz Mountains of Iran, southeast of Tabriz. They claimed to have discovered wooden beams 13,000 feet above sea level, which appeared to be 120 metres long. (Ravilious, 2006)

Ararat (Turkey) – For centuries, explorers including Marco Polo visited this region drawn by Ark myths. Former astronaut James Irwin led two expeditions but failed to find any evidence. On the 27th April 2010, a team of evangelical Christians from China and Turkey claimed to have uncovered remnants of the Ark, 13,000 feet above sea level, on Mount Ararat. They claimed that carbon dating of some of the material had revealed their age as 4800 years old. The documentary filmmaker, Mr Yeung Wing-Cheung from Hong Kong, said that Turkish officials were seeking UNESCO World Heritage status for the site to protect it whilst official archaeologists searched the site. These claims are as yet unsubstantiated.

Durupinar (Turkey) – In the 1980s, adventurer Ron Wyatt led expeditions to a site near Mount Tendurek and Dogubeyazit on the Turkey-Iran border, just south of Ararat. According to locals, a combination of earthquakes and heavy rains exposed this mountain formation from surrounding mud plains in May 1948. It created interest as the rock formation was shaped like the hull of a boat, but investigations concluded that it was a freak of nature.

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Ain Sifni (Iraq) – There is an account from Al-Masudi (d.956) in his book ‘*The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*’ (*Muruj Adb-dhabab Wa Ma’adin Al-jawhar*) in which he claimed that the Ark started in Kufa (modern Iraq), sailed to the Ka’aba in Makkah and then finished at Mount Judi, identified by a hill near Jazirat ibn Umar, near Mosul. The Mandaeans of southern Iraq who follow John the Baptist^(as) also believe that the Ark landed near Ain Sifni.

Black Sea (Turkey) – Ryan and Pitman, two explorers from the USA, did surveys of the sea bed of the Black Sea in 1998 and discovered that around 5600 BCE, a great deluge from the Mediterranean had broken through into the Black Sea, raising its level greatly. Subsequent surveys claimed to have found a coastline and dwellings much lower in the sea, preserved due to the composition of the water in the Black Sea. (Wilson, p.60-71)



Conclusion

There is growing interest among literalists of various persuasions to locate the Ark and to prove their own interpretation of scripture and events. To do the subject justice, we must be open to the evidence that emerges, rather than trying to craft evidence to suit one's own favourite theory.

Most of the exploration teams and their findings have been discredited, but this has not dampened the enthusiasm of explorers, nor of clever locals who have

spotted an opportunity to earn money from gullible foreign explorers.

Recent events have given us a graphic understanding of what such an event would have meant to people at the time. The 2004 Asian tsunami, which struck off the coast of Indonesia killing over 200,000, sent huge waves tens of metres high; washing people, boats, homes, and modern infrastructure away with them (echoed by the more recent tsunami in Japan). Similarly, the floods that struck Pakistan in 2010 took away the central

infrastructure of an entire country and affected 21 million people.

The great flood must have been even more intense.

Given the continuous and widespread cultures in Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia from around 2700 BCE to the present day, it seems more likely that the flood occurred between 5000 – 3000 BCE, and the consensus would suggest that the events took place in an area broadly between Turkey, Armenia, Syria, Iraq and Iran. The Qur'an (Ch.54:Vs.12-13) describes how 'the two waters met', and a sensible connotation would be that the two great rivers of Mesopotamia, the Euphrates and Tigris, overflowed to deluge all of the towns and cities on that plain. This is backed up by other accounts such as that of Gilgamesh, who is known to have ruled in Uruk around 2500 BCE, so given that his epic describes the flood in detail, the flood should be before that. Archeological digs in Mesopotamia are finding evidence in ancient cities such as Ur, Kish, Erech and Shuruppak for a great flood around 3000 BCE, seemingly confirming the geography of the flood as being between the two great rivers. (Yahya, p.25)

The Qur'an describes the flood as a punishment for specific tribes visited by Noah^(as). So while the flood would not have been global, in its region it would have been catastrophic. The fact that accounts of the great flood are found in myths across the world means that the story was transmitted globally and corrupted forms survive as mythology, but accounts of the flood on different continents do not imply that the entire globe was flooded to such an extent.

If the Ark were discovered, this would prove that the flood account is not just religious parable, but rather a historic event. Indeed, the Holy Qur'an (Ch.54:V.16) seems to indicate that the Ark will someday be found, just as the body of Pharaoh and the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the last two centuries and cast new light on those cultures and their spirituality.

Irrespective of the location or nature of the Ark, the main value of the recording of the account in religious texts is to remind mankind that if they turn away from their Creator and adopt wicked practices, they are prone to punishment through natural disasters despite their knowledge and technology, and this must be as true today as it was 5000 years

ago. Conversely, those who behave well benefit from blessings and progress. The Promised Messiah^(as) in his book *Kishti-e-Nuh* (Noah's Ark) in 1902 related the plague of the time in India as being like the deluge of Noah^(as) and invited people to his 'Ark' of peace and salvation (Saifi, 1983, p.94-96). So the story and the Ark are preserved for a reason, for mankind to recongise that only through heeding the signs can we benefit and avoid future disasters of the scale of the great flood. It will be interesting to see in the future if a messenger warns people to make preparations for an impending disaster, whether they would mock or ignore him, or would take notice and act on the warning.

Fazal Ahmad has been on the Editorial Board of The Review of Religions since 1993. His special areas of interest are Christianity, comparative religion and archaeology.

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Pan African Address



HADHRAT MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD^(ABA), KHALIFATUL MASIH V,
HEAD OF THE WORLDWIDE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY



On 26th November 2011 Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), Khalifatul Masih V, Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, graced a function organised by the Pan-African Association UK to celebrate the independence of various African countries, held in the Tahir Hall, Baitul Futuh Mosque, UK. Amongst those in attendance included:

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- HE Mr. Edward Mohammed Turay,
SIERRA LEONE HIGH COMMISSIONER
 - HE Wesley M. Johnson,
LIBERIA AMBASSADOR
 - Alhaji Bawah G. Ayembillah,
MINISTER AND HEAD OF CONSULAR AND
WELFARE GHANA
 - Dr. Yaqeen Habeeb,
NAIB AMIR (VICE PRESIDENT)
AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY
NIGERIA AND CHAIRMAN HUMANITY
FIRST NIGERIA

-
- Mr. Issah Wemah,
CHAIRMAN PAN AFRICAN ASSOCIATION
UK

We present below the keynote address of the evening, delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba).

After reciting *Tashbahud*, *Ta'awwudh* and *Bismillah*, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^(aba) said:



‘Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullabe Wa Barakatohu – peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

As we are all aware, and as the distinguished guests have just mentioned, today we are gathered here to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the independence of Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Cameroon.

Today’s event has been organised by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community’s Pan-African Association, and so on behalf of our Community, I would like to thank all of the distinguished and honourable guests for attending this event.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was formed in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^(as). We, Ahmadi Muslims, believe him to be the Promised Messiah^(as), Imam Mahdi and the Reformer of the Age. We believe him to be the very Messiah and Mahdi of the Latter Days, whose advent was foretold by the Holy Prophet^(saw). Indeed, we also believe that Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^(as) is the same reformer whose advent was prophesied by other previous prophets, and who was to come in the servitude of his master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw).

Upon his advent, the Promised Messiah^(as) outlined two great and overarching



Today we are gathered here to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the independence of Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Cameroon.

purposes for which God Almighty had commissioned him. Firstly, he was sent to establish and to develop a relationship between man and God Almighty. It was his objective to make mankind realise that its Creator is the One God, Who is the Lord of all the worlds and the Possessor of all powers. As such, the Promised Messiah^(as) spent his entire life reminding mankind that they must submit and bow down before the All-Powerful God.

He came to inform people of the world that they should realise that all of the powers and forces of the universe are nothing in comparison to the Might and Power of God Almighty. The second

purpose for which the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at was sent, was to make mankind aware of the rights owed to one other. This was something that he greatly emphasised throughout his life.

The Promised Messiah^(as) taught us so beautifully that if a person becomes aware of the rights owed to his fellow man, then this would naturally lead to the establishment of human values. When human values are established, then man would cease to be cruel to his fellow man. Hence, his teachings formed the basis for true peace.

The Promised Messiah^(as) stressed the importance of discharging the rights owed to mankind to such a great extent, that he taught that on certain occasions the rights owed to man are to take priority even over the rights owed to God Almighty. This, God forbid,



The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community runs hundreds of Hospitals in Africa



does not mean or imply that the All-Powerful Creator has no significance in comparison to man, or that He is in any way secondary; rather, it means that God Almighty has such love for His Creation that He Himself has instructed that on those occasions where humanity is in desperate need, we should assist them first. Thereafter, once the need has been fulfilled, man should return to the worship of God Almighty.

In short, we believe that even though the purpose of our creation is the worship of God, this objective becomes secondary on those occasions where humanity requires our immediate assistance. This point is in exact accordance with the true teachings of Islam and the commands of God Almighty. The teachings of

Islam are most beautiful. They stress the importance of fulfilling the rights of others. Unfortunately, those in power have generally ignored this basic principle.

If we look at the world's political situation today, we find that there are different systems of governance, and different laws that have been established.

On the one hand, there are those countries where monarchies or dictators rule. In such countries, we find that the people are given very few rights. Instead, the rulers withhold most of the powers and rights for themselves. As a consequence, restlessness and anxiety spread amongst the people of that nation.

On the other hand, we find those countries that have adopted democracy. The basic principle that underpins

democratic societies is that the general public speak of seeking their own rights. They expect that their leaders will represent them fairly and without discrimination. However, even in such democratic countries there invariably comes a time when the policies made by the ruling party do not measure up to the required standards of justice. Policies that claim to advocate justice are not properly implemented, whilst laws giving preferential treatment to certain people or bodies are routinely passed. Thus, even in democracies we regularly find injustice.

Islam however, teaches an altogether different approach. In this era it is the Promised Messiah^(as) who has explained to us the code of conduct that Islam has advocated. He explained that Islam teaches us to forsake our rights for the benefit of others. Islam teaches *selflessness* rather than *selfishness*. Islam teaches that a good person is he who would prefer to fulfil the rights of his fellow man, instead of prioritising his own rights.

It is only when a true spirit of sacrifice develops within a society that a person happily chooses to relinquish his own interests for the sake of others, and values the rights of others more than his own. When such a spirit of mutual sacrifice is

born then true peace will emerge in that society. There is no doubt in this.

There is insufficient time to speak about this matter in detail at this time. I wish only to inform you that wherever the Ahmadiyya Jama'at is established, it strives to fulfil the rights of others with this very spirit of sacrifice that has been taught by Islam.

The members of the Ahmadiyya Community worldwide regularly make financial sacrifices and give alms. They do so not to gain any worldly benefit or recognition, but simply to serve God's Creation.

As you may be aware the majority of our humanitarian projects are based in Africa. With the Grace of Allah, over the past eighty or ninety years, we have strived not only to bring the African people closer to Allah, but also to discharge the rights owed to the people of this great continent.

It is in this spirit that our Jama'at has opened many schools in Africa. It is with this spirit that many of our Ahmadi engineers, who have been trained and brought up in the West, travel to the remotest parts of Africa to try and



Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad^(ra), Khalifatul Masih III, Third worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community exchanging gifts with Mr Banja Tejan-Se.

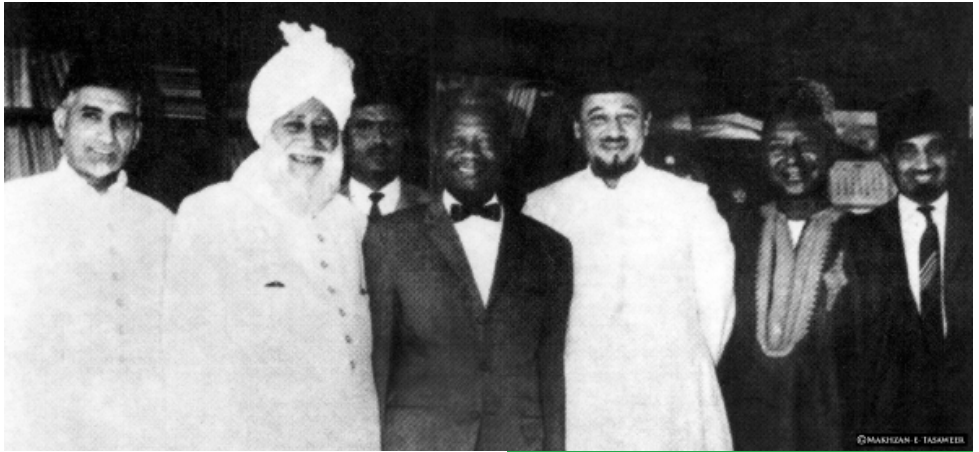
provide a supply of drinking water to the poor and deprived local villagers. With this spirit of sacrifice our youngsters, who have been brought up in the comfort of the West, have spent night upon night in the far off jungles, installing hand pumps in an effort to provide drinking water to humanity.

In the same way our Ahmadi teams have provided electricity to people living in

the remotest parts of Africa, by installing solar panels.

Also, now in certain countries we have started a new project of creating model villages, in which facilities such as tap water, electricity, street lights, community centres and paved streets will be provided *Insha'Allah* (God Willing).

Our Ahmadi youngsters take no payment for this work. Indeed, they spend their own money to take part in these projects because they wish to fulfil the command of Allah, which is to serve humanity and fulfil the rights owed to mankind.



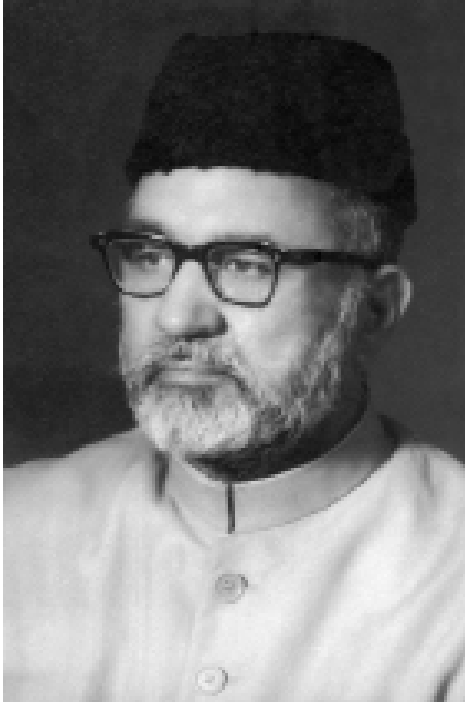
Mr Banja Tejan-Se, then Acting Governor General Sierra Leone (third from left), hosted a State Dinner in honour of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III^(ra) (second from left) at the Governor House.

Whilst it is true that in our hospitals we do take fees from those who are wealthy and well-off; we also treat thousands of poor people each year for free, who otherwise would be in no position to attain such treatment. We provide such services not as a favour or with a desire to seek reward. Our only motivation is to fulfil our duty to serve humanity. With the Grace of Allah, the local Ahmadi Muslims who are relatively well off financially, use their wealth to support and help the people of Africa, irrespective of religion, through the various schemes and projects run by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

I myself lived in Ghana for over eight years and during this time I became

extremely familiar with the temperament of the African people. Generally speaking, it is part of the character of the African people to willingly make sacrifices to help and support their friends and relatives. Nevertheless, the spirit of sacrifice has become even stronger in those African people who have converted to Ahmadiyyat. God Willing, our Jama'at will continue to maintain this passion to serve and will be willing to make all necessary sacrifices in an effort to help the people of Africa.

Regarding the independence celebrations,



Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^(ra), Second worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, sent Sheikh Basheer Ahmad Sahib (photo) to Sierra Leone to attend a special function marking the country's independence. The Government had requested a special representative from the Ahmadiyya Muslim community to attend.

I should also mention that our Community existed in certain African countries even before independence was achieved, as I have said earlier. In those countries, with the Grace of Allah,

the Ahmadiyya Jama'at always played a very positive role in helping the country progress towards freedom. For example, when Sierra Leone's independence was achieved, its Government officially recognised the role of our Jama'at and the humanitarian services it had rendered, to both the country and to its people.

The Government did this by specially inviting a central representative of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at from Pakistan, to attend the main function marking the country's independence. The Head of the Ahmadiyya Community at the time, Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^(ra), the Second Khalifa, thus sent an Ahmadi who was a High Court Judge in Pakistan, Sheikh Basheer Ahmad Sahib, to attend on behalf of our Community. His comments and suggestions were received with much appreciation and respect by the then Government.

An example and proof of this can be seen in one function that took place in Bo, Sierra Leone, when a senior magistrate, Mr Banja Tejan-Sie, addressed the gathering. When speaking about Sheikh Basheer Ahmad Sahib, the magistrate said that only that respected judge could have reminded them about their

responsibilities, in such a magnificent way. He said that his manner and words had touched their hearts, and were extremely inspirational. He also said that if the people of Sierra Leone were able to act upon his words, then they would be able to transform their circumstances and travel on a path of progress and advancement. It is of note that Mr Banja Tejan-Sie was later appointed as Acting Governor-General of Sierra Leone. In the capacity of Acting Governor-General of Sierra Leone in 1970, he hosted a State Dinner in honour of Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad^(ra), the Third Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, at the Governor House.

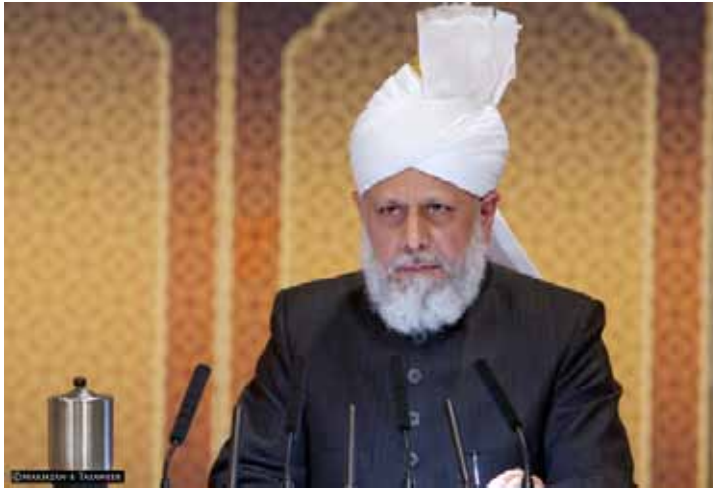
This was another example of how highly the contribution and service of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at was valued by the Government. Furthermore, the contribution of the Ahmadiyya Community towards Sierra Leone's independence was also officially recognised when our Missionary In-Charge was presented with a gift from the Government to mark the country's freedom. Along with the gift, a letter was attached from the Governor-General to our Missionary In-Charge. In the letter, he wrote:



Sheikh Amri Abedi, one of the earliest Ahmadiyya missionaries in Tanzania, played a key role towards the independence of Tanzania.

'I take great pleasure in presenting this gift marking the independence of our country. This is in recognition of your valued services that you have made in an effort towards acquiring our independence.'

Since the independence of Sierra Leone



Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), Khalifatul Masih V, Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, addressing the Pan African Association gathering.

was achieved, there have been a number of Ahmadi Muslims who have had the honour of becoming Members of Parliament, Ministers of Government and Ambassadors of State. In this way many Ahmadi Muslims have been able to serve Sierra Leone with great distinction and become a means for the progress of the nation.

Similarly, upon the independence of Tanzania, the Ahmadiyya Community was also able to play a significant role. One of our local Tanzanian Missionaries, Sheikh Amri Abedi, who received two years missionary training in our centre in Rabwah, Pakistan, was also personally able to play a valuable role towards the independence of Tanzania. The leaders

of the country used to consult with him regularly and seek his wise counsel. Later on he was appointed the first African Mayor of Darus Salam. He was also elected unanimously to the Legislative Council of Tanganyika, and then in 1963 he was appointed Minister of Justice and proved to be greatly loved and popular in this role. Therefore, throughout his life he rendered great services to his nation.

Another example of the services rendered by the Ahmadiyya Community is that the name 'Tanzania' was actually chosen upon the recommendation of an Asian Ahmadi Muslim, to the Government of the time. This too was an historic service to the nation.

Hence, these are just a few examples. In fact, the Ahmadiyya Community has continually offered great services to the country. In short, the Ahmadiyya Jama'at has played and continues to play a prominent role in providing the rights owed to deprived people, to serve them and to strive for their freedom. We do this without any desire for personal gain or self-interest.

It is my heartfelt prayer that the African people are able to take full advantage of and benefit from their independence. They should strive to utilise their natural resources for the betterment of their people. All countries should keep in mind the saying of the Holy Prophet of Islam^(saw), that the leader of the country is the servant of that nation. This is a crucial point to remember. Whichever laws or regulations are in force, should apply just as much to the rich as to the poor. If this approach is maintained, then, God Willing, the freedom that you have gained after long periods of colonial slavery, will come to be everlasting. If, however, you do not follow this, dominant world powers will surely seek to once again enter your lands and take over your natural resources through their deceitful schemes, or on the pretext of their various unjust and false excuses.

But if the leaders of the poorer nations fulfil the rights of their own people and the people themselves give precedence to the interests of their nation, then the country will progress, *Insha'Allah*. Indeed, if all the countries of Africa adopt such a course then there is no doubt that Africa itself will progress at great speed.

I firmly believe that if the African countries and people unite together and fulfil the requirements of justice, then one day, Africa will emerge as a true global power. May Allah enable this to happen, *Insha'Allah*.

At the end I would like to once again thank all of the honourable and respected guests for attending tonight's function. Thank you very much.

Long Live Africa!

Long Life Humanity!"



Muharram and the Promised Messiah^(as)'s True Expression of Love for the Holy Prophet^(saw)



AMER SAFIR, UK

I look always with wonder at this Arab Prophet whose name is Muhammad, thousands of blessings and peace be upon him. How exalted his status was! One cannot perceive the ultimate limit of his station...¹

(Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi)

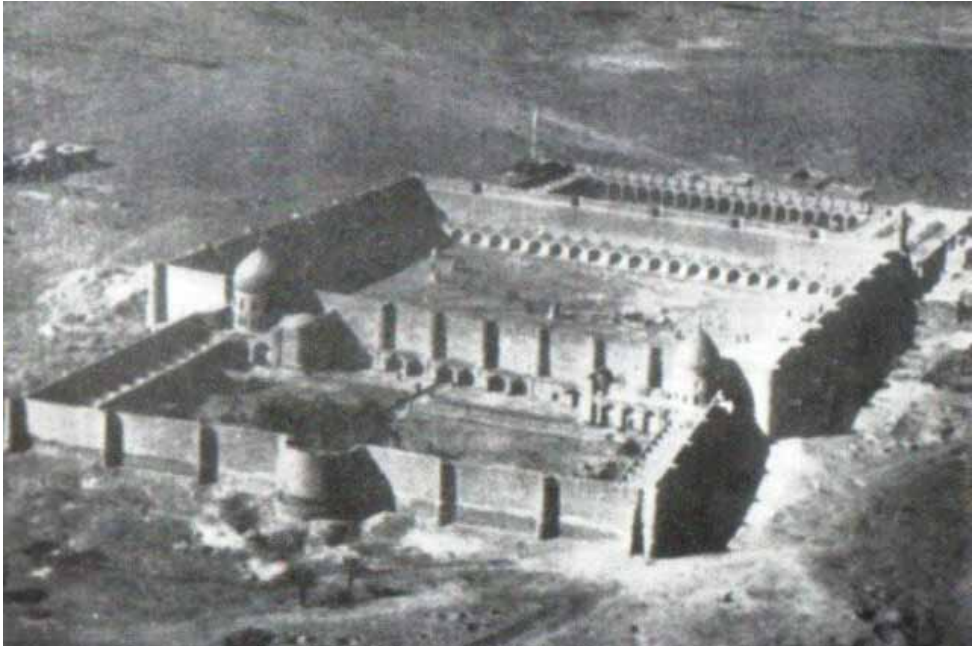
The Tragedy of Karbala

The background to Karbala revolves around the refusal of Hadhrat Imam Hussain^(ra), the blessed grandson of the Holy Prophet^(saw), to pledge allegiance to Yazid, the son of Muawiyah. Muawiyah had rebelled against Hadhrat Ali^(ra), the Fourth of the rightly guided Khalifas and father of Hadhrat Imam Hussain^(ra), and established his own governance and declared himself a self-appointed Khalifa. Before his demise, Muawiyah appointed his own son, Yazid, as his heir apparent. Whilst many Muslims pledged allegiance to Yazid, Hadhrat Imam Hussain^(ra) and some other Companions had rejected this outright. They felt that due to Yazid's impiety, he was not worthy, nor possessed the right to the Khilafat. The true Khilafat was not a dynasty where the son would automatically become the heir-apparent. Rather, the true Khalifa was chosen by God, albeit through the will of the people. Thus, Muawiyah and Yazid were trying to establish a despotic rule in the guise of Khilafat.

Hadhrat Imam Hussain^(ra) eventually set off for Kufa in Iraq on the beckoning of around 18,000 people who written letters pledging their allegiance to him. Although Hadhrat Imam Hussain^(ra) had indications through visions and also the information received from others that something was not right, he set off to Kufa, not yet fully aware that the people

Muawiyah and Yazid were trying to establish a despotic rule in the guise of Khilafat.

of Kufa no longer supported him. En route, Hadhrat Imam Hussain^(ra)'s party were confronted by a large army in Karbala. The enemy commander said he had been ordered to detain Imam Hussain^(ra) and his party and demanded they pledge allegiance to Yazid. Despite the fact that Hussain^(ra) explained to the enemy commander that he been



The Great Mosque of Kufa. Built in the 7th century, it is considered to be one of the earliest Mosques. It is said to contain the tomb of Muslim bin Aqil^(ra), cousin of Hadhrat Imam Hussain^(ra), who he sent to Kufa to investigate the 18,000 people who had pledged allegiance. Aqil^(ra) was eventually martyred before he could inform Hadhrat Hussain^(ra) regarding the treachery of the people in Kufa.

beckoned by the people of Kufa, and that he was even ready to travel elsewhere, his plea fell on deaf ears.

On the morning of *Ashura* (the 10th of Muharram), judgment day arrived. There were only approximately 72 people

with Imam Hussain^(ra) against 4000 soldiers. One by one Imam Hussain^(ra)'s Companions fell fighting the enemy soldiers, desperately trying to defend Imam Hussain^(ra). After, the *Ahle Bai'at* (family of the Holy Prophet^(saw)), one by one also fell fighting. 20 members of the family of the Holy Prophet^(saw) were killed in the field of Karbala. Imam Hussain^(ra) fought valiantly until his last breath, but he also eventually was martyred. Horse riders rode forth and trampled upon the dead body of Imam Hussain^(ra). Imam Hussain^(ra) had been hit 45 times by arrows, 33 times by spears and

over 40 times by sword blows. Hadhrat Hussain^(ra)'s head was severed and sent to Kufa, where the governor had it displayed for public view. This was a tragic day in Islamic history, when the blood of the noble people of God was shed in this merciless slaughter. The people of Kufa also had displayed ultimate cowardice and hypocrisy. However, Imam Hussain^(ra) had given his life to uphold the truth, of this there can be no doubt. A full account of the events that transpired at Karbala can be read in the article we featured in the January 2011 Edition of *The Review of Religions*, 'Imam Hussain and the Tragedy of Karbala.' Here, our purpose is to depict how true love for the Holy Prophet^(saw) and his family can be expressed.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi, has stated in his writings that Yazid was an impure worm of the earth, blinded by the love of the world; whilst Imam Hussain^(ra) was truthful and provided a pure model for future Muslims to follow. Once in the house of the Promised Messiah^(as), the incident of Hadhrat Hussain^(ra)'s martyrdom was being related. Upon hearing this the Promised Messiah^(as) started crying most profusely, and stated with immense pain: "Yazid

There were only approximately 72 people with Imam Hussain^(ra) against 4000 soldiers.

performed this cruel act against the grandson of the Holy Prophet^(saw), but God also rapidly brought His wrath down upon the oppressors."²

True Expression of Love for the Holy Prophet^(saw)

Each year in the first ten days of Muharram, Muslims around the world mourn the martyrdoms of Hadhrat Imam Hussain^(ra), his family and companions that took place in the fields of Karbala over 1000 years ago. Because many of those martyred on that fateful day were close family members of the Holy Prophet^(saw), remembering Karbala holds special significance for Muslims. Some Muslims take to the streets and wail excessively, beating their chests with their hands and other weapons. They believe that literally enacting the torment the family of the Holy Prophet^(saw) went

Imam Hussain^(ra) had given his life to uphold the truth, of this there can be no doubt.

through at Karbala is an important aspect of the commemoration. Others take part in processions, specially organised functions and other events and gatherings in mosques and halls. However, within such gatherings numerous innovations have been introduced which are far-removed from the real teachings of Islam. Further, sectarian violence has become the norm during this month. Shias target Sunnis, and Sunnis attack Shias, resulting in loss of life and property. These acts are carried out in the name of God and the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw).

So what *is* the correct way for a Muslim to mourn the events of Karbala? How can a Muslim express *true* love for the Holy Prophet^(saw) and his family?

In this era the correct method has been beautifully elucidated to us by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi. The

Promised Messiah^(as)'s love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw) and his family was absolute, sincere and unparalleled. His writings, books and speeches are replete with heartfelt affection towards the Holy Prophet^(saw). It would take several books or even more to suitably depict the true devotion the Promised Messiah^(as) had for the Holy Prophet^(saw). Here, we only provide a glance of that love he held. He writes:

'I always wonder how high the status of this Arabian Prophet was, whose name was Muhammad, (thousands of blessings and peace be upon him). One cannot reach the limit of his high status and it is not given to man to estimate correctly his spiritual effectiveness.... He is the fountainhead of every grace and a person who claims any superiority without acknowledging his grace is not a man but is the spawn of Satan, because the Holy Prophet^(saw) has been bestowed the key to every exaltation and he has been given the treasury of every understanding...I am nothing and possess nothing. I would be most ungrateful if I were not to confess that I have learnt of the true Unity of God through this Prophet. The recognition of the Living God we have achieved through this perfect Prophet and through

his light. The honour of converse with God, through which we behold His countenance, has been bestowed upon me through this great Prophet. The ray of this sun of guidance falls like sunshine upon me and I continue illumined only so long as I am adjusted towards it.³

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw) had foretold that when the moral state of the Muslims would be at its lowest ebb; when the Mosques, although full, would be devoid of actual worship; when the Qur'an would be read by Muslims but without an understanding of its inner meanings, and when the Muslim clergy would be the worst of creation, the Messiah would arrive. It was exactly in such circumstances that Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) was raised as the Messiah and the Mahdi for the task of rejuvenating the true teachings of Islam, through explaining the inner meanings of the verses of the Qur'an. He provided thousands of logical arguments to corroborate his claim, and also was supported with Heavenly signs that were displayed in his favour. He wrote over 80 books, guided by God, replete with profound insight into the true, beautiful teachings of Islam. His writings were based on his discernment of the hidden meanings entailed within the Qur'an as

The correct method has been beautifully elucidated to us by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi.

taught to him by God. As the *Hakm* and *Adl* (Judge and Arbitrator) of the time he said that he had been commissioned by God to rectify the erroneous concepts that had entrenched themselves into Muslim practices and customs, but not by bringing anything new, for the Qur'an is the Final and Perfect Book. As the Promised Messiah^(as) explains:

'Now under heaven there is only one Prophet^(saw) and only one Book. The Prophet is Muhammad^(saw), the Chosen One who is higher and more exalted than all Prophets and is the most perfect of Messengers and is the *Khatam-ul-Anbiya'*, and the best of men by following whom we find God Almighty and all the veils of darkness are lifted and the signs of true salvation are witnessed in this very life. The Book is the Holy Qur'an, which comprises true and perfect guidance and

*The Promised Messiah^(as)
corrected the error-strewn
practices and doctrines of the
Muslims based on the true
teachings of the Qur'an.*

effectiveness, through which knowledge and understanding of the Divine are obtained and the heart is purified of human weaknesses; and being delivered from ignorance, heedlessness and doubts, a person arrives at the stage of complete certainty.⁷⁴

Thus, the Promised Messiah^(as) corrected the error-strewn practices and doctrines of the Muslims based on the *true* teachings of the Qur'an, and the practice of the Holy Prophet^(saw). And in this light, his love for the Prophet^(saw) was unmatched. The Promised Messiah^(as) writes:

‘That light of high degree that was bestowed on perfect man was not in angels, was not in stars, was not in the moon, was not in the sun, was not in the oceans and the rivers, was not in rubies, emeralds, sapphires, or pearls; in short, it was not in any earthly or

heavenly object. It was only in perfect man whose highest and loftiest and most perfect example was our lord and master, the Chief of the Prophets, the Chief of all living ones, Muhammad, the Chosen One^(saw). That light was bestowed on this man and, according to their ranks, upon all those who bore the same colour to some degree.... This dignity was found in its highest and most perfect form in our lord and Master and our Guide, the immaculate Prophet, the righteous one, testified to by the righteous, Muhammad, the Chosen One^(saw).⁷⁵

Elsewhere, depicting the miracle of the Holy Prophet^(saw) in transforming a society of people steeped in ignorance and moral degradation, into shining models of piety, the Promised Messiah^(as) writes:

‘A strange and phenomenal event took place in the deserts of Arabia, when hundreds of thousands of dead become alive within a few days, and those who had been corrupted through generations took on Divine colour. The blind began to see and the tongues of the foolish began to flow with Divine wisdom. Such a revolution took place in the world as no eye had seen or no ear had heard of before. Do you realise what this was? All



The Prophet Muhammad^(saw)'s Mosque in Madinah.
Photo: Omar Chatriwala

this was brought about by prayers during the darkness of the night of one who had been wholly lost in God. This created uproar in the world and manifested such wonders as seemed impossible at the hand of the unlettered helpless person. O Allah! Send down blessings and peace upon him and on his followers in proportion to his concern suffering for the Muslim *Ummah* [community of Muslims] and shower upon him the light of Thy mercy, forever.⁶

After the Promised Messiah^(as) the system of Khilafat—Successorship— was established by Divine Will, in accordance with the prophecies of the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw). The present Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim

community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), Khalifatul Masih V, in his Friday Sermon has explained the best method of remembering Karbala, in light of the profound spiritual knowledge granted to the Promised Messiah^(as). His Holiness explained that the best way to remember Karbala is to send *Darud*, invoking salutations and blessings upon the Holy Prophet^(saw) and his family, and to bring about pure reformation within ourselves. He said that all Muslims undoubtedly feel sorrow and grief regarding the incident of Karbala. But certain Muslim groups adopt customs which appear quite extreme in our view. *Darud*, however, has been expounded by the Holy Qur'an, the Traditions of the Holy Prophet^(saw) have drawn attention to

This is how true love of the Holy Prophet^(saw) can truly be expressed, rather than by holding rallies and introducing customs and rituals that the Holy Prophet^(saw) never practised.

it, as has the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. It is a most excellent way of professing love for the Holy Prophet^(saw) and his family.⁷ The Promised Messiah^(as) said:

‘One night this humble one invoked blessings on the Holy Prophet^(saw) to such a degree that my heart and soul were filled with its fragrance. That night I saw in my dream that angels were carrying water skins full of light into my house and one of them said to me: These are the blessings that you invoked upon Muhammad.’⁸

The Promised Messiah^(as)'s life was a true reflection of the life of the Holy Prophet^(saw), because of which, even the

hearts of some of his fiercest enemies became inclined towards the true Islam. Hence, the Promised Messiah^(as) taught that to express real love for the Holy Prophet^(saw), a true Muslim, along with invoking *Durud* (invoking salutations/blessings upon the Holy Prophet^(saw)), should strive to follow the example set by the Holy Prophet^(saw). He or she should obey all the injunctions given by God, and endeavour to lead every moment of his life in the way the Prophet^(saw) did. When a Muslim adopts this approach, his or her *Durud* will emanate from the heart, and he or she will become a paragon of virtue and high moral standards. This is how true love of the Holy Prophet^(saw) can truly be expressed, rather than by holding rallies and introducing customs and rituals that the Holy Prophet^(saw) never practised. The excellent behaviour of such a Muslim would lead people, even the opponents of Islam, to stand up and take notice, and praise the teachings of Islam and the person of the Holy Prophet^(saw) for inspiring such excellent conduct. Hence, just as Hadhrat Hussain^(ra) and those with him, stood firmly in the face of certain death, Muslims should similarly display this forbearance and steadfastness in front of people with Yazid-like natures and be resolute. Hussain^(ra) expressed

the truth despite facing a huge army; hence Muslims should present the truth without regard for the consequences for their own persons.⁹

The Promised Messiah^(as) has explained logically, and through Divine revelation, the best manner of expressing love for the Holy Prophet^(saw) and his family. In these few pages full justice cannot be discharged in depicting just how beautifully the Promised Messiah^(as) has expressed that devotion. We humbly urge our readers to visit the following link at the official website of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, www.alislam.org/books/, where all the books of the Promised Messiah^(as) that have been translated into English can be read, — the Promised Messiah^(as) expression of true love for the Prophet^(saw) will become further evident. Finally, we present one last extract of the Promised Messiah^(as) from amongst his treasure of writings, in which he expresses his love for Islam and the Prophet Muhammad^(saw):

‘O all ye who dwell upon the earth! And O all human souls that are in the east or in the west! I announce to you emphatically that the true reality in the earth is Islam alone, and the True God is the God Who is described in the Qur’an, and the

Prophet who has everlasting spiritual life and who is seated on the throne of glory and holiness, is Muhammad, the Chosen One^(saw). The proof of his spiritual life and holy majesty is that by following him and loving him we become recipients of the Holy Spirit and are favoured with the bounty of converse with God and witness heavenly signs.¹⁰

ENDNOTES

1. *Haqiqatul Wabi* in *Rubani Khaza'in*, Vol.22, pp.118-119
2. *Seerat Tayyiba*, Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad^(ra), p.36
3. *Haqiqat-ul-Wabi*, *Rubani Khaza'in*, Vol. 22, pp. 118-119
4. *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya*, *Rubani Khaza'in*, Vol. 1, pp. 557-558, sub-footnote 3
5. *A'ina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam*, *Rubani Khaza'in*, Vol. 5, pp. 160-162
6. *Bakaratud Dua'*, *Rubani Khaza'in*, Vol. 6, pp. 10-11
7. Friday Sermon, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), 21st January 2011
8. *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya*, *Rubani Khaza'in* Vol. 1, p. 598, sub-footnote 3
9. Friday Sermon, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), 10th December 2010
10. *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*, *Rubani Khaza'in*, Vol. 15, p. 141

CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS EVENTS & FESTIVALS



JANUARY 2012

Thursday 5th January

Faith: Sikhism

Event: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) was the final of the ten Gurus in the Sikh faith. Many of the customs Sikhs practise today were introduced by him.

Saturday 14th January

Faith: Hindu

Event: Makar Sankranti

Hindus celebrate the sun's movement into the northern hemisphere, which is considered to be extremely auspicious.

Saturday 7th January

Faith: Christianity (Orthodox)

Event: Christmas

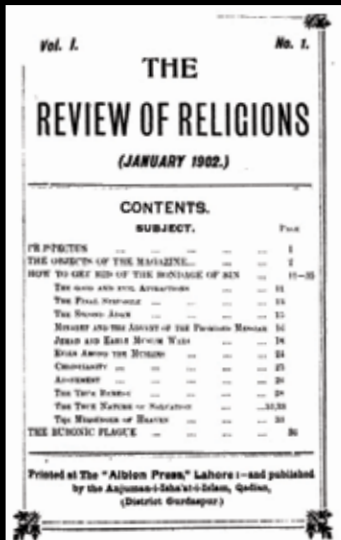
As most Orthodox Christians adopt the Julian calendar rather than the Gregorian, they celebrate Christmas thirteen days after December 25th.

Sunday 15th January

Faith: Shinto

Event: Seijin Shiki

Seijin Shiki, or Coming of Age Day, is an annual holiday in Japan on the second Monday of January. It is to celebrate those who have reached 20 years age.



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