

Editorial – Five spheres of activity for the revival of Islam: Sarah Waseem – UK	2
Notes and Comment: WhoSwitched Off the Lights – With power outage humbling the mighty, should man begin to take the blame for his chaos? Fazal Ahmad – UK	3
History of Islam – A brief history of Islam from the Caliphats, through the medieval era, the Mongols and Ottoman Empires to today (well, 1947), including a background to the political history of some Muslim countries: Late Professor Abdus Salam – UK)	5
Efficacy of Repentance – Part II – God is now quickening the earth after its spiritual death; the time is ripe for the arrival of he Messiah; God’s promise would be fulfilled. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad ^(as)	17
QUESTION & ANSWER – Response to Questions – Spiritualism is a material world; life after death; is animal slaughter cruel; and idealising pop-stars. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad ^(rw)	26
Euphesus – Turning Points for Christianity – Paul and John visited this town in Turkey, with its caves where Christians fled persecution and where a council changed Mary’s status. Fazal Ahmad – UK	34
Future of Revelation – Part II The rationale for the concept of the finality of Prophethood. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad ^(rw)	43
Persecution of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan: An Analysis Under International Law and International Relations: Concluding a detailed review of the background to the persecution of Ahmadis – Part 3 Amjad Mahmood Khan – USA	50

Chief Editor and Manager

Mansoor Ahmed Shah

Basit Ahmad

Bockarie Tommy Kallon

Daud Mahmood Khan

Fareed Ahmad

Fazal Ahmad

Fauzia Bajwa.

Mansoor Saqi

Mahmood Hanif

Mansoor Hyder-Muneeb

Navida Shahid

Sarah Waseem.

Saleem Ahmad Malik

Tanveer Khokhar

Chairman of the Management Board

Naseer Ahmad Qamar

Special contributors:

Amatul-Hadi Ahmad

Farina Qureshi

Proof-reader:

Shaukia Mir

Design and layout:

Tanveer Khokhar

Publisher:

Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah

Distribution:

Muhammad Hanif

All correspondence should be forwarded directly to:

The Editor

The Review of Religions

The London Mosque

16 Gressenhall Road

London, SW18 5QL

United Kingdom

© Islamic Publications, 2002

ISSN No: 0034-6721

Cover: Abdullah Mosque:

Photo by FazalAhmad

Editorial

In his book *Fat-he-Islam* (Victory of Islam) the Promised Messiah^(as) has written ‘what is called “Faith” has been substituted by a few words of declaration uttered by the tongue;... True piety and virtue have been completely forgotten.’ He writes that there are five spheres of activity necessary to ensure the revival of Islam.

Before describing these, it is worth reflecting on how Islam progressed following the demise of the Holy Prophet^(sa) and the first four Khalifas. This month’s issue contains an article written by the late Professor Abdus Salaam in which he presents a synopsis of the history of Islam following the demise of the Holy Prophet^(sa) and the first four Khalifas. It is a story of conquests and of the establishment of empires. Contrast this then with the five steps needed for the revival of Islam as presented in 'Fat-he-Islam.

The Promised Messiah^(as) writes that his first sphere of activity is that he has been guided to write and publish books. Along with this, leaflets would be published which proclaim the truth of Islam over other creeds. A further task is to ensure that those people who are seeking ‘the truth’ are cared for. During his lifetime, the Promised Messiah^(as) accommodated several thousand guests who visited him

in Qadian in order to establish the truth of his claim to be the Messiah of the age. He writes: ‘...the circle of those who can come and stay near me ..should also be gifted with that sublime taste which I have been gifted.’

The fourth branch of activity is correspondence with those who seek the truth and those who are antagonistic to it. Finally the Promised Messiah^(as) writes that he has been directed by Allah to broaden the circle of devotees and those who take the oath of Initiation. He writes that Allah has informed him ‘Anyone who slips his hand in your hand in allegiance, slips it not in your hand but rather in the Hand of God.’

The Promised Messiah^(as) stresses that all five of these spheres of activity are needed to bring about the revival of Islam. All of these are based upon logic and reasoning. ‘Seekers after the truth’ are also to be cared for, as demonstrated by the immense hospitality and love which the Promised Messiah^(as) displayed for his guests.

It is only through these methods that Islam will be revived in its true beauty and purity.

Sarah Waseem – UK

Notes & Comments

Who Turned Off the Lights

14th August 2003 could well have gone down in history in the same way that September 11th did. It was the day that several cities in America and Canada found themselves without power for many hours in the worst power outage in history. In a scene reminiscent of a Hollywood film, traffic lights stopped working and people were stuck in building lifts or in metro systems underground. Mobile telephones suddenly stopped working leaving people worried about how to communicate in an emergency with loved ones. In temperatures of well over 30°C, even the air-conditioning systems had stopped working, making conditions more unbearable. In a matter of seconds, all of the facilities that people had come to rely upon in daily life had vanished leaving people to their own devices. Over 50 million people in New York, Toronto, Ottawa and Detroit emerged gingerly from offices, cars and subways worried that they were

involved in yet another terrorist incident. In the evening rush hour, there was traffic chaos, cities were in darkness, and thousands of city workers who were left stranded with no route home were forced to sleep rough on the streets. Trains, ferries, cars and aircraft all ground to a halt as fuel became scarce and signalling became impossible. (This scene was repeated on 28th August 2003 in London with two power outages creating an evening rush-hour chaos).

As night descended on these great cities, the eerie darkness seemed to be sending out a message that even these industrial giants are not as powerful as they may imagine. Even behaviour such as looting which is normally associated with lesser nations, was witnessed in New York and Ottawa. It is easy to feel comfortable behind the luxuries of life, and to think that our existence is totally different to that of our ancestors. But events such as this bizarre incident remind us of how fragile our

communities and structures are. Without these crutches, we very quickly return to basic instincts. People worried about how to find food and drink, how to communicate and how to get home. This was ironically the scenario painted around the potential millennium software bug which never materialised. Even a former energy secretary in the US described his nation as a superpower with a Third World electricity grid. The next day, as families woke up to the horror of the previous day's nightmare, realities such as discovering a fridge full of rotten food struck home. In the modern age of global communications, we sometimes believe the illusion that these powerful push-button facilities will always be there, and as a result, many modern thinkers either deny or relegate the position of God, as they feel they have created all of the facilities that they need for themselves. Such incidents remind us that all of these things are fragile and have a limited lifetime, but God is always present everywhere. Maybe the 14th or 18th of August also provided us with a valuable

reminder of our true status and position in the universe. Chilling then to think of the Day of Judgement as the time when the lights would go out on our existence on Earth, and we would be forced to evaluate what we actually achieved from our time on this planet without the assistance of our worldly crutches!

Fazal Ahmad– UK

In *The Review of Religions* of April 2003, Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih III, was described as the cousin brother of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (P.15). The dictionary defines a cousin as a relative descended from one of one's common ancestors. For the avoidance of doubt, both persons has the same father and as such, were paternal brothers but maternal cousins as each came from a different wife of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II.

History of Islam

by the late Professor Abdus Salam (Nobel Laureate)

The following paper was read at one of the weekly meetings at the London Mosque in 1947 by Professor Dr. Abdus Salam, who was later awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1979. He was then a student at Cambridge doing his three year Tripos course. In this partly revised paper, originally published in the June 1983 issue of the *Muslim Herald*, he presented an overview of the political history of Islam. This article may be of great interest to those who are unfamiliar with this history, especially given recent events in the Middle East.

In this paper I will try to sketch an outline of Islam's political history and how the glorious faith preached by the Holy Prophet^(sa) spread out of the confines of Arabia to the farthest corners of the world. I will try to give an outline political history of present day Muslim countries. It will necessarily be a very short sketch but I hope it will give some idea of what power Islam once was-and God willing, will once again be, through Ahmadiyyat.

Islamic history may conveniently be divided into five periods:

(1) The first period may be called the Arab Period. This comprises

the times of (a) the first four Caliphs of Islam; (b) the Umayyads at Damascus; (c) and the Abbasids at Baghdad.

This period runs from 632 CE (Christian Era) to 950 CE, approximately 300 years. During this period the centralism of Islam was intact. The Caliph was both the spiritual and the temporal head.

Next followed around 100 years of divided principalities when the Caliph's temporal power was reduced to nothing, and it appeared as if Islam's political hegemony would be gone forever.

(2) Around 1050 a new people appeared on the scene-the Seljuqs. They accepted Islam and under them the centralism of Islam was restored. The Caliph in Baghdad was now the spiritual head of most Muslims, while political power was in the hands mainly of priests of Turkish origin.

(3) The third period begins with the Mongol attack on Islamic countries-when Baghdad was sacked and the Caliphate extinguished. But 50 years later, the Mongols themselves had accepted Islam. This period (including that of Timurlane) extended until 1500 CE.

(4) From 1500 we enter the fourth period, that of Safavis in Persia and Osmani Turks in Turkey and Mughals in India.

(5) Finally, the fifth period is the one from 1700 CE till today, when European powers also began playing their sinister part in the history of Islam.

If history has a moral, then the

only moral I wish to draw from Islamic history is that the religion of Islam has won its greatest victories when the arms and might of Islam were at their lowest.

With this introduction we shall now go on to a detailed consideration of the periods I have mentioned.

The Arab Period

At the time of the death of the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace be on him, in 632, practically the whole of Arabia had accepted Islam. Under his first duly elected Successor, the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, the power of Islam was consolidated in Arabia.

But it was during the time of the second Successor, Hadhrat Umar, that Islam spread outside Arabia and won its victories. The Byzantines and the Persians both thought Arabia belonged to them and construing the rise of Islam as a rebellion against them they hastened to march to chastise the Arabs. A handful of Muslim

armies faced numbers, in some cases, ten times larger. But the fiery zeal of faith swept all before it. Damascus fell to the Muslim armies in 635, Yarmuk in 636 and with it Syria. Persian armies were defeated at Qadisiya in 637 and Egypt was conquered in 640. But the reign of Caliph Umar was memorable not only on account of its military glory. It was in his reign that for the first time in world history the principle was recognised that the state was responsible for the material welfare of all its citizens. The saying with which he began his caliphate is unique:

‘By Allah, he that is weakest among you shall be in my sight the strongest for I shall vindicate for him his rights, but him that is strongest will I treat as the weakest until he complies with the laws.’

After Umar came Hadhrat Uthman and Hadhrat Ali. After Ali, the principle of electing the Caliph died out. Muawiyya, who succeeded Ali in 661 as Caliph, made caliphate hereditary and

thus the Umayyad dynasty began.

During the reign of Muawiyya’s son, Yazid, the battle of Kerbala took place in 680 CE. Hadhrat Ali’s son, Hadhrat Hussain, declined to pay homage to a Caliph who had not been elected in a Shura. He was martyred on the plains of Kerbala.

Among the Umayyads, Caliph Walid’s reign was the most glorious. During his reign in 711 CE, a handful of Muslims under Tariq crossed over into Spain. In a few years they had overrun it with irresistible force and for the next 500 years the bulk of Spain was a Muslim country.

During this period Muhammad bin Qasim invaded India and conquered Sind and Multan. The Umayyads lost power in 750 CE, and were succeeded by the Abbasids, who though Sunnis in faith came to power with the help of Khurasani Shias. They transferred their seat of government from Damascus to Baghdad. The most glorious

reign among the Abbasids was doubtless that of Harun-al Rashid, the hero of the celebrated Arabian Nights, and his son Mamoon. Islamic learning and the prosperity of the Muslim countries were at a pitch that had never been reached before.

Around a hundred years after Harun's death, the power of the Abbasid Caliphs began to wane. In Khurasan, Samanids took over power, in Fars Buyids, in Africa the Fatmids and in Arabia the Carmathians. All these dynasties acknowledged (except the Fatmids) the sovereignty of the Caliph in name but the disintegration of Islamic polity was so complete that it appeared that Islam was politically doomed.

The Seljuqs

During this period when the empire of the Caliphate had vanished, a new people accepted Islam. The Turkish Seljuqs accepted Islam; they bred a generation of Muslim warriors to whom more than anything else, the Crusaders owed their failure

to conquer Islamic lands. The first Seljuq Sultan was Tughral who died in 1063. His brilliant son Alp Arslan followed him. This period was of unequalled prosperity and security. It also produced the greatest Muslim statesman of all times, Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Abbasid Caliph still held sway over Baghdad but he relegated all temporal power to the Seljuq Sultans. The Seljuq kingdom extended from the borders of Afghanistan to the ends of the Arabian peninsula. Except for Egypt and Spain, the entire Muslim world was united. Never after that period has it been united again, in a like manner.

Alp Arslan was succeeded by his son Malik Shah. His period was the heyday of learning and original research in mathematics and sciences. In 1074 an observatory was founded where the celebrated Umar Khayyam worked. The Jalali calendar was instituted which in the judgement of modern scholars is more accurate than the Gregorian calendar. The Nizamia University in Baghdad was founded. This

university had the honour of having one of its chairs being occupied by the celebrated Muslim scholar AI-Ghazali.

The Seljuq power began declining towards the end of the twelfth century. But even in its decline, it had enough vitality to repulse the Crusaders. The great Saladin of Scott's novels flourished about 1175. It is curious that the attitude towards the Crusaders was entirely different in the Christian countries and in the Muslim lands. While in the West the Crusades were proclaimed as Holy War and the whole military might of Europe was behind them, in Muslim countries they were considered as a local affair and local depredations, which the governors of the provinces concerned could effectively deal with. In 1171, after the decisive battle of Hattin when Saladin sent several Frank prisoners to the Caliph Alhasir at Baghdad, the booty included a bronze iron inlaid with wood of the true cross. It was duly buried near Baghdad.

In the later part of Seljuq period, the Ismailis (commonly known as the Assassins) gained strength in the land of Islam. Though they held absolute sway over only a few forts, their political power through their ability to assassinate the leaders of Islam was great.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century the Seljuq power had declined. Some other Islamic dynasties may have taken their place but by about 1220 there occurred one of the greatest eruptions in the history of the world.

The Mongols

The nomadic tribes of Central Asia-the Mongols-swarmed over the whole civilised world in both Europe and Asia under Genghiz Khan. Like an avalanche, they swept all before them. Around 1260 it appeared that Islam's political power had disappeared for good. Baghdad had been razed to the ground, the Caliphate obliterated the lands of Islam, Persia, Transoxonia, and Iraq laid waste. But then once

again a miracle happened. The religion of the conquered, conquered the conquerors.

Why the Mongols rose like that, nobody has finally ascertained. In its suddenness, its devastating destruction, its appalling ferocity, its passionless and purposeless cruelty, its irresistible though short-lived violence, the Mongol episode resembles rather some brute cataclysm of blind forces of nature than a phenomenon of human history. Around 1220 they fell on the lands of Islam and Europe. In Europe they sacked Moscow, Rostov, Kiev and Cracow. Their second wave in 1258 under Halgu obliterated Baghdad and the Islamic caliphate. It seemed they came, merely to kill and to ruin. One by one all the Muslim countries fell before their onslaught. If they spared the inhabitants of a town, which surrendered, it was either to profit by their skill or to employ them against their countrymen. Dozens of wretched captives accompanied the advancing hordes, erected the tents of the besieger, to be driven

afterwards to the breaches effected in the walls, to fill moat and trench with their bodies; and were finally, if they still escaped death, put to sword, to give place to a new batch of victims drawn from fresh conquests.

Their cruelty was calculated to strike with a paralysis of terror those whom they proposed next to attack while they left behind the smoldering ruins and demolished houses. The extent of terror they aroused can be gauged from the following quotation from Ibn ul Athir (written in 1230):

‘I have heard that one of the them took a man captive but had not with him any weapon wherewith to kill him and he said to his prisoner: Lay your head on the ground and do not move and he did so and the Tartar went and fetched his sword and slew him therewith.’

They professed no religion but their destruction of the centres of Islamic civilisation advanced

them so much in the favour of the Pope, that His Holiness was pleased to write to Ogtai Khan and others letters with his own signature. The Pope only realised their perfidy when their hordes began devastating the Christian lands with equal impartiality.

The destruction of Baghdad as the metropolis of Islam was thorough. The murder of the Caliph struck a fatal blow at the semblance of unity, which had subsisted among the nation of Islam. The sack of Baghdad lasted a week while 80,000 people were put to death.

The loss suffered by Muslim towns, which never again reached their previous level, defies description and almost surpasses imagination. Not only were thousands of priceless books annihilated, the very tradition of accurate scholarship and learning was destroyed. In spite of all this they could not kill the religion of Islam. They themselves fell victims to it. In 1275 the Mongol rulers had accepted Islam. Thereafter those

very Mongols were Islam's greatest champions.

The political history of the next 200 years consists of the rule of Muslim Mongol princes in Persia till about 1350 CE, while Osmani Turks established themselves in Asia Minor, and Egypt was ruled by the descendants of Saladin. After 1350 CE another Central Asian conqueror, Timurlane, arose. He professed Islam but he had no other motive except world conquest and world domination. He swept over Persia, India, Afghanistan, parts of Russia and some parts of China like Genghiz Khan before him. His most notable victory ever was over Bayazid 1, Sultan of Turkey in 1402. It checked for a while the progress of Osmani Turks. But his influence proved ephemeral. His successors ruled over Central Asia and Persia for no more than a 100 years when the Safavis supplanted them.

It would not be out of place to stop here and take some stock of Muslim religious thought during this dark period.

We came across some of the greatest Sufi names in this period. The first is that of Shah Shams Tibriz. His disciple, Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, wrote his *Mathnawi* around 1260 CE. The author describes his work in the *Mathnawi* as ‘The Roots of the Roots of the religion and discovery of the Mysteries of Reunion and some knowledge.’ The Sufi movement had its heyday in the thirteenth century. Sheikh Muhiyyud Din ibn-Arabi, the greatest name in medieval Islam, a native of Andalusia, went to live in Damascus and died there in 1240.

In the literary sphere Saadi and Hafiz belong to this period.

The Safavis and Osmani Turks

Now we start with the fourth period of our history the period starting around 1500 CE when with Shah Ismail Safavi, a Shia dynasty, seized power in Iran. This was the first time that a Shia dynasty had come to power in Iran. This had a profound effect on the course of future history of Islam.

The Islamic world was divided into two antagonistic camps: a Shiite Iran, parts of Afghanistan and Iraq on the one hand and the Osmani Turkish Empire comprising Turkey, parts of Iraq, Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Algiers. Spain by now had passed out of Muslim hands. In India, ruled the descendants of Timurlane-the Great Moghuls.

From 1500 to 1700 we witness these absolute autocracies: the Moghuls in India, with Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb, Safavis in Iran with Shah Abbas; while Mohammad II, Selim 1 and Sulaiman the Magnificent in Turkey. India was a great power in the Moghul days. For Persia this was the golden period of her prosperity and well being, while the Turks ruled the biggest empire they ever had.

Thus while Selim 1 conquered Egypt, Syria and Hedjaz and assumed the title of Caliph, Sulaiman the Magnificent, who ruled from 1510-1566,

conquered Belgrade and parts of Poland. Vienna was besieged by Turkish armies while Turkey possessed the strongest fleet in the world. The Turkish Empire extended from the frontiers of Germany to the Persian border. Although during this period the centralism of Islam had disappeared, politically the Muslim world was at its zenith. As a contemporary European historian wrote 'Except for his war with Persia, there is nothing that can keep the Turk annihilating us in Europe.'

I shall not dwell on this period, but will trace the main events after 1700.

After 1700

Turkish power in Europe held intact till about 1800. But the Moghul Empire in India had begun disintegrating and during the course of the next two centuries was gradually supplanted by British supremacy. The Safavis in Persia lost their hold on the country and in 1727 the Afghans conquered Persia. The Afghans were Sunnis and

bitterly hated the Shiite Persians. This was the first time after Sultan Mahmud (around 1000 CE) that the Afghans asserted themselves as an independent power. They were soon however driven out of Persia by Nadir Shah, who rising from humble beginnings, ultimately seized power and ruled over Persia. His career of conquests was as amazing as that of Timurlane or Napoleon.

To finish with Persian history, after Nadir Shah, his family lost power and the Qajars took their place. They ruled over Persia effectively till the revolution of 1906, when the Persians won for themselves the constitution. The Qajars were supplanted by Reza Shah Pahlvi in 1925. Reza Shah as you all know abdicated in favour of his son who is the present Shah (1947 Ed.).

Concerning Turkish history, after 1700, an important element was the rise of Russia. Wars with Russia started about 1700. The Turkish army was victorious in the beginning. In 1710 Peter the

Great's army was menaced with total destruction. But around 1770 Turkish fortunes began to wane. Crimea got her independence from Turkey in 1788. France, the traditional ally of Turkey, broke with Turkey when Napoleon occupied Egypt in 1798. Egypt under Muhammad Ali went out of the Turkish orbit and became quasi independent. Later Egyptian history and Great Britain's role in it is familiar to you all so I will not go into its details.

Around the same time Algiers was captured from the Turks by the French. The Greeks won their independence around 1820 with the help of European powers. The Turkish caliphate went on losing ground till power was seized from the Caliph by the Young Turks in 1910. Turkey entered the war of 1914 on the side of Germany and lost all her European and Asiatic possessions. The Arab countries became independent of Turkish rule after this war.

The Stage in 1947

Before concluding, I will comment on all the Muslim countries one by one and summarise their histories-each from their national point of view, starting from the extreme east.

PAKISTAN:

Muslims came to Sind and Multan in the eighth century. However Muslim sway in the sub-continent began in earnest in the twelfth century. For 400 years India was ruled by various Afghan dynasties. They were succeeded by the Moghuls in 1526. The Moghul power passed after 200 years to the British who left India in 1947 when Pakistan was born.

AFGHANISTAN:

Afghanistan was a part of Umayyad and Abbasid empires. It first acquired a separate existence around 1000 CE when Ghaznavi (who had the capital at Ghazni in Afghanistan) dynasty ruled over it. After that Afghanistan shared the fate of Persia, all through its chequered history. It was no more than a

province, sometimes that of Muslim Indian Empire, sometimes of Persian.

In 1725, however, Afghanistan became independent. In the nineteenth century the Afghan clashed with the British but the British could never make any headway in conquering Afghanistan. Since then it has existed as an independent power.

PERSIA:

Persia was a part of Umayyads and Abbasid empires. It was under the Seljuqs in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. For about 100 years Mongol princes ruled over it, which from 1350 till 1500 Timur, and his descendants held sway. From 1500 to 1700 Safavis were the rulers followed in the nineteenth century by the Qajars.

CENTRAL ASIA:

Transoxonia formed part of Persia till the eighteenth century when the Russians slowly expanded south. In the nineteenth century they conquered Bokhara and Samarqand.

IRAQ AND SYRIA:

Syria (including Palestine which throughout Muslim history formed part of Syria) and Arabia shared the fate of Persia till 1500 CE. After that they formed parts of Osmani Turkish empire. These nations became independent during the war of 1914. After the war, the British defected from their promises to grant Iraq its independence. Syria was parcelled out to the French, Iraq and Transjordan were made British protectorates. It was only after the war of 1939 that Syria and Transjordan gained their independence.

TURKEY:

First conquered for Islam by the Abbasids. Osmani Turks took it in 1288; Constantinople was taken in 1453 by Mohammad I. Turkey rose to greater power but there was decline in the nineteenth century. During the 1914 war, alliance with Germany cost Turkey all its possessions.

EGYPT:

Ruled by the Umayyads till 750 then by Fatmids till 1170, then by

Mamluks till 1500 when Selim, the Turkish Balkan, conquered it and incorporated it into the Turkish Empire. It won independence in the nineteenth century, lost it again to the British, and has won it again very recently.

SPAIN:

Spain was taken by the Muslims in 710. Ruled by the Umayyads. Never submitted to Abbasids; this Arab Muslim power finished about 1400 - Muslims were either expelled or made to reconvert to Christianity.

I have not covered in this quick survey, Malaysia, Indonesia or Africa.

I have said before that at the lowest ebb of Islamic political power, Islam's religious vitality has displayed itself again and again. Islam's political might reached its nadir towards the end of the nineteenth century when within Islam rose the Ahmadiyya Movement. Hadhrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, was raised at Qadian in 1889 and

through him Islam will be regenerated spiritually and politically, Inshallah.

PLEASE NOTE:

In this journal, for the information of non-Muslim readers, '(sa)' or 'sa' after the words, 'Holy Prophet', or the name 'Muhammad', are used. They stand for 'Salallahu alaihi wassalam' meaning 'Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him'. Likewise, the letters '(as)' or 'as' after the name of all other prophets is an abbreviation meaning 'Peace be upon him' derived from Alaihi salato wassalam' for the respect a Muslim reader utters.

Also ru or (ru) for *Rahemallahu Ta'ala* means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him

Efficacy of Repentance – Part II

Presented below, in translation, is the second and final part of the address of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^(as) that was delivered in Qadian on 21 February 1904. The Urdu text of the speech is taken from *Malfoozat*, Volume 6, PP 352-359. *Malfoozat* is the title of the ten volumes that contain the collection of discourses, speeches and addresses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi.

Translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad



The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as).

In 1891, he claimed, on the basis of Divine revelation, that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been foretold by Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) and by the scriptures of other faiths.

His claim constitutes the basis of the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

[Translator's Note: All references to the verses of the Holy Qur'an are given in Arabic as they occur in the text. The English translation, presented in Italics, is taken from the translation of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib^(ra). Where the Promised Messiah^(as) has himself stated a certain interpretation of an Arabic verse, this is incorporated in the main body of the text].

There are many matters that an ignorant person considers objectionable but in the sight of God these are considered to be worship of God. However, if there is no sincerity of intention then even *Salat* [an act of worship] becomes a curse. The believers have been commanded

[in the Holy Qur'an] to eat and drink,

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا

...eat and drink
(Ch.7:V.32)

and those who do not offer their *Salat* for the sake of God have been referred to as [the cursed ones]:

قَوْلٍ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ

So woe to those who pray
...but are unmindful of their
prayer
(Ch.107: V.5)

To eat, *Kuloo*, is a command and when a believer performs this act having understood the point of this command it will be rewarded. Similarly, there is a reward upon the fulfilment of the command [to be kind to wives]:

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

And consort with them in

kindness
(Ch.4: V.20)

However, if ostentation forms part even of *Salat* which is an act of worship, then that, too, becomes accursed.

In this age that which is called Islam has become different [from its true form]. All the negative capacities have come to the fore and the capacity of sincerity which has been mentioned in [the following verse of the Holy Qur'an] has ascended to the heaven.

مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ

Being sincere to Him in
obedience
(Ch.98: V.6)

True loyalty to God and sincerity and love and trust in God are attributes that have become almost extinct. God Almighty has now decided to revive these capacities anew. God has always revived the dead earth back to life, [as is stated in the Holy Qur'an]:

يُنْجِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

[He] is now quickening the earth after its death
(Ch.57: V.18)

God has decided [to bring back to life the good capacities] and for that He has chosen and adopted various means. On the one hand He has sent an appointed one who is to invite people with gentle words and guide them. On the other hand there is the progress of knowledge and science and gradually there is a trend towards greater understanding. There is not now the rough condition that existed at the time of the Sikh rule and people are generally beginning to gain a greater understanding. Yet another means [adopted by God Almighty] is the manifestation of signs which is by way of *Itmam-e-Hujjat*, that is, providing a full and complete argument. Hence, when the book ‘*Nuzul-ul-Masih*’, [meaning ‘The Sending Down of the Messiah’] is published, people will know [more about

the signs] as it contains nearly one hundred and fifty signs for which there exist hundreds of thousands of witnesses.

Among the system of signs, there is also the system of signs that create fear and awe in people among which the plague is one and it is spreading with such force that in previous generations the like of it had never been known. There are many people, however, who are taking note of these signs and benefiting from them. Not a day goes by without there being received, by letter or in person, initiation of people who wish to join this Community. Even though the world has advanced much in sinfulness and impiety, in mischief and in self-seeking immorality, those who come to join our Community also come from the same society and this shows that there are many good people mixed with others. God will bring out these people and will grant them understanding but some others will become the victims of the plague. This is how [matters in] the world will be finalised and a complete and

conclusive proof would have been provided.

(Here Janab Muhammad Ibrahim Khan Sahib mentioned Karachi and the region of Sindh and stated that people there were totally oblivious and did not have knowledge of such matters. At this the Promised Messiah^(as) stated):

A person becomes perplexed in the face of a completely ignorant person. However, there must be some educated people there. The system of English education is in place. There may be many harmful effects of the English education, but it has the benefit that it expands intellect and increases the capacity to understand. It is such people that we need and they will gradually appear. What kind of conversation could one hold with savage people who have no concern other than to eat and drink? Even though there is a 'veil' of materialism over the educated group of people, good people do understand and as a result are coming towards us. A section of

our Community is now made up of such people. It is not the case that we are calling them to us from here, they are coming themselves after having understood. In short, there is great expectation from a person who is intelligent and has understanding. What can one say to an ignorant person who lacks understanding?

People have been led astray partly by *Mullahs*, the religious clerics, and partly by the ignorant *Fakirs* and some follow the scantily clad hermits. Whatever the situation may be, God's work does not stop. When a person wishes to make a garden, he first ensures that the chosen ground is capable of producing a garden. If he finds the ground to be a wasteland, he first prepares it by clearing it and by breaking up clusters of earth and such like. It is only after much preparation that he would make his garden there. In short, He who is the King of Kings is about to prepare this 'garden' and He would have seen that some people of a good nature exist. It is due to the blessing of education that many

people have gained guidance from our books whereas at the beginning they were very much opposed.

An intelligent person doubtless becomes perplexed at the challenge posed by the Cross and its activities that have progressed to a very high degree. Their books are spread far and wide and, collectively, their extreme efforts seem so powerful that one could easily be led to despair as to how that power could ever be broken and how the Unity of God would spread on the surface of the earth! All the means of weakening Islam are present and the Cross is in force. However, it is always the case that God Almighty does what He wills and whatever He decides comes into being.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٥﴾

*Dost thou not know that Allah has the power to do all that He wills?
(Ch.2: V.107)*

[The message contained in this verse] is the only thing that reassures even in the face of immense difficulties such that one's intelligence may give the verdict that Islam cannot be re-established. I do not, however, accept such a verdict. Opinions of this type are heard from time to time but they are proving to be wrong. When God intends to do something, it happens. At the time of the Holy Prophet^(sa) did people have a positive opinion about his mission? Who was there who believed that a poor person who had neither power nor any grandeur, who had no army and possessed no wealth and who faced opposition from all sides would eventually be successful and that the promises of victory, support and glory made by God Almighty would all be fulfilled? Despite apparent hopelessness, there was hope and all the promises came to be fulfilled and the testimony [contained in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an] was gained.

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ

*This day have I perfected
your religion.*
(Ch.5:V.4)

Furthermore, there was revealed the Chapter [containing the following verse]:

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

*When the help of Allah
comes, and the victory.*
(Ch.110: V.2)

Similarly, it is possible that someone in our Community may consider it an impossibility that the power of the Cross will ever be broken but I say this that God can do everything. God must have various means with which this trial will come to an end but we have no knowledge of these. Nevertheless, we need to have faith that God's promises are true and even if all material means point to the negation of His promises, even then His promise is true. If it was the case that there was not a single person with me, even then His promise would be true. The promise is weak of a person whose power

and control is weak but there is no weakness in our God. He is Omnipotent and that which He has set in motion, continues. Our Community should hold fast to this belief.

At times the Community is faced with trial and tribulation and there occur some splits. The Companions of the Holy Prophet^(sa) migrated from Mecca to Medina and to Ethiopia but God brought them together again in one place. It is the practice of God that He tries and such trials can take on such a severe form that it seems as if a powerful earthquake has erupted when one is forced to call out:

مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ

*When will come the help of
Allah?*
(Ch.2: V.215)

At such times some people's thoughts turn to the idea that perhaps God's promise is wrong but eventually God's word proves truthful.

This system has been established in the heaven at its appropriate time and if all other proofs are overlooked then the timing itself is a great proof. It is now twenty years since the beginning of the [Islamic] century and God's promise is contained in the Holy Qur'an and in the *Ahadith* that the Promised Messiah would be born at the time of the trial posed by the Cross. The extreme nature of the force of this trial can easily be observed. Numerous reports reveal that nearly thirty hundred thousand Muslims have abandoned their faith. Previously, even if one person became apostate from among the people of Islam, it was considered a grave act and caused much concern. Should God not take care even at a time such as this? Consider also the poor state of the practice [of the Muslims]. They are Muslims in name - some are even addicted to and remain under the influence of such drugs as marijuana and cannabis. Is there not need even now [for a Reformer]? Christians too are expectant [of a Messiah] and they indicate the present time

[for the Second Coming of the Messiah]. Holy people who experience visions have also pointed to the same period. Circumstantial evidence and other indications also point to this time. If God had not taken care now, the world would have either gone completely astray or there would be Christianity. He who believes in God and the Holy Qur'an has to accept [the message of the time] but those who like the Jews are oblivious to the significance of the time, suffer deprivation.

People also present the argument of *Sawad-e-Azam*, that [the claim to be the Promised Messiah] goes against the principle of collective agreement. These are foolish people who do not even know that a Reformer only comes when people have gone astray. What kind of significance can there be in the unity of such people and their witness? The Holy Prophet^(sa) of God states that he has seen the Messiah^(as) among those who have passed away in the Mi'raj and then the death of the Messiah^(as) is proven from the

Holy Qur'an. Thus the Holy Prophet's word and deed have both proved the death of the Messiah^(as). John^(as) died and it was with him that the Holy Prophet^(sa) saw Jesus^(as). How can someone be alive who is with the dead for so long? Apart from this, God states that we should not accept anything that is without a precedent. For the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam, God provided precedence. Hence, there ought to be a precedent for the fact that Jesus^(as) is still alive.

This age is the time of spring for Islam. Even if we had remained silent, God would not desist. In reality, we are doing nothing, it is God who is doing everything. We write and speak only for the sake of earning God's reward. The door of His blessing has now been opened and whatever God has intended, He will most certainly bring it into being. You can see that we have neither speakers nor lecturers, nor do we have any societies working on our behalf but our Community is progressing. There are thousands

who have taken the oath of allegiance merely on the basis of dreams. There was no one to explain matters to them or to make them understand. It was God who guided them. Did we have it in our power to do all this? It is His hand that is working. Truth is such a thing that once it enters the heart, it is difficult for it to be removed. Those who accept our teaching after investigation, consider it to be dearer than their lives. One example of this is Maulvi Abdul Latif^(ra) who himself had thousands of disciples. He owned a large estate and possessed much wealth. He was a religious scholar at the royal court yet he left everything and accepted death. Can falsehood possess such power and blessing? Except for truth, does anything else possess such power? Here in the Punjab there are many that are put to great hardship merely because of their belief. Their nation, their brotherhood and the villagers all create hardship and painful circumstances for them merely because they have accepted the truth. In short, if

God had not placed this in their hearts why would they undergo such tribulations of such a harsh nature that their own fathers and brothers separate from them. There are some that earn just two *anna* daily after much hard work and from that they pay their subscription to us. They offer the *Tahajjud* prayers and they are steadfast upon *Salat*. They bow before God with extreme humility and deep feeling. The point to ponder is that except for the fact that God should grant them the light of faith and pour truth into their hearts, how else could all this be achieved?

For seeing and understanding, the book *Braheen* is a sufficient sign in itself. As is stated [in a Persian verse]:

حرفے ہیں است، اگر درخانہ کس است

*One word is enough to discover
if there is someone inside the
house*

For an intelligent person just one thing is sufficient. God promised long life - is anyone able to say

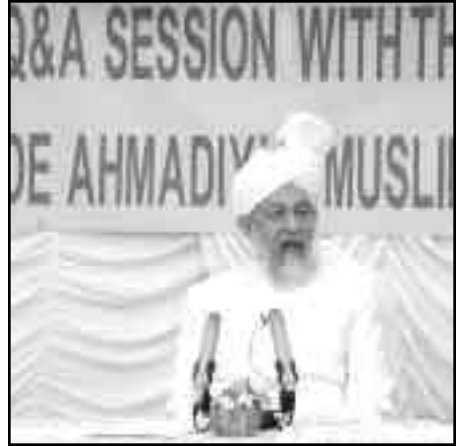
that he would live for so many years? Most of the promises made in the book *Braheen* have already been fulfilled and some are still outstanding. If this was the work of a human being how could there have been so much support and if the promises were not from God how could they have been fulfilled?

In short, consider the time, the age, the deviation, the inner and outer state [of the Muslims] and you will realise yourself [that it is time for the appearance of a Reformer]. We are not angry with our opponents because truth is always challenged to the bitter end. If one looks at the life of the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam, one will note how many challenges he had to face but did Musailma [the false claimant] face any challenge at all?

Response to Questions

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the Fourth Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, (May God's mercy be upon his soul), offered to people of all nationalities, faiths and beliefs the opportunity of raising questions and issues that were of interest to them. Presented below are answers to some questions that were raised in sessions held in London in 1993 and 1997.

Compiled by Amatul Hadi Ahmad



QUESTIONER

How can we develop ourselves spiritually when we have to spend so much of our day dealing with materialistic matters?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru): The question has its in-built answer. The only way for you to become spiritual is by dealing with the matter and yet remaining aloof enough so that you are not influenced by the material life, instead you influence the material life.

There are two types of people.

Those who shape things around them with their goodness and in the area in which they move other people become better than before because of their good influence. There are others who are themselves influenced by the evil atmosphere in which they move or by people with whom they make friends. These people gradually drift away from righteousness to ill practices. Hence, when we talk of materialism it is the latter group that we have in mind, people who in their daily contact with the material world become overwhelmed by it yet the

contact itself must exist in the case of every one who is living. It is impossible for a man to be living and yet to break away entirely from his contact with matter. The Prophets of God have this contact with the material world when they are married or when they are not married, when they eat, when they feel hungry, when they walk and talk. It is impossible for the living to break the link with the material world that is around them but the way one goes about it is the distinguishing factor. Hadhrat Maulana Rum has spoken of this in one of his poems and described this process as a contact between the boat and water. I am not going to quote him verbatim but the meaning of what he has said is simply this that you cannot conceive of a boat without water. Anything lying uselessly on the ground cannot be a boat until you have an association of that thing with water. Hence, a boat must have a counterpart that is water. However, as soon as it becomes submerged it is a boat no longer. So this is the state of material life

here on earth according to Maulana Rum who was one of the greatest Sufis in Islam. He says that you cannot do away with your contact with matter or you will not be human. Therefore, keep that contact but be above it. One should be the master of the world around one with the spiritual teachings one receives from God. One should not permit oneself to be mastered by the material world. Spirituality, as the questioner asked, is bound to develop, remaining within the material realm and material contacts, not otherwise.

QUESTIONER

As a Muslim, I understand that the object of human existence is to seek consciousness of God and to become a manifestation of His attributes. However, it is clear that God takes away the lives of some human beings without giving them the opportunity of achieving this objective. In particular, I would like to find out, from an Islamic point of view, what the fate of infants and

children would be on the Day of Judgement?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru):

These are, in fact, two questions rolled into one. The second part of your question is easier to understand and explain and I will begin with that.

As far as children are concerned, they are the closest to God and to their objective because they have not yet reached an age where they would be tried or be gradually influenced by such things as ungodly conduct and behaviour. They do not face temptation by Satan because that is an age of innocence. That is why the Holy Qur'an states that all children are created in accordance with 'nature'. However, the question arises as to what is 'nature'? It is *Fitratullah*, that is, the 'nature' of God and every child is created based upon that nature. Hence, children have already achieved the goal by the act of having been born. As they travel towards maturity, gradually and steadily they begin to be transformed.

They start to make choices, and also wrong choices, in early childhood and here they can be monitored as moving in the right or wrong direction. Once a course of action is maintained and when that is extended and projected further into the age of maturity, it then begins to manifest itself as pious behaviour or as bad behaviour.

Hence, when some children are called back by God, they are fortunate in the sense that they were saved from trials and the possibility of failure. However, they are not fortunate in another sense because trials are not meaningless. If one goes through the age of trial and then achieves correctness, that is a much higher achievement than remaining correct without ever having been tried. It has been stated by the Holy Prophet^(sa) in a tradition that such people who die early before reaching the age of maturity will be forgiven, of course, because they are innocent, but they will have missed something and that something would be taught to them by Prophet Abraham^(as).

THE HOLY PROPHET^(sa) FURTHER STATED THAT PROPHET ABRAHAM^(as) WOULD HAVE AN ‘INSTITUTION’ IN THE HEREAFTER FOR TRAINING SUCH CHILDREN WHO DIED EARLY AND, HENCE, DID NOT ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF CREATION OF MANKIND.

The Holy Prophet^(sa) further stated that Prophet Abraham^(as) would have an ‘institution’ in the hereafter for training such children who died early and, hence, did not achieve the purpose of creation of mankind. They would, therefore, undergo a lengthy period of training in the hereafter and when they successfully complete that training, they will, God willing, be given a similar treatment to the rest of humanity, similar to those who succeeded in life and became good people.

Turning to the first part of the question, what happens when God decides to have someone (who is not a child) called back to him, that is, when he decides for someone to die? By the time of his death, a person’s trends are already visible and under-

standable. He had already started moving along a certain trajectory. If life were to be terminated earlier, a person would only reach a certain portion of that trajectory, but if it were to be extended further, we would be able to see that he is moving in the same direction until he reaches an extended point. Thus, when one considers a person dying at a mature age, one thinks, mistakenly, that it should be enough. However, if we think in terms of eternity, the question would arise: why end his life there, at only seventy or eighty years? Maybe, if he had much longer, a thousand years or so, he would have rectified himself or changed from bad to good or from good to bad. The question, it would seem, is always there [as to what may have been the case had the time of death been different].

The decision is taken by an All-Knowing Being who knows to what degree a person had become set in his goodness or in his badness. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly tells us that when at the time of death a person says, *'Oh God, give me some more time and I will do goods deeds'*, or after death he says, *'Please send me back to the earth. This time I promise I will do good deeds'*. According to God, that person is a liar, *'Even if We did send him back, he would do exactly the same as he did previously'* – this is the verdict of the Holy Qur'an. This is in fact something that applies to all mankind in that this is exactly how people behave. When someone is about to die, they are often observed to have said, *'Oh, we were not just to you, we were not good to you. If we were given a longer lease of life, we would mend these shortcomings and would be very good and kind to you'*, and so on. They almost never do. Whenever they are saved, they begin to behave in exactly the same way as before. Thus, the question of coming to

an end early or late is immaterial. God knows whether some characteristics have acquired permanence or not.

QUESTIONER

According to some people, slaughtering of animals is a cruelty. Why should we then eat animal meat at all when we can live on vegetables?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(rw): But when people live on vegetables do they know how much animal life they kill with every mouthful? Bacteria and other insects that live on vegetables are destroyed by man through the use of pesticides or by fumigation and such practices. Apart from that, the vegetable that they eat is also a living cell and the scientists have now reached a stage in their understanding that they cannot rule out some sort of a 'nervous' system existing in vegetable life. There is certain evidence of plant life behaving as if it possessed a 'nervous' system. That evidence is so powerful that nobody can

.....SCIENTISTS HAVE NOW REACHED A STAGE IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY CANNOT RULE OUT SOME SORT OF A 'NERVOUS' SYSTEM EXISTING IN VEGETABLE LIFE. THERE IS CERTAIN EVIDENCE OF PLANT LIFE BEHAVING AS IF IT POSSESSED A 'NERVOUS' SYSTEM.THERE IS A PLANT KNOWN AS 'TOUCH-ME-NOT' THAT SHRINKS AS ONE BRINGS A FINGER CLOSE TO IT. THIS IS A VISIBLE SIGN.

ignore it. There is a plant known as 'touch-me-not' that shrinks as one brings a finger close to it. This is a visible sign. But apart from that, the fact is that every plant follows a course of behaviour that requires the existence of some 'nervous' system because when the plant grows there are two parts of it. One begins to grow away from the light and then gets embedded as a root in the soil, and the other begins to grow towards light. Why should the same type of cells have different preferences and why should they grow away from light? Moreover, when the position of the plant in relation to the sun is changed and as it changes also in the difference regions of the earth, from north to south, the branches of trees are

differently patterned, and they always tend to grow more in the direction of the sun. There are other similar behaviour patterns which indicate that there is some sort of a 'nervous' system that we cannot trace yet it does exist in the plant kingdom. That is also a sort of life. Why destroy life at all? That is the question.

We live in a world in which life lives on life. This is the plan of things and when one understands the plan of things, one can go further and begin to understand God's philosophy that the lower order of life is permitted to be sacrificed for life of the higher order. There is an entire plan of eco-system in life. Hence, when this is true of the stage below that of man, why should man be

deprived of it? When in nature all other species of animals below man are permitted by God to survive on the comparatively lower order of species, why should man be deprived of it? If a person takes pity on a hen, we need to ask has he ever observed the hen eating worms or insects? Whatever animal you eat, it lives somehow on lower orders of life and all birds do the same thing. Birds of comparatively higher order kill their own species – birds of a lower order. This is a general plan of things and nobody can change it. There is no reason why man should be exempt from this.

QUESTIONER

Islam teaches not to idolise human beings. So, what does it think of ‘pop stars’ and other people that teenagers follow and idolise?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru): Idolising is a different thing from having ideals. Strictly speaking, the term idolising means to raise someone’s status to the status of

God, a deity whom you worship. Idealising, on the other hand, means that you believe in imaginary principles, ideals, which do not exist in real life. For example, some people live an ideal life, or attempt to live an ideal life or want to have an ideal husband which means a husband that can only be found in ideas but not in real life whereas to make an idol of somebody is a different thing altogether. Idolising is to follow somebody in such total submission that nothing of your own will is left and you are, in a way, enslaved or captured by that person. This is idolising as I understand it - I may be wrong. Now that I have explained these differences, what is your question in view of this?

QUESTIONER

Some people say that those who continually follow ‘pop stars’ are idolising them but what about idealising them?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru): Without idealising you cannot do justice to yourself because every-

body's concept of what is perfect is different. For instance, you may have a completely different ideal from mine. Therefore, you must realise what your ideal is and you must remain in search of that ideal. If you find your ideal and it so happens that you are also an ideal for that person then in that case life can be heaven on earth, a real paradise. However, most often this does not happen. More often than not what we find is that one may believe someone to be one's ideal but it turns out not to be the case and this is because of acting and deceit - because of distorted human attitude in that people are prone to cheat others in relation to their own inner selves. What they pose as and what they purport to be is most often not true. Someone may present a personality that is your own ideal but if that person is acting then you could be deceived and fall into the trap of his acting. Idealising, therefore, is a must but with this precaution that when you search for your ideal you should remember that people sometimes try to cheat others and they are not what they

show themselves to be. The test for this is very simple. In the ordinary daily practice of life, if they easily tell lies to please you, leave them alone. This is because if a person is true he does not at any stage, even in extreme compulsion, tell lies to save himself or gain some advantage from others. Such a person is the only person who will be trustworthy. If he happens to be your ideal then you are the luckiest person on earth. Without truth no one must ever be trusted and it is not difficult to judge at all because it is impossible for a false man to pose as true in every situation. It is absolutely impossible. He may be true from one side, but from another he will be false. His inner self will reveal itself from this or that corner. An untrue person will be caught and he should be caught. In short, with this principle to guard your interests, I hope, God willing, you will find your ideal - so I hope and pray.

Ephesus – Turning Points for Christianity

By Fazal Ahmad– UK

On the South-West coast of Turkey is the town of Efes, historically known as Ephesus. It is known for its historical Roman ruins - a theatre, palaces, temples - but more crucially, this town seems to have played a major role in the history and shaping of modern Christianity. In this article, we take a look at the different influences that the people and background of the town provided.

Introduction

The town of Ephesus (modern Efes) is on the western coastline of Turkey. Nowadays, there is a small local town called Selçuk nearby, but Ephesus is now a popular tourist destination with so much of its Roman heritage still visible. Probably the most striking structures are the theatres (*Odeion*) and the impressive Library of Celsus, which at one time held 12,000 volumes.

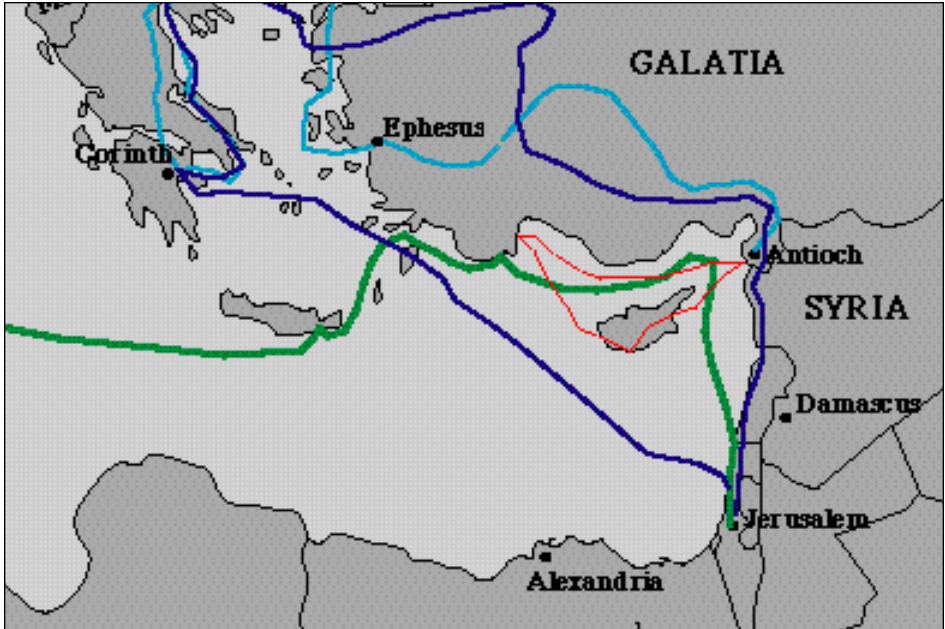
At the dawn of Christianity, Ephesus was the capital of Asia Minor (having been given that honour by the Roman Emperor Augustus in place of Pergamon) and was the meeting point of the east and west, both for trade and

ideas. It had a population of some 250,000 people (mainly Greeks) at the time and there was a large community of Jews in the city.

Ephesus was at that time one of the major centres of the Roman world alongside cities such as Corinth, Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. It was the major seaport of Asia. Its people also had a strong interest in pagan religion and were soon to build an industry around the worship of a goddess.

Pagan Beliefs

Ephesus was subject to a wide range of religious influences due to its strategic location between Europe and Asia, just as Istanbul would centuries later.



Paul's Missionary Journeys

From the 6th century BC, Ephesus hosted the grand Temple of Artemis; Artemis being the ancient Roman mother goddess, and the temple became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The worship of such a mother goddess was not unusual among the pagans of the time with similar cults springing up elsewhere around Diana, Cybele, Isis in Egypt, and the goddess of Çatalhöyük. The significant position of a mother goddess in Ephesus was to have a dramatic

effect on Christianity centuries later.

Ephesus came under Persian influence when it was seized by Cyrus the Great in 546 BC. Two centuries later while still part of the Persian Empire, the Temple of Artemis actually burned to the ground in 356 BC. A few years later in 334 BC, the city was captured by Alexander the Great as part of the Macedonian Greek world, and under his influence the temple began to be re-built

but was not complete until 250 BC. From 133 BC, Ephesus came under the direct control of Rome and the Romans built up Ephesus as a major trading port. It was at this point that the city gained its great power and status.

Near the ancient Roman ruins of Ephesus is the Church of the Virgin Mary built in the 2nd century, and the first such church dedicated to Mary. This was the venue for the major Church Council of Ephesus in 431 CE, which will be discussed later. The Church was originally a Roman Business Centre housing many shops, but was later converted into a Basilica in the 4th century.

The Romans still held on to their pagan beliefs and by now had started to treat their Emperors as gods just as the Egyptians had done centuries earlier with their Pharaohs. Emperors such as Nero and Domitian used the city to boost their own egos and to ‘encourage’ the locals to worship them and pay their dues. The remains of a huge statue of

Domitian was discovered years ago that adds weight to this. The Temple of Artemis was now devoted to Diana; again the city was the centre for the worship of the mother goddess.

Other foreign deities such as Isis from Egypt had also been imported to Ephesus and were worshipped here just as we saw at Pompeii in Italy. A temple to the Egyptian goddess Serapis still stands and dates from the 2nd century CE. There are also shrines and temples dedicated to Zeus, Demeter, Pluto, Apollo, Poseidon and a host of other pagan deities inherited from the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians.

Paul’s Visit

Paul(also known as St. Paul) had a great influence in taking the message of Jesus^(as) to the non-Jews. On his third missionary journey, Acts describes his numerous visits to Ephesus around 53 CE:

When they reached Ephesus, he (Paul) left them there, but first he himself went into the

synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews. (Acts 18:19)

Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm, and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John ... he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus. (Acts 18:24-28)

When Paul visited Ephesus over the course of three years, not only was there a well-established Jewish community present with their synagogue, but also the message about the imminent arrival of the Messiah had already reached here through John the Baptist^(as) (Acts 19:1-7), although not many of the followers were aware that Jesus^(as) had already arrived. Scholars

also point to the fact that the version of Christianity that people in Ephesus were following was from the time of Jesus^(as) and John the Baptist^(as) up to 30 CE, and was not up to date with the changes which had taken place in the Church between 30 - 50 CE.³

Ephesus is the place where Paul probably stayed the longest during his travels. Interestingly, given the discussion earlier about the mother goddess, Paul's preaching received a backlash from the local silversmiths led by Demetrius who feared a drop in their business of selling silver statues of Artemis. The locals came in hundreds to protest against Paul, but despite this, Christianity soon gained many followers in the city.

John of Ephesus

In early Christian history, there were two notable people in Ephesus by the name of John: the apostle John also known as *John the Evangelist*, and later *John the Elder* who was still alive at the time of the Church elder

Papias(60 - 130 CE).² There were two tombs of John in Ephesus also.

John the Evangelist is thought to be the St. John of the Bible and had a Basilica dedicated to him at nearby Selçuk. He is thought to have lived the last few years of his life there according to local traditions. Some of these traditions even suggest that Mary accompanied St John here around 37 CE and spent here remaining years here. Indeed, there is even a house here called the Meryemana which still attracts pilgrims today, although there are many such legends across Turkey.

John the Elder is thought to have been a senior priest living in Ephesus and responsible for the Second and Third Epistles of John found in the Bible. This may also be the person responsible for the book of Revelations in the Bible. Dabbous (1997) suggests that this was actually John the Baptist, who survived an attempt on his life, traveled west through

Turkey to Ephesus, and then settled on the nearby Greek island of Patmos where he received his revelations as documented in the Bible.³ There is a Tomb dedicated to St John the Baptist in the fortress situated on the rock at Ephesus.

Roman Persecution

The Roman Empire did not know what to make of the new religious fervour of the Christians and Jews. The Jews had been troublesome for the Roman authorities as they were anticipating the advent of a Messiah, and since the Romans had annexed Palestine, the Jews had become increasingly militant expecting that Messiah to also free them from Roman rule. Even in the second century CE, the Roman Governor Pliny (69-113 CE) wrote to Emperor Trajan the punishment meted out to Christians for resisting worship of the Emperor.

One period of persecution recorded, is under the Roman Emperor Decius in the year 250 CE when the people were told to

worship their Emperor. The many Christians who refused and were steadfast in their monotheistic beliefs were persecuted. There is a legend of Maximus who is said to have been stoned, and his fellow seven sleepers and their dog were forced into their caves (more about this later).⁵

The famous Church historian Eusebius recorded the persecution endured by Origen, a renowned Christian philosopher under Emperor Decius in the following words:

As for Origen, the terrible sufferings that befell him in the persecution ... chains and bodily torments, agony in iron and in the darkness of prison; how for days on end, his legs were pulled four paces apart in the torturers stocks. ⁷

This was followed by the harshest persecution under the Emperor Diocletian who prohibited Christian meetings, had Churches burnt down, and many Christians were arrested,

tortured, exiled and even executed.⁸

There is no doubt that the cruelty of the persecution inflicted on Christians by the Roman Emperors was very severe, and that the Jews and Christians living in Ephesus suffered similar consequences.

Cave of the Seven Sleepers

The eighteenth chapter of the Holy Qur'an is Al-Kahf which has an account of how a group of young men took to caves to flee from persecution for many years. The Qur'an begins to describe the men as follows:

Dost thou think that the People of the Cave and the Inscription were a wonder among our Signs? When the young men betook themselves for refuge to the Cave and said, 'Our Lord, bestow on us mercy from Thyself, and provide for us right guidance in our affair.' So We sealed up their ears in the Cave for a number of years.

(Ch.18: Vs.10 - 12)

Some say 'They were three, the fourth was their dog,' and others say 'They were five, the sixth was their dog', guessing at random. ... And they stayed in their Cave three hundred years, and added nine more.

(Ch.18: Vs.23 - 26)

Not far from the old Roman ruins at Ephesus near Mount Pion is a large cave structure known locally as the *Caves of the Seven Sleepers*. The cave is a network of catacombs and caves just a mile from the old city. The caves were discovered in 1928 by Franz Miltner, an Austrian archaeologist. The complex consists of four floors (possibly even as many as seven) and within it were two rock carved churches.

Local legends speak of seven young Christians who fled from Roman persecution and refused to denounce their faith. The Imperial Guards mercilessly sealed up the caves to prevent the young men from escaping (some accounts suggest that this was

done on the direct order of Emperor Decius who according to the legend had come to Ephesus to celebrate a pagan festival). According to most traditions, the boys fell asleep for 200 years, and then awoke and left the cave in search of food. They were surprised to see that Christianity had become the State religion.

The duration of the stay of the group of young men has been a source of debate for many years. Some scholars argue that the meaning of verse 26 in the Holy Qur'an is that they stayed in the Cave for 300 solar years, which is approximately 309 lunar years (a lunar year is 11 days shorter than a solar year). Another interpretation is that out of a total period of 300 years, they resorted to the Caves to flee persecution for a total of 9 years.

Whatever the truth of the legends, these caves are certainly more plausible than the series of burial chambers in Rome forming the great catacombs. The caves of Ephesus also show

meeting rooms and places for worship whereas the complex in Rome was just for burials. The complex at Ephesus may not be the actual place of the seven sleepers, but is one of the more plausible candidates. There are other similar structures with their own legends elsewhere in Turkey in Akhisar, Sardes, Tarsus and Antakya among others.

In Ephesus at the site of the caves, the story of the seven sleepers inspired the local population to the extent that they built a Church above the Grotto, and established a graveyard here with over a thousands tombs and graves placed here. Some inscriptions related to the seven sleepers have even been found here.

Council of Ephesus

In the year 431 CE, a hundred years after another Christian council at nearby Nicaea had created the concept of Trinity in 325 CE, another Church Council was held here in Ephesus. This time, the subject under debate was the status of Jesus' mother,

Mary^(s). At the Council, a proposition was put forward that since Jesus^(as) had been declared divine a century ago, Mary must be the Mother of god. This was opposed by Nestorius who argued that even if Jesus^{((9s0as))} had been both human and divine as was now accepted in the Church, Mary could only have been the mother of his human nature, but even this was rejected as Nestorius was outnumbered at the Council, and thereafter, the cult of Mary was born.

Modern Catholics sometimes seem to worship Mary more than anyone else, and there are tales of 'weeping' statues of Mary, which attract pilgrims from around the world. How ironic that the city, which for centuries was home to the pagan traditions of a mother goddess, had now hosted a conference at which Mary too had been turned into a mother goddess!

Conclusions

As we have seen, Ephesus has played a major role in some of the pivotal points of early

Christianity. It is highly likely that John the Baptist^(as) was in the vicinity and had a major influence on the local Jewish population. Later, Paul preached extensively to the pagans here. In the next few centuries, Christians suffered persecution at the hands of the Romans but survived, and as they became a force and their followers grew rapidly in number, Ephesus also hosted one of the most significant Church Councils, which was to change the status of Mary in Christianity forever.

Lane Fox, Penguin Books, London 1986.

6. *Cities of the Biblical World*, Lamoine F. Devries, Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts 1997.
7. *The History of the Church*, Part 39, Eusebius, Penguin Books 1989.
8. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon, Penguin Books 1985, p.326-327.
9. *The Religions of the Roman Empire*, John Ferguson, Thames & Hudson 1982.

References

1. *Perished Nations*, Harun Yahya, Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, London 1999.
2. *John the Baptist - Part X*, Maha Dabbous, Review of Religions, Vol.92, No.1, January 1997.
3. *John the Baptist - Part XI*, Maha Dabbous, Review of Religions, Vol.92, No.2, February 1997.
4. *Jesus:the Evidence*, Ian Wilson, London 1984.
5. *Pagans and Christians*, Robin

Future of Revelation

This is an extract taken from the book Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth, written by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru).



The Rationale of Finality

The finality of any prophet can be observed with reference to his message as well as with reference to his status. It is possible for a prophet to be final in his message and his status, yet it is also possible for another lesser prophet to come after him without violating his finality. It is this aspect of prophethood that we are going to thoroughly examine now.

The belief in the finality of the Qur'anic law and in the finality of the Prophet^(sa) to whom this law was revealed, is unanimously held by all Muslims. The Qur'an – a complete code of life – claims for itself a promise of eternal Divine protection from interpolation by human hands. If this claim is right, as the Muslims believe and demonstrate it to be, the bearer of such a book must be accepted as the last lawbearing prophet. This is clearly understandable and is so endorsed by the entire world of Islam without exception. But from the non-Muslim vantage point, it is difficult to comprehend how any Book could fulfil the needs of all ages and defy the requirements for change during the times to come. Add to this the Qur'anic claim of universality and the problem will increase manifold. How can it be logically explained that any Divine Book could satisfactorily address the ethnic and parochial problems of all mankind alike? There are Europeans, Americans, Africans, Arabs, Russians, Israelis, and numerous people of Asian origin with different ethnic backgrounds and inherited cultures. Their political and social traditions also differ

so widely that it is difficult to visualize how a single universal code of religious law could satisfy them with equal justice.

In answer to both these questions, the Qur'an claims that all its teachings are founded on the human psyche which is common to mankind and unchangeable in relation to time. Any teaching which perfectly corresponds to the human psyche becomes unchangeable. It is this principle that the Qur'an alludes to when it says:

فَاقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*So set thy face to the service of religion as one devoted to God. And follow the nature made by Allah – the nature in which He has created mankind. There is no altering the creation of God. That is the right religion. But most men know not.*¹

(Ch.30; v.31)

Indeed the nature created by God cannot be altered. Even the atheist must concede that human nature has remained universally unaltered since time immemorial. But a Book of Law corresponding to this unalterable nature can itself be changed all the same by the interference of humans. The Qur'an takes care of this danger by declaring it is a well-protected Book.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُزَلُّنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

*Verily, it is We Who have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We are its Guardian.*²

(Ch.15: V.10)

History has proved this claim to be right. Hence the Prophet^(sa) who was bestowed this Book has to be accepted as the last law-bearer. Nothing in this claim is irrational, but when it is suggested that even non-law-bearing prophets cannot come, the jurisdiction of finality is overextended without any rational justification. No sooner have they made this claim of absolute finality than they venture to demolish it themselves. The cracks begin to appear the moment they hasten to exempt Jesus^(as) from this all pervasive law of finality.

When confronted with this dilemma, they dismiss it with a mere wave of their hand as though it were no dilemma at all.

The reappearance of Jesus^(as) as a prophet after Prophet Muhammad^(sa), they argue, does not contradict his absolute finality on the following counts:

- Jesus would be brought back from a stock of prophets who had already been commissioned before the advent of Prophet Muhammad^(sa). Thus his finality will not be violated. It can only be violated if a prophet is raised after his advent even if that prophet brings no new law and is selected by God from within his own *Ummah* (people).
- Jesus^{'(as)} prophethood would be the one granted to him during his advent prior to Islam.
- Moreover because during his second advent he would be subordinated to the Holy Prophet^(sa), he would no longer be held as independent.

Hence by being an older prophet and by becoming subordinated, he would not violate the seal of prophethood. As such, their concept of

finality only means that new prophets cannot be commissioned while old prophets can be brought back; but this is sheer absurdity. What manner of an All-Wise God would He be Who would pass the verdict of absolute finality in favour of anyone despite His knowledge that a prophet would certainly be needed after him? The question of old or new is irrelevant. Central to the issue is the question of need.

The need for another prophet after the advent of the last is an intrinsically contradictory belief. Faced with this dilemma the Ulema always twist the issue by arguing that the need for the advent of a prophet may occur after the final prophet had come and gone. Yet, the absoluteness of his finality would remain intact as long as the new need is fulfilled by an old prophet. But anyone should be able to see through this transparent effort at cheating. The difference of old or new is just a childish attempt to confuse the issue. If Jesus^(as) of Nazareth reappears and submits to the supremacy of Prophet Muhammad^(sa), he would still be a prophet after him. To fulfil the new need by borrowing an old prophet from a bygone people is far worse than fulfilling the same need by raising a new prophet from within the people of Islam. If the former does not violate the Doctrine of Finality the latter most certainly cannot.

Al-Imam Al Mahdi (The Guided Leader)

We may now be permitted to deviate from the issue of Jesus's^(as) re-advent, but only for a while, to turn our gaze upon the status of Al-Imam. Al-Mahdi.

According to the prophecies of the Holy Prophet^(sa), Jesus^(as) does not seem to be the only one whose appearance is predicted in the latter days. One finds the repeated mention of another Divine Reformer, under the title of Al Mahdi, which means 'The Guided One'. Most traditions speak of Isa^(as) (Jesus) and Al-Mahdi (the Guided Imam) as two different persons. But there is one prominent exception. Ibn-e-

Majah – one of the six authentic books of tradition – creates a strong impression that the two Promised Reformers would in fact be one person, only holding two different titles. The exact words of the tradition run as follows:

لَا الْمَهْدِيُّ إِلَّا عَيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ

There would be no Mahdi other than Isa (Jesus)³

This can only mean that the promised Mahdi himself is referred to as Jesus^(as). However, Al-Mahdi is to be born within the Ummah, according to most traditions. How then, could he be the person of Jesus^(as), if Jesus^(as) is to descend from heaven after him? This can only happen if Jesus^(as) is a mere title which Al-Mahdi would possess together with his own so that no separate Jesus^(as) would descend from the heavens. His role will be performed by Al-Mahdi instead. It ensues that the prophet Jesus^(as) would be born metaphorically, as Al-Imam Al-Mahdi within Islam. This leads us to the issue of determining the real status of Al-Mahdi. As will be shown presently, his status has to be that of a non-law-bearing subordinate prophet though the mainstream Ulema do not refer to him as such. In the case of Jesus^(as), they can freely refer to him as a prophet because of the reasons mentioned above; but in the case of Al-Mahdi they cannot do so lest this admission should clearly clash with their Doctrine of Finality.

Their strategy regarding the Mahdi is completely different. For them, he will remain an uncrowned prophet to whom all attributes of a prophet are freely granted except for the title. It is like defining a man without calling him one, while calling him by any other name would not make him less than a man. The Ulema must realize that the status of Al-Mahdi must be determined by virtue of his attributes. His entitlement to the status of a prophet cannot be denied him as long as

he functions as one. If the prerequisites of a prophet are combined in any person, then call him by whatever title you may, a prophet he would always remain. A denial of him, while he will be directly commissioned by God, will be tantamount to a denial of God. As such, whoever refuses to believe in Al-Mahdi as a subordinate prophet will lose his right to be counted among the true believers. Belief in him will be incumbent upon every Muslim, as admitted even by the orthodoxy. Thus he would enjoy a prerogative which is shared only by a prophet and by no one less than a prophet. The act of not granting Al-Mahdi the status he is entitled to enjoy can in no way deprive him of that right. The inconsistency in their beliefs will by no means become less glaring.

Non-Law-Bearing Prophets and Revelation

In Islam, the status of a prophet is the highest a man is granted. A prophet is not just a person who prophesies, he is the one who is specifically commissioned as such by God. All reformers are not essentially prophets but all prophets are essentially reformers. Revelation by itself does make one a prophet. Even non-prophets can be granted revelation and be blessed by communion with Him.

Revelation has a much wider field of application with many connotations such as dreams, visions, inspirations and even verbal addresses. As such it has never been denied by most scholars even in the medieval ages. The controversy only arose in relation to the institution of prophethood and it is this particular aspect of revelation that is being presently examined.

One can easily understand the wisdom behind the discontinuity of law-bearing prophets in the light of the foregoing discussion. The question which must be examined at length is, why should non-law-bearing prophets also be discontinued and why should the institution of prophethood in its entirety be brought to an abrupt end?

The history of religion proves beyond a shadow of doubt that it has never been essential for every prophet to bring a new law. There are many among them like Isaac., Jacob^(as) Joseph^(as), Lot^(as) and Isaiaha^(as), who did not bring any new law. However, they shared with the prophets before them the distinction of having been commissioned by God as Divinely appointed spiritual leaders.

References

1. Translation of Ch.30:V.31 by Maulawi Sher Ali.
(Note: The author has replaced the word ‘Allah’ by ‘God’)
2. Translation of Ch.15: V.10 by the author.
3. *Sunan Ibn-e-Majah*. Kit-abul-Fitan. Babo Shiddatiz-Zaman.

Readers’s Notice

As announced by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V at the 37th Annual Convention UK, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community is inviting anyone who can undertake the work of translating the writings of the Promised Messiah^(as), mainly in Urdu, into English. If you can render this service, please write to Mr M.D. Shams at the following address:

Mr. M.D. Shams
Additional Wakilu Tasneef
‘Islamabad’
Sheephatch Lane
Tilford
Surrey
GU10 2AQ

Persecution of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan: An Analysis Under International Law and International Relations – part 3

This is the final part of an article looking at the illegitimacy of the position of Pakistan in the way that it deals with minorities such as the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

First published in *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, Vol.16, Spring 2003, pp.217-245 by Amjad Mahmood Khan.

IV. The Anti-Blasphemy Provisions Under Regional Instruments

A. African Charter on Human and People's Rights

Thirty African nations, including thirteen Muslim states, signed the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on October 21, 1986.⁷⁵ Apart from the ICCPR, the African Charter stands as the only legally binding treaty that includes Muslim states. The 62-Article Charter enshrines sweeping rights including those of free speech, association, and property. Article 8 guarantees the freedom of conscience and the profession and free practice of religion. Although Pakistan is obviously not a signatory, the Charter, along with the ICCPR, is an indicator that religious freedom can be protected in Muslim states. In targeting a particular religious group by attaching criminal penalties to the public declaration or display of an Ahmadi's faith, the anti-blasphemy provisions violate Article 8 of the Charter.

B. Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam

The Charter of the Islamic Conference formed the Organisation of the Islamic Conference ('OIC') in 1972, opening membership to every Muslim state in the world, roughly 50 in all. The Conference aimed to offer an Islamic conception of human rights and express Muslim solidarity in international human rights norms. Members of the OIC

passed the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam on August 5, 1990.⁷⁶ The Declaration makes no guarantee of freedom of religion, nor offers any of the explicit safeguards found in the UDHR, ICCPR, and U.N. Declaration of 1981. The closest it comes to the language of the above instruments is in Article 10, which prohibits ‘any form of compulsion on man in order to convert him to another religion or to atheism.’⁷⁷ The language of this Article resembles that of Article 18(2) of the ICCPR, which provides, ‘No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice.’⁷⁸ Where Article 18(2) prohibits compulsion as it relates to basic religious freedoms for minorities, Article 10 of the Cairo Declaration merely prohibits compulsion as it relates to conversion to a religion other than Islam or to atheism. In other words, the Cairo Declaration does little to advance international customary human rights law in the Muslim world.

The anti-blasphemy laws do not seem to run counter to the basic Articles of the Cairo Declaration. Indeed, they seem wholly consistent with them: they are laws restricting blasphemy against the Prophet of Islam in accordance with ‘the tenets of the *Shari’a*’ and for the preservation of the ‘unspoiled nature’ of Islam. Though, in fact, the Cairo Declaration appears as Pakistan’s best, and perhaps only, chance to justify its anti-blasphemy provisions under an extra-territorial covenant, it is important to recognise that the Declaration itself came well after the issuance of the anti-blasphemy provisions. Indeed, a retroactive attempt at reconciling legal persecution of religious minorities with the precepts of a fledgling regional instrument not endorsed by the majority of the world⁷⁹ is but a contradictory and perfunctory attempt at saving Pakistan’s once leading commitment to religious freedom while still advocating a debilitating, strictly *Shari’a*-based legal system.

V. THE ANTI-BLASPHEMY PROVISIONS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

The persecution of Ahmadis is fundamentally an issue of the legal entrenchment of restrictions on religious minorities in Pakistan. Though I argue that the issue is best resolved through international law, it nevertheless requires a deep understanding of Pakistan's political and social milieu. Foreign policies concerning the issue would necessarily involve paradigmatic prescriptions. It is a useful exercise, therefore, to assess the issue through the lenses of various strands of international relations theory, so as to anticipate the major policy arguments for and against its resolution. Admittedly, many of these arguments cut against my own argument for the repeal of the anti-blasphemy provisions in Pakistan's Penal Code.

A. The Realist Paradigm⁸⁰

A realist would argue that Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws target only about 5% of Pakistan's total population. These laws were enacted by democratically elected officials in the National Assembly and are wholly constitutional. The majority of Pakistan's people seemingly favour a system of *Shari'a* and deem Ahmadis as non-Muslims. The United States, or any nation, should therefore treat the persecution of Ahmadis no differently than other human rights concerns around the Islamic world, that is, as a minor problem relative to the concern of maintaining the balance of power among Muslim states. Considerable deference must be paid to the central authority in Pakistan, namely President Musharraf and his appointed cabinet and justices. By intervening on behalf of oppressed religious minorities in Pakistan, some have argued, the international community would not only be violating the sovereignty of Pakistan, but also disrupting its delicate and crucial partnership in the war on terrorism.

Pakistan has endorsed only the UDHR, which is a mere moral affirmation of universal rights and has no binding force. The ICCPR,

in contrast, is binding on its signatories, which does not include Pakistan. Pakistan has asserted its preference for the *Shari'a* by not endorsing the U.N. Declaration of 1981 and by justifying its anti-blasphemy provisions under the Cairo Declaration. A young and unstable country like Pakistan should not bind itself by the whims of its founding fathers, whose mandate was short-lived. To undermine the strictures of the *Shari'a* with an international referendum to repeal the anti-blasphemy laws would damage Pakistan's political and legal machinery, perhaps leading to the increase of violence along its borders. Such a referendum would also fail to account for the fact that Pakistan, since October 1999, and until only recently, has been essentially a military regime that solves its problems, particularly the Kashmir dispute, through military means.

The persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan can be resolved via political means, not legal ones. To hold Pakistan to international customary human rights law as it relates to its anti-blasphemy laws is an impractical and futile pursuit because political treatment of religious dissidents is what drives the legitimacy of such laws. Rather than dealing with individual political actors within Pakistan, a more manageable approach would be to treat the nation as a unitary political actor, whose internal political insurrections are not the concern of the international community, particularly not of Western, liberal nations. Of greater concern is who controls Pakistan's central authority, how best to deal with that authority, and how to preserve Pakistan's powerful alliance with the West against other, more volatile, Muslim states in the region and the world.

B. The Institutional Paradigm⁸¹

According to the institutionalist point of view, the anti-blasphemy provisions violate Article 18 of the UDHR, which Pakistan itself advocated in 1948. According to a developing body of international customary human rights law, Pakistan, in passing Ordinance XX,

violated Articles 18, 19, 20, 27 of the ICCPR and Articles 6 and 7 of the U.N. Declaration of 1981. Pakistan justified its anti-blasphemy provisions and the persecution of religious minorities under the provisions of a regional instrument, namely the Cairo Declaration, *post hoc*, years after its promulgation. The United States, or any nation, should therefore treat the persecution of Ahmadis in a manner that defers to international institutions as a way to promote and maintain basic and universal religious freedom to religious minorities.

Pakistan has clearly demonstrated its commitment to the universal human right of religious freedom in its founding era, being the leading Muslim nation to endorse the UDHR. This commitment, though buried in history, must be renewed by holding Pakistan accountable for its promulgation of anti-blasphemy laws that fly in the face of existing international norms. All states have an interest in preserving the basic freedoms of ethnic minorities within their borders. By rendering Pakistan subject to international law, the international community posits a collective interest in prescribing state activities that champion freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief. With a history marred by corruption, violence, and instability, Pakistan has a vested interest in proving to the world that it can function as not only a progressive democracy capable of honouring commitments to international law and custom, but also as one of the few Islamic states that encourages religious pluralism.

Pakistan, though not a party to the ICCPR, reconciled its anti-blasphemy provisions with the limitations to non-derogable rights in the Covenant itself. Pakistan acted in a way *prima facie* incompatible with recognised rules concerning freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief. However, it defended its conduct by appealing to exceptions or justifications contained within the rules themselves. Whether or not Pakistan's conduct is in fact justifiable on the basis of these exceptions is not the key issue. Rather, the important thing is that

Pakistan constructively consented to external institutions governing its conduct, thereby strengthening rather than weakening the spirit of the rules and the system.

C. The Liberalist Paradigm⁸²

The liberalist view holds that Pakistan criminalised the activities of Ahmadis to acquiesce to the wishes of its major political parties and interest groups, including the clerics. The majority of Pakistan's people favour the 1974 amendment declaring Ahmadis non-Muslims and subsequent amendments to the Pakistani Penal Code through Ordinance XX and the Criminal Law Act of 1986. Non-Muslim minorities (and Ahmadis) are in fact represented in the parliament through separate electorates. The United States, or any nation, should therefore defer to the organised collective action of a sovereign and democratic nation and the legal procedures it adopts to protect its interest in preserving public order.

Pakistan's commitment to religious freedom for minorities, though certainly an integral part of its founding era, is not entirely representative of its people. As the *Shari'a* evolved in Pakistan and Islam became the official state religion, domestic support of laws restricting activity that blasphemed Islam and its founder, the Prophet Muhammad(sa), increased. Indeed, although Pakistan endured a number of military coups, its intensity of purpose to treat Ahmadis as non-Muslims remained consistent. To call for the repeal of the anti-blasphemy laws and thus allow the wishes of less than 3% of the nation to prevail would render meaningless the precise interactions between Pakistan's institutions and its citizens. What is required to alleviate the plight of Ahmadis in Pakistan is an overhaul of public opinion towards them; to repeal the anti-blasphemy provisions so as to afford religious freedom to Ahmadis as Muslims would prove ineffective.

Altering individual and group behaviour within states requires state deference to international institutions. Though the anti-blasphemy provisions offend notions of freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief in the UDHR and U.N. Declaration of 1981 as well as the legal provisions of the ICCPR—that is to say, though the laws go against international norms—it is not necessarily the case that repealing them will make Pakistan more tolerant of religious minorities. External opinion of Muslim states within the region, and internationally as well, may disfavour the repeal of the anti-blasphemy provisions, which, in turn, may result in the severance of international commitments by Muslim states in the future. If the provisions are retracted, Ahmadis may then have the law on their side, but the rest of Pakistan and the Muslim world against them.

More integral to the advancement of religious minorities in Pakistan is an analysis of Pakistan's current conflict of interests. Pakistan's quest to eradicate violent zealotry within its borders is genuine, though not without its limitations. The world has recently seen French naval engineers and an American journalist terrorised by a militant component of Pakistan.⁸³ Yet, as President Musharraf clamps down on Pakistan's internal terrorist network,⁸⁴ this militant component struggles for legitimacy within Pakistan. Public opinion polarises as these crucial interests collide, altering the dynamics of represented interests. One emerging interest that the Pakistani government is bound to reflect is that of religious minorities like the Ahmadis, who favour emphatically an assault on Islamists. It follows, therefore, that the international community's methodical appraisal of President Musharraf's regime and its support of Islamists, rather than a slapdash attack on the anti-blasphemy provisions in particular, will likely result in resolving the persecution of Ahmadis.

D. The Constructivist Paradigm⁸⁵

Under the constructivist model, Pakistan, during its founding era,

expressed a felt obligation to grant the fundamental right of religious freedom to minorities. Pakistan's prevailing social norms evolved to reflect a more restrictive *Shari'a*-based government protective of Islam's integrity. The rise of President Musharraf and the devastating impact of September 11 again re-shaped the social norms in Pakistan, so that militant Islam's hold on Pakistan was cast into doubt. The United States, or any nation, should therefore work discursively with Pakistan's leadership to repeal the anti-blasphemy provisions in Pakistan's constitution.

By affirming the UDHR, Pakistan advocated a norm of international religious freedom. Its founding visionaries, led by Jinnah, deliberated over the construction of an Islamic Republic respectful of non-Muslims. Indeed, as the mouthpiece for millions of Muslims jaded by their brutal conflict with Hindu India, Jinnah constructed the basis for a constitution that ensured the right to profess freely one's faith. Interestingly, this fundamental protection afforded to non-Muslims and Muslims alike was part of a patently secular impulse prevailing in Pakistan, at least up until 1953. Norms, however, are built up and broken down by state actors. The hegemonic discourse of the mullahs, essentially legislating from the pulpit, eviscerated the advancement of international norms in Pakistan. Sure enough, one such norm, that of basic freedom for religious minorities, eroded, leading to the institutionalised persecution of Ahmadis.

Perhaps the only consistent pattern to glean from Pakistan's brief and tumultuous history is that the norms that shape its government have constantly changed. Five military coups are testimony enough that Pakistan's citizens are unsettled. They assault retrogression and champion an Islam not manipulated for political gains. Now, with Pakistan's newfound responsibility to the 'civilised' world to uproot militant Islam from within, a significant next step by the international community would be to include experts on religious liberty on

delegations to Pakistan and appropriate regional and international meetings, to decry Pakistan's punishment of quotidian religious observances by its minority Ahmadis, and also to work with those within Pakistan who advocate new legal norms and who hold a more broad-minded attitude toward Islam.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ahmadis in Pakistan have been called 'the most persecuted Muslim religious group today.'⁸⁶ Those defending the anti-blasphemy laws would be quick to argue that Ahmadis are not Muslims to begin with, so they cannot be the most persecuted Muslim group in the world. Their persecution stems from their false hope for self-identification as Muslims; should they renounce their identity as Muslims, they would ameliorate their position. Such reasoning is counter to one of the very quests that sustained Pakistan's statehood: self-identification as Muslims in lieu of persecution under Hindu India. Freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, and belief are what drove millions of people to die for the creation of a safe haven for Muslims in Pakistan. To subject Muslim religious minorities today to the same persecution Muslims endured during partition would be to relinquish the principles of justice Pakistan sought at its inception to justify its creation.

Until international law speaks to the issue, the persecution of Ahmadis will continue. One of the virtues of international institutions and instruments is their ability to regulate problems of political proportions through legal means. The anti-blasphemy provisions in Pakistan are legal mechanisms cloaked in political trappings. They validate the ascension of strict *Shari'a* as well as the militant whims and ambitions of extreme Islamic fundamentalist groups in Pakistan. They construct and regulate an invisible threat by religious minorities and in so doing earn the backing and support of Pakistan's institutions and a significant part of its people. But a State's political ruse cannot

withstand the authority of a larger body of law. As an institutionalist might argue, where a nation once committed to universal human rights now stands opposed to a body of international customary human rights norms, it nevertheless cannot escape being bound by the norms of the majority, and it remains liable for its gross deviations from the set of regulations that govern that majority.

A constructivist is correct to put faith in changing norms in Pakistan. The October 1999 military coup in Pakistan, though decried by much of the international community, was a joyous occasion for many of Pakistan's citizens. On the streets of Karachi shortly thereafter, one could sense a movement towards governmental reform, accountability, and justice. The events of September 11th have only fuelled this impulse, with Pakistan's citizens demanding more accurate census counts, more fair geographic and demographic representation in the National Assembly, and a more consistent administration of justice. These new norms initially began to bode well for Ahmadis, albeit tenuously.⁸⁷ For example, on April 21, 2000, President Musharraf required that deputy commissioners rather than local police officers review all blasphemy charges prior to filing formal cases.⁸⁸ He later rescinded this requirement due to strong pressure from right-wing Muslim groups. Though Pakistan has a long road ahead, the minimum effect of these emerging norms is to render less clear the claim that the majority of Pakistan's peoples truly favour the anti-blasphemy provisions in place.

It is also crucial for a liberalist to note that Ahmadis represent the moderate thread of Islam in Pakistan. In the face of persecution in Pakistan, Ahmadis advocate universal human rights, tolerance, and deliberation. They have condemned militant Islam in vociferous terms.⁸⁹ In Pakistan itself, Ahmadis have set up progressive schools, hospitals for the sick and needy, and welfare programs. They have been built inter-religious coalitions against affronts to basic civil and

religious liberties. Some estimates calculate that Ahmadis in Pakistan, though only representing 3% of the country's total population, represent nearly 20% of its literate population.⁹⁰ Two of Pakistan's most respected personalities: Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, Pakistan's first foreign minister and the only person ever to serve as both the president of the U.N. General Assembly (Seventeenth Session from 1962 - 1963) and president of the International Court of Justice (1970 - 1973); and, Professor Abdus Salam, the first Pakistani Nobel laureate, were both Ahmadis.⁹¹

Intervening on behalf of Ahmadis in Pakistan by calling for the repeal of the anti-blasphemy provisions under the authority of international law is, in fact, entirely consistent with the realist paradigm.⁹² Most Muslims are far less militant than one would gather from the harsh rhetoric of their "spokesmen." What results often from the political power of militant Islam is not only systemic cruelty toward innocent domestic groups, but also the creation of a regime many times more dangerous to the interests of the international community than a moderate, tolerant Islamic regime. To empower Ahmadis would be to encourage political alternatives to emerging militant Islamic groups in Pakistan. Healthy political struggle paralyzes militant Islam. The international community, the United States in particular, would be wise to understand the nature and function of moderate and credible opposition groups to militant Islam like the Ahmadiyya Community.

In sum, the case of the Ahmadis in Pakistan represents a visible and practical outlet by which the United States and other Western democracies may empower moderation in Muslim regimes. To call for the repeal of the anti-blasphemy provisions in Pakistan is a prime opportunity for the international community to gain enormous political advantage over militant Islam, while at the same time elevating the status of the fundamental universal right of religious freedom.

References

- 75 See African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, June 17, 1981, O.A.U. Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3/Rev. 5 (1981), *reprinted in* DOCUMENT SUPPLEMENT, *supra* note 20, at 489.
- 76 An English translation of the Declaration is included in U.N. GAOR, World Conf. on Hum. Rts., 4th Sess., Agenda Item 5, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.157/PC/62/Add.18 (1993).
- 77 *Id.*
- 78 ICCPR, *supra* note 52, art. 18 § 2, 999 U.N.T.S. 171.
- 79 For a discussion of the intractability of the Cairo Declaration as a statement of international law, see Ann Elizabeth Mayer, *Universal Versus Islamic Human Rights: A Clash of Cultures or a Clash With a Construct?*, 15 MICH. J. INT'L L. 307, 327 - 51 (1994).
- 80 Considered the dominant approach to international relations theory, the realist paradigm identifies the state as the only crucial actor in international politics. International norms reflect power relations among states, and a state's given policy is driven by its relative gains to other states. The essential goal of a state is to survive by maintaining or enhancing its own power. See ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, INTERNATIONAL LAW AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 9 - 14 (2000).
- 81 Traditionally considered as opposing the realist paradigm, the institutionalist paradigm identifies institutions as modifiers of a state's power-driven interests. Institutions link common issues and posit a collective interest between states so as to change state behaviour to reflect a norm. See *id.* at 14 - 17.
- 82 Questioning the realist and institutionalist view of the state as a unitary actor, the liberalist paradigm gives primacy to the social actors that make up a state. Government interests are but a reflection of the precise interactions between individuals and states. Domestic representation is the decisive link between societal demands and state policy. See *id.* at 17 - 20.
- 83 On February 21, 2002, authorities confirmed that Pakistani militants kidnapped and murdered Daniel Pearl, an American journalist for the *Wall Street Journal*. *Fallen Journalist: Daniel Pearl is Dead, Abducted in*

Pakistan and Killed by Captors, WALL ST. J., Feb. 22, 2002, at A1. On July 15, 2002, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a British-born Islamic militant, was found guilty of the crime and subsequently sentenced to death. Steve LeVine, *Pakistan Convicts Four in Pearl Slaying*, WALL ST. J. (Europe Edition), July 16, 2002, at A2. On May 9, 2002, a Pakistani suicide bomber, allegedly with ties to the Al-Qaeda terrorist network, killed 11 French naval engineers in a Sheraton Hotel in Karachi. *Pakistan Blast Kills 14, Marks Growing Risks for Musharraf*, WALL ST. J. (Asia Edition), May 9, 2002, at A1.

- 84 *See generally*, Raymond Bonner, *Pakistan Seethes as Militants Lash Out*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 17, 2002, at A22.
- 85 Taking the liberalist view of the state as a composition of individual actors one step further, the constructivist paradigm recognises that the realities of international politics are shaped by the social structures that govern individual actors. Individual actors are discursively competent and, therefore, construct norms over time. SLAUGHTER, *supra* note 80, at 23 - 26.
- 86 Arzt, *supra* note 50, at 408.
- 87 Within fourteen months of President Musharraf taking office, Islamic fundamentalists set on fire and destroyed two Ahmadi mosques in the Sialkot and Punjab districts respectively, killing ten Ahmadis and injuring a score of others. *See* Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, U.S. Department of State, *Annual Report On International Religious Freedom: Pakistan*, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organisation/9001.pdf> (Dec. 2001).
- 88 *See id.* at 518.
- 89 For example, denouncing a militant perversion of Islam, the then Supreme Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Community, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, remarked: “No religion with a universal message . . . under one flag can even momentarily entertain the idea of employing force to spread its message. Swords can win territories, but not hearts. Force can bend heads, but not minds.” MIRZA TAHIR AHMAD, *ISLAM’S RESPONSE TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES*, 42 (1992).
- 90 *See* Siddiq, *supra* note 4, at 283.

- 91 Internationally, now estimated as over 100 million strong, Ahmadis are lauded as peace-loving, law-abiding citizens with remarkable humanitarian interests. Ahmadis can be found in the highest offices of public service, in Europe and West Africa in particular. *See* Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, *The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam: An Overview*, at <http://alislam.org/introduction> (last visited Dec. 17, 2002).
- 92 Intervention under the authority of international law on behalf of Ahmadis by the United States, or any nation, can be channelled through Pakistan's existing institutions. The Supreme Court of Pakistan, in fact, has deferred to international legal norms in its adjudication. For example, in *Shehla Zia v. WAPDA*, a case decided only a year after *Zaheerudin*, the majority court cited as persuasive authority the 1972 Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the 1992 Rio Declaration to declare that the construction of a grid station in a residential area in Islamabad constituted an affront to a Pakistani citizen's right to life and would lead to environmental degradation. *See Shehla Zia v WAPDA*, 46 P.L.D. (Sup. Ct. 1994) 693, 710 (Pak.).
- 93 *See* H.R. Res. 348, *supra* note 9.
-

Subscription

The Review of Religions



The Holy Ka'aba

MECCA, ARABIA

**The First House of Worship, and
The Spiritual Heart of Islam**

We hope you have enjoyed reading this edition of the magazine. *The Review of Religions* will continue to provide discussion on a wide range of subjects and welcomes any comments or suggestions from its readers.

To ensure that you regularly receive this monthly publication, please fill in your details below and we will put you on our mailing list.

The cost of one year's subscription is £15 Sterling or US \$30 for overseas readers (Please do not send cash). Payments should be made payable to the London Mosque and sent to the address below:

The Review of Religions
The London Mosque
16 Gressenhall Road
London SW18 5QL
United Kingdom



Please tick in box if
you wish to receive *The
Review of Religions*
2002 CD

Please put me on the mailing list for the Review of Religions for 1 year. I enclose subscription payment of £15.00 or US \$30.00. OR if you wish to receive a CD of all the articles published in 2002, please tick the white box above and enclose payment of £5.00, please also add an appropriate sum for postage.

Name: _____

Address: _____
