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# EDITORIAL

Sarah Waseem – UK

The Afghan government released Abdul Rahman, a 41 year old man who converted 16 years ago to Christianity.

In 1990, Mr. Rahman left Afghanistan and started to work as a medical aid worker for an international Christian group helping Afghan refugees in Pakistan. During the course of his job, he converted to Christianity.

In February of this year he was arrested after the police found him carrying a Bible. His ‘crime’ was that he has become an apostate and according to Muslim clerics in Afghanistan, should now face the death penalty.

In 2004, the constitution of Afghanistan was written and it enshrined personal freedoms and recognised the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantees the freedom to choose one’s religion.

But the constitution also draws

from both civil and Islamic Sharia laws and explicitly states that no law can ‘contravene the tenets and provisions’ of Islam. Islamic clerics in Afghanistan argue that the death penalty is the prescribed punishment for apostasy. Intense international pressure was placed on the government to release Mr. Rahman. The case was dropped on ‘technical grounds’ with the prosecutor declaring that medical tests confirmed that Mr. Rahman was mentally unfit to stand trial. Many have interpreted this as an appeasement gesture to win favour with the West.

There is no mention in the Holy Qur’an or anywhere else of any punishment for an apostate which may be meted out to him by any other person. The consequences of his apostasy in this world and in the next life lie solely in the Hands of God. Man is free to accept or reject whatever beliefs he chooses. God says in the Holy Qur’an:

*There should be no compulsion in religion.*  
(Ch.2: V.257)

*It is the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will, believe and let him who will, disbelieve.*  
(Ch.18: V.30)

Islam recognises the right of freedom of conscience and freedom of belief. As far as one's religious belief is concerned, one is answerable to God alone. No man has the right to punish another for his choice of belief. There is absolutely no compulsion whatsoever in Islam and no punishment of any kind permitted in the Holy Qur'an for apostasy.

*Those who believe, then disbelieve, then again believe, then disbelieve and then increase in disbelief, Allah will never forgive them nor will He guide them to the way.*  
(Ch.4:V.138)

This verse proclaims that persons who renounce Islam have the opportunity to re-enter Islam if they so choose. This verse

disproves the assertion that according to the Holy Qur'an an apostate should be put to death. If death was the automatic punishment for an apostate then no question would arise of having the opportunity to join Islam again. This verse mentions apostates who again accept Islam.

Human rights are laid down in the Holy Qur'an which guarantee man the right of perfect freedom of faith and conscience. In such matters God is the Judge – not man.

In this edition of *The Review of Religions*, in his speech on 'Freedom of speech and Tolerance in Islam' Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V emphasises the extent to which tolerance and forgiveness was displayed by the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(saw)</sup> at the time of the victory of Makkah.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V quotes the example of Ikramah who was the greatest enemy of Islam. When Ikramah's wife pleaded for his forgiveness, the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> forgave him. However, Ikramah went to the

Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, and arrogantly said that he had no intention of becoming a Muslim merely because he had been forgiven. He insisted that he still believed in his faith.

‘The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> replied “You can, no doubt, remain steadfast on your faith. You are free in every way.” Moreover, thousands of Makkans had not accepted Islam and despite their defeat exercised their right of freedom of faith. So this is the teaching of the Holy Qur’an and the example set by the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> on this matter.’

‘People who persecute in the name of religion are totally ignorant of the essence of religion. ‘Religion is a metamorphosis of hearts. Religion is not politics and its adherents do not make up political parties. Neither is it a nationality with limited loyalties, nor a country with geographical borders. It is the transformation of hearts – transformation for the good of the soul. The home of

religion is in the depths of the heart. It is beyond the sway of the sword. Mountains are not moved by the sword, nor are hearts changed by force. While persecution in the name of religion is the repetitive theme in the history of human aggression, freedom of conscience is the Quran’s repetitive theme.’  
*(Murder in the name of Islam, by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV<sup>(ru)</sup>)*

Islam presents the greatest example of forgiveness and tolerance to be found in any scripture or international convention. The Muslim clerics of Afghanistan and their Wahabi brethren who have spilled over to other countries, need to study and reflect on the true meaning of their faith.

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## *The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and the Holy Word of God – Part 7*

This series sets out, in the words of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a summary of his exposition of four outstanding topics: ISLAM; ALLAH, THE EXALTED; THE HOLY PROPHET<sup>(saw)</sup> and THE HOLY QUR'AN. The original compilation, in Urdu, from which these extracts have been translated into English, was collated with great care and diligence by Syed Daud Ahmad Sahib, Allah have mercy on him and reward him graciously for his great labour of love. Amin. The English rendering is by the late Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, may Allah be pleased with him, and is quoted from *The Essence of Islam*, Volume 1. All references throughout, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, are from the Holy Qur'an.

**T**he Holy Qur'an has emphatically claimed that it is the Word of God and that our lord and master, Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> is His true Prophet and Messenger, on whom that Holy Word has descended. This claim is clearly set forth in the following verses:

*Allah is He beside Whom there is no God, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and the All-Sustaining.*

*He has sent down to thee the Book containing the truth.*  
(Ch.3:Vs.3-4)

Again:

*O mankind, the Messenger has indeed come to you with Truth from your Lord...*  
(Ch.4:V.171)

Again:

*And in truth We have sent it down and with truth has it descended...*  
(Ch.17:V.106)

Again:

*O ye people, a manifest proof*

*has indeed come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light.*

(Ch.4:V.175)

Again:

*Say. "O mankind! truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah..." (Ch.7:V.159)*

Again:

*But as for ythose who believe and do good works and believe in that which has been revealed to Muhammad – and it is teh truth from their Lord.*

(Ch.47:V.3)

There are hundreds of other verses in which the claim has been put forward clearly that the Holy Qur'an is the Word of God and that Muhammad, the chosen one<sup>(saw)</sup> is His true Prophet. But the verses that we have set out should suffice.

We would remind our opponents that this claim is not put forth in any other book as forcefully as it has been put forth in the Holy

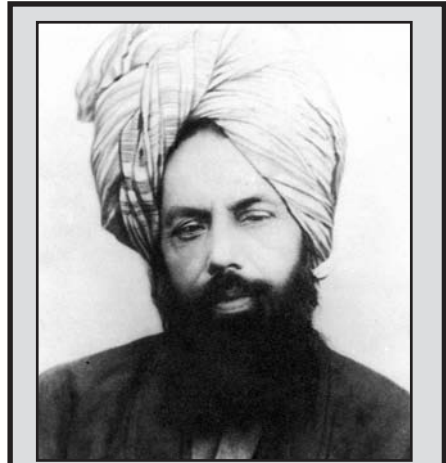
Qur'an. We are very eager that the Aryas should show from the Vedas that the four Vedas claimed to be the word of God and set forth clearly that they were revealed to such and such a person at such and such a time. For a book, on behalf of which it is claimed that it is from God, it is a primary necessity that it should set forth this claim clearly; for a book, which gives us indication of its being from God, to be attributed to God, would be an impertinence.

A second matter which is worth mentioning is that not only has the Holy Qur'an claimed that it is from God and that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was the Messenger of Allah, but has also established this claim with strong and powerful arguments. We shall set forth all these arguments in their order, but for the moment we present the first argument so that seekers after truth should be able to compare in this respect other books with the Holy Qur'an. We also invite every opponent that if this method of proof establishes the truth of a book and is found

in their books also, they should set it forth in their papers and journals; otherwise, we would have to conclude that their books lack this proof of high degree. We affirm with full confidence that this method of proof will not be found in their religion and if we are in error, they should point out our error.

### **Grand Revolution brought by the Holy Prophet<sup>(SAW)</sup>**

That first argument which the Holy Qur'an has set forth in support of its claim of being from God Almighty is that sane reason holds it to be a strong argument for accepting a true Book and a true Messenger of God, that they should appear at a time when the world should be plunged in darkness, and people should have adopted paganism in place of the Unity of God, and vice in place of purity, and wrong in place of justice, and ignorance in place of knowledge, and a Reformer should be sorely needed. Then such a Messenger should depart from the world when he should have accomplished his work of reform in a fine manner and



**The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(AS)</sup>.**

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(AS)</sup>. 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 and blessings of Allah be upon him) and by the scriptures of other faiths.

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

should have been safeguarded from his enemies while he was occupied in that work. He should have appeared under command like a servant and should have departed under command. In short, he should appear at a time

when the age should demand that a heavenly Reformer and Book are needed and he should be called back in accordance with a revealed prophecy after he had firmly planted the tree of reform and a grand revolution should have appeared.

We state it with great pride that the brightness with which this argument has been established in support of the Holy Qur'an and our Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> is lacking in the case of other Prophets and other Books. The claim of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was that he had been sent to the whole of mankind; so the Holy Qur'an convicts all people of being involved in all types of paganism and vice and disobedience as it says:

*Corruption has appeared on land and sea;*  
(Ch.30:V.42)

and then says:

*... so that he (Muhammad) may be a Warner to all the worlds;* (Ch.25:V.2)

that is to say, that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> should warn all people that on account of their misconduct and false doctrines, they have been accounted very sinful in the estimation of God Almighty.

The word Warner that has been used in this verse concerning all the peoples, which means to warn the sinners and evildoers, is a sure indication that the Qur'an claimed that the whole world had been corrupted and that everyone had given up the way of truth and good behaviour, inasmuch as a warning is meant for the disobedient and pagans and evildoers, and a warning is administered to offenders and not to the well behaved. Everyone knows that it is only the vicious and faithless ones who are warned, that it is the way of Allah that a Prophet is a bearer of good tidings for the good and is a Warner for the evil ones. When a Prophet is designated as a Warner for the whole world, it would have to be accepted that by the revelation vouchsafed to that Prophet, the whole world has



been held to be involved in misconduct. This is a claim which the Torah did not make in the case of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, nor the Gospel in the case of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, but was put forward only by the Holy Qur'an. Then it was said:

*..and you were on the brink of a pit of fire...*  
(Ch.3:V.104)

Meaning that before the advent of this Prophet you had arrived at the brink of hell.

The Jews and the Christians were warned that they had perverted the Books of God and had led all the people in every type of mischief and misconduct, and the idol worshippers were charged with worshipping stones, men, stars, and the elements and that they had forgotten the True Creator and were guilty of devouring the property of orphans and of killing children and of doing wrong to their partners, and that they had transgressed beyond measure in everything. It was said:

*Know that Allah quickens the earth after its death.*  
(Ch.57:V.18)

that is to say that the whole earth had died and would now be revived afresh by God.

In short, the Holy Qur'an charged the whole world with misconduct and idol worship, and held the Christians and the Jews to be at the root of all evil and set out all the types of vices in which they indulged. The Qur'an drew such a picture of the misconduct of the world that except in the case of the age of Noah, no other age appears to resemble it.

We have contented ourselves with citing only a few verses and would urge our readers to study the Holy Qur'an carefully so as to discover how forcefully and with what effective words the Holy Qur'an has set forth that the whole world had been corrupted and had died, and that mankind was standing on the brink of hell. It urged the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> to warn the whole world that it was

in a serious condition. A study of the Holy Qur'an reveals that the world was steeped in paganism, idol worship, misconduct and all manner of sin, and was sunk in the deep well of vice.

It is true that the Gospel mentions some of the misconduct of the Jews, but it nowhere said that the whole world had been corrupted and had died and had become filled with paganism and misconduct. Nor did Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> claim that he was a Messenger to the whole world. He addressed the Jews, who were a small people and inhabited a few villages within sight of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. But the Holy Qur'an mentions the death of the whole world and describes the evil condition of all peoples. The Jews were the descendants of the Prophets and professed faith in the Torah, though they did not act in accordance with it; but in the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, in addition to all sorts of corruption in conduct, their doctrine too had been corrupted.

Thousands of people were

atheists and thousands denied revelation and all sorts of evils were rife on the earth. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> mentioned the misconduct of the Jews who were a small people, which shows that the Jews were then in need of a Reformer. But the argument that we put forward in the case of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> to affirm that he was commissioned by God, that he came at the time of general corruption and was called back after effecting a full reform, and the presentation of both these aspects in the Holy Qur'an, and his calling the attention of the world to it, is a matter which is not to be found in the Gospel and indeed not in any other Book except in the Holy Qur'an.

These arguments are put forth by the Holy Qur'an itself and it claims that its truth is established by a consideration of both these aspects. It appeared at a time when misconduct and false doctrines had become widespread and the world had drifted far away from truth and reality and the Unity of God and purity. The affirmation of the Qur'an in this

respect is confirmed by a study of comparative history. There is evidence of the confession of every people that that age was so full of darkness that every people had become prone to creature worship and that is the reason that when the Holy Qur'an charged all people with misguidance and evil-doing, not one of them was able to prove its innocence. Observe how forcefully God Almighty speaks of the vices of the people of the Book and describes the death of the whole world. He says:

*..they should not become like those who were given the Book before them and the term was prolonged for them but their hearts were hardened and many of them were wicked. Know that Allah quickens the earth after its death. We have made the signs manifest to you, that you may understand.*  
(Ch.57:Vs.17-18)

This means that the believers are admonished that they should not behave like the people of the

Book who were given the Book before them and a long time passed and their hearts were hardened and most of them became disobedient and vicious. They are reminded that the earth had died and that God is now reviving it. These are signs of the need and truth of the Holy Qur'an which are being explained to you so that you might understand.

Now you will realise that we have not put forward this argument from our own mind, but that it is the Qur'an that puts it forward and after setting forth both parts of the argument, it says that:

*Know that Allah quickens the earth after its death*  
(Ch.57:V.18)

These are Signs in support of the truth of the Holy Prophet<sup>(SAW)</sup> and the Holy Qur'an which have been set forth so that you might reflect and arrive at the reality.

The second part of this argument is that the Holy Prophet<sup>(SAW)</sup> was

called back from the world to his Lord at a time when he had completed his task fully and this is also clearly set forth in the Holy Qur'an, as Allah the Glorious says that:

*This day have I perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour upon you and have chosen Islam for you as religion.*

(Ch.5:V.4)

meaning that by the revelation of the Qur'an and by the reform of the people your faith has been completed for you and God has chosen Islam as your religion.

This was an indication that the revelation of the Qur'an had been completed and it had carried out surprising and wonderful changes in eager hearts and had perfected their training and that Divine favour had been completed for the Muslims.

These are the two aspects which are the purpose of the advent of a Prophet. This verse announces forcefully that the Holy

Prophet(saw) did not depart this life till Islam had been perfected by the revelation of the Qur'an and the proper training of the Muslims. This is a sign of Divine origin which is not bestowed on a false claimant. Indeed before the Holy Prophet(saw) no true Prophet had shown this high example of perfection that on the one side the Book of God should be completed in peace and on the other side the training of people should be perfected and the disbelieving people should be defeated in every direction and Islam should be victorious on every side.

At another place it is said:

*When the help of Allah comes, and the victory, and those seest men entering the religion of Allah in troops, glorify they Lord, with His praise, and seek forgiveness of Him. Surely He is Oft Returning with compassion.*

(Ch.110:Vs.2-4)

This means that the succour and victory that had been promised

having come and you having seen, O Prophet, that people are entering into Islam in great hosts, then praise and glorify God, that is to say, confess that whatever has happened was not your doing but was the grace and beneficence of Allah, and supplicate Allah in final *Istighfar* for He is Oft-Returning with compassion.

When Prophets are urged to *Istighfar*, it is wrong to conclude that this means that they have to seek forgiveness like sinful people. In their case, it is a confession of their nothingness and humility and weakness and is a respectful way of seeking help. As these verses affirm that the purpose of the advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> had been fulfilled, that is to say, thousands of people had accepted Islam and this was an indication of the approaching death of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> - he died within a year of the receipt of this revelation - it was natural that as these verses had given pleasure to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> he should also be concerned that the garden having been planted,

what about its future irrigation? So God Almighty, in order to remove this concern of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> urged him to *Istighfar*.

The meaning of *maghfirat* is so to cover up a person that he should be safeguarded against calamities. Thus, *mighfar* means a helmet. *Istighfar* means that the calamity that is feared or the sin that is apprehended, may be covered up and stopped from becoming manifest. In this case it was to convey reassurance to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> that he should not grieve over the faith, that God Almighty would not let it be destroyed and would ever turn to it in mercy and hold back the misfortunes which could follow upon some weakness.

*(Nur-ul-Qur'an, No. 1, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 9 pp. 333-356)*

It is a clear proof of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and of the truth of the Holy Qur'an, that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was sent into the world when by its circumstances, it was demanding a grand

Reformer and that he did not die, nor was he killed, till he had established the truth upon the earth. When he appeared as a Prophet, he at once proved his need by the world and condemned every people for their paganism, unrighteousness and wrong-doing. The Holy Qur'an is full of such admonition, for instance:

*Blessed is He Who sent down the Discrimination to His servant that he may be a Warner to all the worlds.*  
(Ch.25:V.2)

Blessed is He Who has sent down the Holy Qur'an to His servant that he may be a Warner to all the peoples; that is to say, he was to warn them of their false doctrines and their going astray.

This verse is proof, and the Qur'an claims, that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> appeared at a time when the whole world and all the people had been corrupted; and his opponents have accepted this claim not only by their silence,

but also by their confession. It follows that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> had come at a time when a true and perfect Prophet should have appeared. Then when we consider the time at which he was called back, we find that the Qur'an is explicit that he was called back when he had completed his task. He was called back after the verse was revealed that the code of teaching for the Muslims had been perfected and all that had to be revealed in that context had been revealed. Not only this, but it was announced that the support of God Almighty had also been perfected and that people in large numbers had accepted Islam. It was also revealed that God had filled their hearts with faith and righteousness and had made them averse to disobedience and vice. They had acquired good morals and a great change had taken place in their morals, conduct and souls.

Then was revealed the *Surah Al-Nasr*, the purport of which is that all the purposes of Prophethood had been fulfilled and Islam had

achieved a victory over peoples' hearts. The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> announced that this Surah indicated the approach of his death. He then performed the Pilgrimage and called it the Farewell Pilgrimage, in which he delivered a long address from the back of a camel and called upon the people to bear witness that he had conveyed to them all the commandments which he had been commissioned to announce to them. Every one confirmed in a loud voice that he had conveyed everything to them. The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> then pointed to heaven and said three times: Bear witness, O Allah. He then said that he had admonished them at length as he might not be with them in the following year. He then returned to Madinah and died the following year. *Send down on him Thy blessings and peace, O Allah.* All these indications are given in the Qur'an and are confirmed by the history of Islam.

Can any Christian, Jew or Arya put forward the instance of any of their Reformers whose advent

was at the time of great need, and whose departing was after the fulfilment of that need, and whose opponents bore witness to their own unrighteousness and misconduct? I know that no one outside Islam can offer this proof. It is obvious that Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was sent for the destruction of Pharaoh, and to rescue his people from his tyranny, and to guide them along the right path. He was not concerned with the corruption of the world. It is true that he rescued his people from the tyranny of Pharaoh, but he could not rescue them from Satan, nor was he able to lead them into the promised land. The children of Israel were not able to purify themselves at his hands and repeatedly fell into disobedience, till Moses<sup>(as)</sup> died while they were still in that condition.

So far as the disciples of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> are concerned, the Gospel bears witness to their condition; no further explanation is needed. Nor is it a matter unknown, as to how little Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was able to guide the Jews for whose

guidance he had been sent as a Prophet. If the Prophethood of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> were to be judged by this measure, one would be compelled to affirm that it is in no way established by this standard.

*(Nur-ul-Qur'an, No. 1, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 9, pp. 358-369)*

The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was raised at a time when the whole world was involved in paganism, misguidance and creature worship and all peoples had abandoned true doctrines and forgetting the straight path, every group was following its own innovations. Idol worship was rife in Arabia, Persia was committed to fire worship, in India in addition to idol worship, creature worship of diverse types was widespread. Many books had been written, whereby scores of human beings had been deified, and the foundation of Avatar worship had been laid. According to Rev. Mr. Bourt and several English writers, no religion had been so corrupted as the Christian religion and it had fallen into serious disrepute on

account of the misconduct and wrong doctrines of its ministers of religion. In Christian doctrine not one or two persons, but several objects had been deified. The advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> at this time of general misguidance, when the circumstances demanded an exalted Reformer and there was great need of Divine guidance, and his illumining a whole world with the Unity of God and righteous conduct and his putting an end to paganism and creature worship, which is the mother of all ills, are clear proof that he was a true Messenger of God and was superior to all Messengers. His truth is established by the fact that in that age of general misguidance, the law of nature and the way of God demanded a true Guide.

It is the eternal law of the Lord of the worlds that when some type of suffering reaches its climax in the world, Divine mercy addresses itself to its removal. When through a prolonged drought people are faced with extinction through famine, God,



the Compassionate, sends down rain. When hundreds and thousands of people begin to die of an epidemic, the air is cleansed by some means or some remedy becomes available. When a people is caught in the wiles of a tyrant, a just and compassionate ruler appears. In the same way; when people forget the way of God and abandon His Unity and worship, God Almighty, having bestowed perfect insight upon a servant and having honoured him with His word, sends him for the guidance of mankind so that he should reform the corruption that had set in.

The truth of the matter is that Providence, Who sustains the world and supports its existence, does not hold back or suspend any of His attributes of beneficence. Every one of His attributes manifests itself on its proper occasion. As it is established by sane reason, that to overcome every calamity, the relevant attribute of God Almighty manifests itself and it has been established by history,

and by the confession of opponents, and by the clear affirmation of the Holy Qur'an, that at the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> this calamity was at its height, that all the peoples of the world had abandoned the straight path of the Unity of God and all sincerity, and of Divine worship, and it is known to every one that it was the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> alone and no one else, who reformed that corruption and rescuing a world from the darkness of paganism and creature worship, established it on the Unity of God, then it follows inevitably that he was a true Guide from God Almighty. The Qur'an has set forth this argument in the following verses:

*By Allah, We did send Messengers to the peoples before thee; but Satan made their works appear beautiful to them. So he is their patron this day and they shall have a grievous punishment. And We have not sent down to thee the Book except that thou mayest explain to them that*

*concerning which they differ and as a guidance, and a mercy for a people who believe. And Allah has sent down water from the sky, and has quickened therewith the earth after its death. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who would believe.*  
(Ch.16.Vs.64-66)

We call attention to the fact that the three elements that we had mentioned which lead to the conclusion that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was a true guide, are mentioned in an excellent manner in these verses. First the hearts of the misguided ones, who had been caught in error over centuries are likened to a dry and dead land, and the Divine word is described as the rain which comes from heaven, and an indication is given of the eternal law that in case of drought Divine mercy always rescues mankind from destruction. It is indicated that this law of nature is not confined to material water, but that spiritual water also certainly descends at a time of hardship, that is to say, when misguidance

becomes general. In such circumstances, Divine mercy comes into play for certain to overcome the calamity that affects the hearts.

Then these verses point to the second element that the whole earth had been corrupted before the advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and finally a reference is made to the fact that those spiritually dead had been revived through this Holy Word of God. The conclusion is that this is a sign of the truth of this Book and seekers after truth are invited to conclude that the Holy Qur'an is the Book of God.

As this argument establishes the truth of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> it also establishes his superiority over the other Prophets, inasmuch as the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> had to contend against the whole world and the task that was committed to him was in truth the work of a thousand or two thousand Prophets.

*(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 1 pp. 112-116, footnote 10)*

The time of the advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> needed a grand Divine Reformer and heavenly guide, and the teaching that he set forth was true and was greatly needed and comprised everything that fulfilled the needs of the time. That teaching was so effective that it pulled hundreds of thousands of hearts to the truth and impressed on hundreds of thousands of minds the creed that:

*‘There was none worthy of  
Worship save Allah.’*

He fulfilled the ultimate purpose of Prophethood, that is to say, teaching the principles of salvation so perfectly that no other Prophet was able to fulfill it to such perfection in any age. These facts compel one to bear eager witness that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was a true guide from God.

There is no remedy for a person who denies out of bigotry and obstinacy even if he repudiates God, but all these signs of righteousness and truth which are

combined so perfectly in the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> cannot be established in the case of any other Prophet, not even in the case of one of them. (*Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 1 pp. 112-114*)

Our Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was a great Reformer for the proclamation of truth, and restored to the world the truth that had been lost. No Prophet shares with him the pride that he found the whole world in darkness and by his appearance that darkness was converted into light. He did not die till the people among whom he had appeared had cast aside the garment of paganism and had put on the robe of the Unity of God. Not only this, but also they achieved high grades of faith and performed such works of righteousness, and fidelity and certainty which are not matched in any part of the world. Such success was not achieved by any Prophet other than the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>.

It is a strong argument in support of the truth of the Holy

Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> that he was raised in an age when the world had fallen into deep darkness and called for a grand Reformer. He departed the world at a time when hundreds of thousands of people had abandoned paganism and idol worship and had adopted the Unity of God and the straight path. Such perfect reform was particular to him that he taught a people who were at the level of animals, the ways of humanity. In other words, he converted wild beasts into men, and then turned them into educated men, and then made them men of God, and breathed spirituality into them and created a relationship between them and the True God. They were slaughtered like sheep in the cause of God and were trodden underfoot like ants, but they did not abandon their faith, and marched forward in the face of every calamity.

Doubtless, the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was a second Adam and indeed was the true Adam for the establishment of spirituality through whom all human excellences arrived at their

perfection, and all good faculties were devoted to their proper task and no branch of human nature was left barren. Prophethood ended with him not only because he was the last Prophet in point of time, but also because all the excellences of Prophethood reached their climax in him. As he was a perfect manifestation of Divine attributes, his law had the qualities both of majesty and beauty. That is why he was named both Muhammad and Ahmad<sup>(sa)</sup>; and there was no miserliness in his Prophethood it was for the benefit of the whole world since the beginning. (*Lecture Sialkot, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 20, pp. 206-207*)

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# *Freedom of Speech and Tolerance in Islam*

*An address by Hadhrat  
Mirza Masroor Ahmad,  
Head of the worldwide  
Ahmadiyya Muslim  
community delivered in  
Baitul Futuh Morden  
on 25 March 2006*

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All the distinguished  
guests, ladies and  
gentlemen,  
*Peace and blessings of  
Allah be upon you.*



Some months ago, a Danish newspaper published some cartoons about the Holy Founder of Islam, Hadhrat Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> in which, unfortunately, an attempt was made to show that the law and teaching brought by him is one of extremism. As a result, terrorism and cruelty has begun to grow in the hearts of the followers of Islam. It is alleged that and Muslims believe that the solution to all their problems lies in adopting a cruel and barbaric

attitude. According to them there is no concept of tolerance, reconciliation or love and affection in Islam.

Non-Muslims draw this conclusion based on the incorrect behaviour and improper actions of the so-called Jihadi organisations (that is to say those who are trigger-happy and call their act a holy war) and the attacks of their suicide bombers. Instead of solving issues through

love and understanding, they display obstinacy and intolerance. Then, some scholars of today, unfortunately, support such Jihadi organisations even though their actions are totally opposed to the teachings of Islam.

But I wish to say just one thing that may perhaps be construed as if I am supporting such Jihadi organisations. The ultimate decisive authority assumed by the superpowers in respect of the poor and under-developed nations and the double standards in the manner in which the superpowers deal with these nations, is the cause of this violent natural reaction by these nations. Admittedly, this is not an Islamic method and is totally against the teachings of Islam. However, in this day and age, the trend not to conform to the teachings of one's faith is as prevalent amongst followers of other religions as it is amongst Muslims whose majority is by lip-service Muslim even though their deeds are not Islamic.

In due course, a reformer is needed to make the act of the people conform to the teachings. This is why the Ahmadiyya Muslim community holds the belief that when, with the passage of time, the people begin to forget the teachings of their faith, then equipped with guidance from God, God sends prophets or reformers who bring mankind back to the ways of God, and thus remind man to discharge the obligations due to the Creator and His creation.

We Muslims believe that there have been 124,000 messengers who have come to the world. They identified the One God and taught man to live in love and affection with each other. The last person to bring a new Law and teaching was Hadhrat Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>. In other words, a Muslim believes in all prophets and reformers from Adam to Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all.

Moreover, an Ahmadi Muslim believes that in accordance with what past prophets prophesied

about a Reformer for the latter days, that Reformer has indeed come and we believe in him. Nevertheless, the Law and teaching is, of course, the same as that brought by Hadhrat Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>.

The purpose of this introduction is that a religion that requires belief in and respect of all prophets and believes that the teachings revealed to them at the time of their advent was true, then how can it be said that such a religion does not teach tolerance of other faiths? How can it not teach reconciliation and harmony with other faiths? How can it teach the habit of religious intolerance and advocate living with others in anything but love and affection? It is impossible. That there is no forbearance in this religion and no freedom of opinion or speech is an unfounded allegation against Islam.

In keeping with the constraints of time, I shall highlight a few examples of what the teachings of Islam are about tolerance;

what the meaning of the freedom of expression and the right to hold an opinion are; what practical example the Prophet of Islam established of this beautiful teaching; and, the tradition set by those Muslims who followed in his footsteps. I hope that as a result, some prominent aspects of this beautiful teaching will become clear.

But firstly, I would like to say that the very name 'Islam' contains an antidote for cruelty, the inability to put up with others and the absence of tolerance. I shall define some of the main meanings that the word 'Islam' incorporates. One meaning is peace, another meaning is submission and obedience, yet another is making peace and achieving reconciliation. One meaning is to leave someone when he is likely to cause you harm, another meaning is to walk together in harmony. The purpose of telling you about these definitions of the name of Islam given by God Almighty to this religion is because the sum

total of its teachings and the Muhammadan Laws include within it love, tolerance, endurance, and freedom of conscience and speech and the right to express an opinion.

After this brief clarification, let me mention the teachings about the freedom of conscience, belief and opinion and tolerance that the Holy Qur'an (the Sacred Book of Muslims) gives us. It should be remembered that when something is attributed to a religion, then the first point of reference has to be that religion's book of law in which the legal code, tenets, and teachings are set out.

When the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> claimed that he was a Messenger and by the command of Allah Almighty proclaimed that he was the Prophet sent with the final Law and the only means of salvation was to accept Islam and adapt their lives in accordance with the commandments of God Almighty, then this proclamation was stated as follows by God Almighty:

*And say, 'It is the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve.'*...  
(Ch. 18:V.30)

Thereafter, God has preserved this task unto Himself as to how to treat the one who does not believe. God will determine this matter whether in this world or the Hereafter. Therefore, O Prophet and O ye who believe in this Prophet, your work is only to convey the Message. In the interest of maintaining an environment of love and affection and tolerance, you should promote this message with kindness. Because you believe that in accordance with the teaching given to you by God, your religion is right and based on the truth, it is a requirement of kindness to mankind that what you hold to be true for yourself, you should share it with the rest of mankind and include them also in this commandment.

It may be objected that the permission to let people believe



or disbelieve was given to the people of Makkah at a time when the position of the Muslims was very weak. It may be said that this is why such words were used so that the disbelievers of Makkah do not cruelly destroy all the Muslims.

This objection is a weak argument. Despite this commandment, the disbelievers of Makkah did not flinch a muscle in their cruelty to the Muslims. They persecuted them because of their faith. Some were laid on burning coal, others were made to lie on the burning sand in the mid-day sun. Some were tied with their legs to two camels and the camels driven in opposite directions cutting asunder the Muslim in two halves. Even the women were beaten and not spared this torture. So if the verse I quoted earlier was meant to save the Muslims from cruelty, then history proves that it did not serve that purpose. This commandment was not limited to that time but is preserved in the Holy Qur'an to this day.

I have given this example of barbaric cruelty so that you can keep this context in your mind. Once again, in keeping within the constraints of time, I hope that you will understand from the one or two events that I will relate, the extent to which Islam grants the freedom of conscience and requires tolerance and reconciliation.

Fed up with the cruelty inflicted by their fellow countrymen, the Muslims migrated to Madinah. First of all, the poor and weak Muslims migrated followed by the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(saw)</sup>. Upon his arrival, a pact was drawn with the Jews of Madinah who had not become Muslim at that time stating how the communities were to live together and remain free and how each other's rights were to be discharged.

I shall mention one or two covenants of this pact of co-existence. But before that a teaching of the Holy Qur'an states:

*There should be no compulsion in religion...*  
(Ch.2:V.257)

This commandment was revealed in Madinah. Let me remind you that by that time, a majority of the inhabitants of Madinah had become Muslim, or they were people who had no interest in religion and they joined the Muslims as birds of the same flock. When seen from that vantage point, the Muslim population represented a dominant majority. On the other side were the Jews who ruled and in whose hands lay the power before the arrival in Madinah of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. But now the Jews were reduced to a minority. As a consequence, and being the Head of State, the governance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> was firmly established. Now he held the power. However, the commandment was that ‘you will not use compulsion in religion, nor shall you use force against those weak persons who even though they are not Muslim, have joined you as your kith and kin, nor shall you use force

against the Jews who live under your domain.’ But you can see from the pact that was drawn up how an atmosphere of love and affection, freedom of belief and tolerance was created. The pact runs somewhat as follows:

- Muslims and Jews shall live together with each other in kindness and sincerity and shall not commit any excess nor be cruel to one another;
- The Jews will keep to their own faith, and Muslims to their own;
- The life and property of all citizens shall be respected and protected save in the case a crime has been committed by someone;
- All disputes will be referred for the Prophet of Allah’s decision because he has the determining authority but all decisions in respect of individual people shall be based on their respective laws.

And there are, of course, other terms of this agreement in addition to the four I have quoted. Now, see what effort has been used to establish a liberal and compassionate atmosphere in society. At that time there were no national laws. Each person lived in accordance with the traditions and laws of his or her own clan or tribe. The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> did not say that you are a minority, and as might be right, you have to comply with the laws of the Muslim majority. Instead, the condition of the agreement was that your affairs would be determined on the basis of your own laws. This is the first charter of freedom of conscience and faith in Islam.

Giving other excellent examples of toleration, the Holy Qur'an explains that no matter what the circumstance, you are not to abandon tolerance. Irrespective of the cruelties inflicted on you, you are not to act other than with justice and take revenge by being just as cruel. If you do that, you are misguided. To call you a Muslim would be meaningless.

The Holy Qur'an states:

*...and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness.*

(Ch.5:V.9)

This is the standard of tolerance and justice in Islam. Islam advocates that do not respond to the low and base allegations of the opponents because to do that would make you just as cruel. If you can forgive, then forgive, that is better. If you must seek revenge, then the recompense of an injury is no more than the injury inflicted on you.

An excellent example of this tolerance and forgiveness was set by the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(saw)</sup> who forgave all the persecutors at the time of the victory of Makkah. History bears testimony to this event. Ikramah was the greatest enemy of Islam. Despite the general amnesty proclaimed by the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> on the day of victory, Ikramah picked a fight with the Muslims, suffered

a defeat and then fled. When Ikramah's wife pleaded for his forgiveness, the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> forgave. Immediately after forgiveness, when Ikramah appeared before the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, he said to him arrogantly that 'if you think that because of your forgiveness I have also become a Muslim, then let it be clear that I have not become a Muslim. If you can forgive me while I remain steadfast on my own faith, then that is fine, otherwise I leave'. The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> said: 'You can, no doubt, remain steadfast on your faith. You are free in every way.' Moreover, thousands of Makkans had not accepted Islam and despite their defeat exercised their right of freedom of faith. So this is the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and the example set by the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> on this matter.

I shall present some other examples of freedom of speech and tolerance.

Once the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> bought a camel from a Bedouin in

exchange for about 90 kilos of dried dates. When the Prophet got home, he found that the dates had all gone.

In all honesty and simplicity, he went to the Bedouin and said frankly to him, 'O man of God! I bought a camel in exchange for dried dates and I thought that I had that much dates with me but when I reached home, I discovered that I did not have that many dates.' The Bedouin said: 'O defrauder!' The people began to tell the Bedouin off for talking to the Messenger of God in that manner but the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> said: 'Let him be.' (*Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal* Vol.6 p.268 published Beirut)

Now see this is how the ruler of the day dealt with an ordinary man. This was the standard of granting the freedom of speech and the standard of his forbearance.

Then let me present an incident about the freedom of faith with reference to people of other faiths. Once a delegation of

Christians from Najaran came to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. During this meeting with him in the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, the time for the Christians to say their prayers arose and they began to go outside. The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> invited them to offer their prayers in the Mosque. Then the pact drawn with these Christians of Najaran granted them full freedom of faith and it was made incumbent upon the Muslims to protect their churches. No church should be destroyed nor should any priest be evicted or expelled. Nor should any right of theirs be diminished. Nor should any Christian be required to change his faith. The proclamation was that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> hereby warrants his personal assurance. The pact went so far as to say that if the Muslims wish to help fund the repair etc. of the Christian churches, it would be an act of benevolence on their part.

With regard to justice, truth and the freedom of faith, the Founder of Jama'at Ahmadiyya, Hadhrat

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> states that it is proven that once a dispute between a Muslim and a Jew came before the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> determined that the Jew was true and decreed against the claims of the Muslim. Then quoting the Holy Qur'an, he states that this verse means 'O Prophet! ask the people of the Book and the ignorant people of Arabia to enter the religion of Islam. So if they enter Islam, they have attained guidance but if they turn away, then your work is only to convey the Message of God.' It is not written in this verse that it is your task to wage war against them.

It is obvious from this verse that war was only permitted against the criminals who killed the Muslims or interfered with the maintenance of peace and were busy in theft and robbery. This war was as a result of his being a Commander and not because of his prophethood. Allah says '*fight in the cause of the Lord against those who fight with you*', that is to say, 'be

disinterested in others and do not commit any excess'. God does not like those who commit excesses.

So this is the beautiful teaching of Islam and the excellent example of the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(saw)</sup>, a specimen of which I have laid before you. It is a great travesty to allege that there is no concept of freedom of faith and conscience in Islam. We should not construe the vested interest of a few individuals as Islam nor can it be construed as such.

In any case, it would have become abundantly clear that whereas there is freedom of

speech and tolerance in Islam, there is also the respect for mankind and forbearance.

In keeping within the constraints of time, I rest my case. I am most grateful to all of you. I think that the food is ready, and I do not wish to come between your food and you. I am most grateful to you who have come here today and listened to me, tolerantly. If we can meet together, many misunderstandings about each other can be removed. I once again thank you from the bottom of my heart for sparing your time to be with us today.

*Thank you.*

In this journal, for the ease of non-Muslim readers, '(saw)' or 'saw' after the words, 'Holy Prophet', or the name 'Muhammad', are used. They stand for '*Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*' 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 '*Alaihis salatu wassalam*' which are words that a Muslim utters out of respect whenever he or she comes across that name.

The abbreviation 'ra' or (ra) stands for '*Radhiallahu Ta'ala anhu*' and is used for Companions of a Prophet, meaning Allah be pleased with him or her (when followed by the relevant Arabic pronoun). Finally, 'ru' or (ru) for '*Rahemallahu Ta'ala*' means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him.

# THE MAUDUDIAN LAW OF APOSTASY – Part 5

*This is the Fifth extract from the ‘Murder in the Name of Allah’ by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, dealing with Jama’at Islami’s founder, Maulana Maududi’s misinterpretation of the Islamic concept of Jihad.*

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*Verily, this is a Reminder. So whoever wishes may take the way unto to his Lord.*  
(Ch.76.V.30)

‘In our domain we neither allow any Muslim to change his religion nor allow any other religion to propagate its faith.’  
(Maulana Maududi)<sup>1</sup>

Maulana Maududi’s desire for political power knew no bounds. The law of apostasy which he evolved was an extension of his dictatorial and intolerant personality – it had nothing to do with Islam. Dr Israr Alunad, who worked closely with Maududi, said that Maududi borrowed the principles of his movement from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the Khairi brothers and the style of his presentation from Niyaz Fatehpuri. But he was so

egocentric that he never acknowledged that his ideas came from anyone but himself.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, the Maulana’s ideas on apostasy, though originating from an interpretive error of early Muslim jurisprudence (*fiqh*) are, in fact, based on medieval Christianity. The Deoband school,<sup>3</sup> which was on one hand collaborating with a predominantly Hindu political organisation – the Indian National Congress – and on the other fighting a rearguard action against the *shuddi* campaign, provided the gloss to Maududi’s thoughts on the subject. The influence of Marxist writings, which the Maulana seems to have read as a young and impressionable editor, is markedly noticeable in his thinking. The *Tahrik-i Jamaati Islami* is a curious blend of

medieval Christian practices, Deobandi/Wahabi intolerance and Marxist incitement to disruption.

As we saw in the first chapter of this book, the concept of religious liberty is not evolutionary or lineal – it is a cyclical phenomenon. Whenever one of God’s prophets or a religious reformer appears, he is opposed. He is accused of dividing the community and breaking traditional conformity. He is pilloried as an apostate. Ultimately a prophet always succeeds in establishing religious freedom. The true faith spread by this religious freedom is hardened in rigid dogma, which actually results in the loss of the right to dissent.

On his last visit to the Temple, Christ<sup>(as)</sup> said: ‘Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.’ (*Mark 12:17*)

This very clear statement separates religious belief from political authority. However, within a year of obtaining political authority (312), the Christian Church was torn by schism. For more than 300

years Christians had been persecuted and flourished, and yet, soon after Constantine’s conversion, the Church was confronted with monastic secession, Donatist schism and Arian heresy. Throughout the history of the Christian Church, heresy, or deviation from orthodoxy, has been a matter of deep concern. It invariably involves the very concept of deity, the divinity of Christ<sup>(as)</sup>.

If Christ was divine in an absolute sense, yet distinct from God, there were two Gods and Christianity was a form of ditheism, not monotheism. On the other hand, if the filial relationship were literally interpreted, then God the Father would be the progenitor of God the Son. But the logic of this relationship meant that Christ would not be fully God, since there must have been a time when he ‘was not’ and God the Father alone existed.<sup>4</sup>

Orthodox Christians held Christ<sup>(as)</sup> to be identical in being (homoousian) to God the Father,



while Arius (c. 256-336) considered him only similar in being (homoiousian) to Him. Then there was the question of his mother. Nestorius (died c. 451) declared that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was two distinct persons, one human, one divine; and that Mary<sup>(as)</sup> was the mother only of the human, not the divine Christ. It would be better, therefore, to call her the mother of Christ<sup>(as)</sup>. The orthodox doctrine is that Mary<sup>(as)</sup> is the true mother, not of the Godhead itself, but of the incarnate *legos*, or Word of God, containing both the divine and the human natures of Christ<sup>(as)</sup>.<sup>5</sup>

The first ecumenical Council of the Church met in 325 in Bithynian Nicea and issued a creed on the mystery of the Trinity. The unrepentant Arius was anathematized by the council and exiled by Emperor Constantine. The emperor also ordered that all Arius's books should be burned and their possession should be punished by death.

The cycle of religious liberty which began with Jesus of Nazareth<sup>(as)</sup> came full circle when Justinian (483-565) prescribed the

death penalty for apostasy. The penalty became part of the codification of Roman law in AD535.

It is a tragic twist of fate that freedom of conscience was snuffed out by the very Roman Christians whose newly converted forefathers were burned to provide fire and fun in Nero's Rome (AD64). As long as Christians were persecuted by non-Christian political authorities, Christian writers defended religious liberty. But once the imperial throne was won over to Christianity, the Church looked 'with the same hostile eye upon individualism in belief as the state upon secession or revolt'.<sup>6</sup> By the middle of the fifth century things that were and still are God's were rendered unto Caesar. Political authority had become the right arm of the Church. In the course of his campaign against the Donatists, St Augustine (354-430) argued:

'There is a righteous persecution which the Church of Christ inflicts upon the impious. She persecutes in the spirit of love. . . that she may

correct. . . that she may recall from error. . . [taking] measures for their good, to secure their eternal salvation.’<sup>7</sup>

In 385 a Spanish bishop, Priscillian, was accused of preaching Manicheism and universal celibacy. He denied the charge, but was tried, condemned and burned at the stake with several companions.

Martin Luther (1483 -1546), the German leader of the Protestant Reformation, concurred with his Roman Catholic predecessor, Augustine, and said: ‘The clergy had authority over conscience, but it was thought necessary that they should be supported by the State with absolute penalties of outlawry, in order that error might be exterminated, although it was impossible to banish sin.’<sup>8</sup>

But it was the French Protestant theologian John Calvin (1509-64) who really inspired Maulana Maududi.

‘He [Calvin] wished to extend religion by the sword and reserve death as the punishment

of apostasy. . . Catholics should suffer the same penalties as those who were guilty of sedition, on the grounds that the majesty of God must be as strictly avenged as the throne of the king’.<sup>9</sup>

While the inspiration came to the Maulana from Calvin, the rationale was provided by the English thinker Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) in his book, *Leviathan*. Since the power to work miracles is one of the signs of a true prophet, and, according to Hobbes, the days of miracles were over, there was no possibility of guidance by a prophet or through divine inspiration. The sovereign alone had civil or religious authority. He alone had the power to make law, ‘For whosoever hath a lawful power over any writing, to make it law, hath the power also to approve or disapprove the interpretation of the same.’<sup>(10)</sup>

Heresy, in Hobbes’s view, was private judgement and action contrary to popular belief as laid down by the sovereign:

It is not the intrinsic error of the

judgment that makes the heresy punishable, but the private rebellion against authority. To make loyalty to the commands of conscience the ruling principle would sanction all private men to disobey their princes in maintenance of their religion, true or false.<sup>(11)</sup>

According to Hobbes, this is subversion.

There is no apostasy without heresy and no heresy without dogma. The Christian dogma was carefully spelled out in the Athanasian Creed, which says: ‘That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance.’

It is in this tradition of medieval Christianity, and not of Islam, that Maulana Maududi developed the original ideals of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the Khairi brothers’ *Hukumat-i-Ilahiyya (Kingdom of God)*.<sup>(12)</sup> St Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin and Thomas Hobbes provided him with the non-Islamic concepts of orthodoxy, dogma and

heresy – and also with the rhetoric of intolerance.

Even the orientalist, who never miss an opportunity of criticizing Islam, agree there is no dogma and heresy in Islam. Goldziher says:

‘The role of dogma in Islam cannot be compared to that which it plays in religious life of any of the Christian Churches. There are no Councils and Synods which, after lively controversy, lay down the formulae, which henceforth shall be deemed to embrace the whole of the true faith. There is no ecclesiastical institution, which serves as the measure of orthodoxy; no single authorised interpretation of the holy scriptures, on which the doctrine and exegesis of the church might be built. The Consensus, the supreme authority in all questions of religious practice, exercises an elastic, in a certain sense barely definable jurisdiction, the very conception of which is moreover variously explained. Particularly in

unanimity what shall have effect as undisputed Consensus. What is accepted as Consensus by one party, is far from being accepted as such by another.<sup>13</sup>

The contemporary Jewish orientalist, Bernard Lewis, who would never be accused of being pro-Muslim, observes:

‘What matters was what people did – orthopraxy, rather than orthodoxy and Muslims were allowed on the whole to believe as they chose to do, so long as they accepted the basic minimum, the Unity of God and the apostolate of Muhammad, and conformed to the social norms.<sup>14</sup>

True Islam had ceased to be the inspiring force for Maulana Maududi. Having introduced the concepts of heresy and apostasy he could not escape from Calvin’s logic which prescribed ‘death as the punishment of apostasy’. But the Maulana had the audacity falsely to attribute the authority for this punishment to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. The Maulana wrote a

pamphlet on the subject in which he confidently quoted Abu Bakr’s military action against the rebel tribes as a proof that there was a death penalty for apostasy. Before discussing this, one ought to quote the Maulana’s writings to show how heavily he was influenced by his Christian models.

But first, in summary, to the Christian fathers of medieval Europe, recantation from Christianity was punishable by death and the only acceptable definition of Christianity was theirs. Similarly, the punishment for recantation from Islam was death and the only definition of Islam was the one the Maulana or his successors laid down. It is clear that under a Maududian government, the Maududian ruler would decide who was and who was not a Muslim. What would that decision be? The Maulana’s writings are quite clear.

According to Maududi, Ahmadis are apostates and a ‘non-Muslim minority’. But Ahmadis are not the only heretics – the Ahl-i-Qur’an, the followers of Mr Parvez’s school of thought, are also heretics.

They are *kafir* and apostates. In fact, their heresy is far more serious than that of the Qadiyanis. The following order of banishment given by Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi, who had not yet renounced the Maududian teaching – and was still considered the right-hand man of Maududi – was published in the *Tasnim*, the official organ of the Jamaati Islami:

‘Some people advise that since there is no possibility of the promulgation of the Islamic Sharia, the government of this country [Pakistan] should be formed on the principles laid down in the Qur’an. If, by this, these people mean that the Sharia is confined *only* to the Quran and that other rules are not Sharia, then it is clearly heresy. This heresy is similar to that of the Qadiyanis, in fact, much more serious.<sup>15</sup>

This verdict is clearly against the Ahmadis and the Ahl-i-Qur’an. To discover whether ‘heresy’ and consequent apostasy is confined to only these two groups needs a closer look.

According to Maulana Maududi’s writings, anything *not* Maududian is heresy. The Maududian teachings are like the Athanasian Creed and any deviation from them is *kufir*. The Maulana says:

‘Ninety-nine point nine per cent of the Muslim nation has no knowledge of Islam or the ability to tell right from wrong. They have directed neither their moral values nor their thoughts towards Islam. A Muslim is a Muslim because his father was a Muslim and the faith is passed from generation to generation. These Muslims have not accepted this right because they believe it to be right, and neither have they rejected the wrong because they know it to be wrong. If Muslim affairs are ever handed over to these people and anyone thinks Muslim affairs will be properly run, he’s living in a fool’s paradise.’<sup>16</sup>

He continues:

‘The process of democratic elections is like churning milk

to obtain butter. If poisoned milk is churned, the butter will be poisonous too. So people who think that the Kingdom of God [Hukumat-i-Ilahiyya] will automatically result if Muslim areas are liberated from the Hindu majority, are wrong. They will end up with a heretic government of Muslims [Kafirana hukumat].<sup>17</sup>

The Maulana is more explicit in the following passage of the same book:

‘The nation called Musulman is made up of all kinds of rubbish. All types of characters found among unbelievers are found here. The number of liars appearing in law courts is no less than in the courts of other nations. Bribery, theft, adultery, falsehood, in short, there is no form of moral depravity in which they are second to the unbelievers [kuffar ].<sup>18</sup>

These Maududian edicts and injunctions are very comprehensive. However, some may still doubt that these injunctions refer

to the ordinary 99.99 per cent of Muslims and that Muslim leadership and intellectuals are exempt from these constraints. But the Maulana made another statement about Muslim leaders and *ulema* to make it clear that any Muslim who does not accept the Maududian creed has gone astray. The Maulana says:

‘Western educated political leaders, *ulema*, and the scholars of Muslim jurisprudence, all these leaders are as misguided as each other, both in their means and their ends. They have lost the path of truth and have wandered blindly into the darkness. Not one of them has a Muslim point of view.’<sup>19</sup>

So, according to the Maulana, neither the 99.99 per cent of Muslims nor their religious or secular leaders are on the right path. They have gone astray, their point of view is not Muslim, and all types of criminals found among the *kuffar* are also found among Muslims. If one were to have dubbed the *umma* a ‘bunch of apostates’ on hearing this

description, Maududi would have replied: ‘You said it.’ He was not in the habit of mincing his words. Referring to those who quit the Jamaati Islami, he said: ‘This is not the path on which to retreat. To retreat means to apostasise.’<sup>20</sup> If quitting the Jamaati Islami and joining another Muslim group is apostasy, then that other organisation is automatically *kafir*. So are Muslims who pray for favours at saints’ tombs and also the Shiites, who consider the first three caliphs to be usurpers. It is well known that according to the Maulana – and all the *ulema* of Deoband agree with him – the mainstream *Ahli Sunnat wal Jamaat* of India and Pakistan, known as Brelavis, are *kafir*.

Now that the Maulana has, virtually declared all non-Maududians to be apostates, he deals in great detail with the subject of people who are Muslim by birth. It is one of the most difficult pieces of Maududi’s argument. Discussing his own Islam, the Maulana said: ‘I have cast away the collar of inherited Islam. . . . I read the Qur’an and studied the life of Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> .

. . . and now I am a new (converted) Muslim.’ On the same basis, he devised a scheme for the reconversion of other Muslims. He unveils his plan in the following words:

‘Whenever the death penalty for apostasy is enforced in a new Islamic state, then Muslims are kept within Islam’s fold. But there is a danger that a large number of hypocrites will live alongside them. They will always pose a danger of treason.

My solution to the problem is this. That whenever an Islamic revolution takes place, all non-practising Muslims should, within one year, declare their turning away from Islam and get out of Muslim society. After one year all born Muslims will be considered Muslim. All Islamic laws will be enforced upon them. They will be forced to practise all the *fara id and wajibat* of their religion and, if anyone then wishes to leave Islam, he will be executed. Every effort will be made to save as many

people as possible from falling into the lap of *kufir*. But those who cannot be saved will be reluctantly separated from society forever [executed]. After this purification Islamic society will start afresh with Muslims who have decided voluntarily to remain Muslims.<sup>21</sup>

The Maulana does not tell us under what rules of *ijtihad* a law laying down the death penalty for apostasy will be relaxed. In any case this law will be relaxed only at the time an Islamic state is established – a one-off concession. After this period of grace, Muslims who are born *kafirs* will lose out. The Maulana explains why he is unable to make any exception for these unfortunates. He says:

There is one final question about capital punishment which may disturb many of us. A non-Muslim who freely embraced Islam then returned to *kufir* can be said to have made a deliberate mistake. He could have remained a *dhimmi*, so why enter a religion of collective responsibility from

which there is no escape? But what of the person who was born of Muslim parents and who has not embraced Islam? He is a Muslim by birth. If, on reaching adulthood, he wants to reject the faith, you threaten him with execution and he remains Muslim; this would be unjust. And it also provides sustenance to the ever-growing number of born hypocrites in Muslim society. There are two answers to this question, one deals with the practical aspect, the other with the principle. In principle there can be no distinction between the born followers of a religion and that religion's converts. And no religion has ever made that distinction. Both converts and born followers are governed by the same laws. It is both impossible and a logical absurdity to treat the children of the followers of a religion as *kufar* or aliens till they are adults, then give them the choice of choosing or rejecting the religion (or citizenship, for that matter) of their birth. No society in the world could manage its affairs in this way.<sup>22</sup>



Even if we accept the Maududian law that Islam prescribes death for apostasy and that all Muslims except Jamaati Islami are *kufar*, we cannot treat non-Maududian Muslims as apostates – even according to the Maulana’s own logic. They are ‘born *kafir*’. The Maulana wants to have his cake and eat it too! Muslims who disagree with the Maududian concept of Islam are first described as both ‘born Muslims’ and *kafir*, because they were brought up by their parents in a *kafirana* environment. Then they are called apostates because on reaching the age of consent they did not reject their parents’ Islam in preference to Maududian Islam. A non-Muslim who joins Islam and then recants should be executed because he became Muslim knowing full well there was no escape. Similarly, a non-Maududian-born Muslim should also be treated as an apostate because he did not accept Maulana Maududi’s version of Islam on reaching adulthood. This is the argument which clearly shows the Maulana’s dictatorial, manipulative and intolerant personality. No Muslim, convert or born, is out

of his reach. The Quranic ordinance that ‘there shall be no compulsion in religion’ is explained away in the following words:

‘This means we do not compel anyone to embrace our religion. This is true. But we must warn anyone who wishes to recant that this door is impassable to free traffic. If you wish to come, do so with the firm decision that you cannot escape.’

A leading scholar of the Ahl-i Quran, Ghulam Ahmad Parvez, referring to this Maududian commentary on the Quranic verse, said ‘Maududi Sahib’s Islam is a mouse-trap: the mouse can get into it, but cannot escape.’

The central point of the Maulana’s argument is that every religion considers the descendants of its followers as its followers. Therefore, descendants of Muslim parents – even where the parents are practically *kafir* – will be Islamic property. If a right of ownership has been established over these children, how can they

be free to choose another religion on reaching adulthood? In explaining this point, the Maulana seems to have overlooked the following saying of the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> ‘Every infant has an in-born predisposition to be a Muslim, but his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Zoroastrian.’<sup>23</sup> If the central point of the Maulana’s argument is correct, then why confine it to the descendants of Muslims? Why not apply it to those of non-Muslims too, since they, according to the *hadith*, were also born with a ‘predisposition to be Muslim’? This would give full control of every non-Muslim child to the Maududian government. It makes no difference whether a child is within the Maududian realm or not. While the Maulana seems to have overlooked that *hadith* quoted above, the force of his logic leads him to this absurdity.

Maulana Maududi has, in fact, reproduced medieval Christianity almost word for word in the Jamaati Islami movement. Commenting on his policy of intolerance, Elisabeth Labrousse, an historian of medieval Christianity, observes: ‘On the

individual level, it creates only martyrs or hypocrites.’<sup>24</sup> Now compare Labrousse’s observation with the following passage from Maududi’s *The Punishment of Apostasy in Islam*: ‘If he [the apostate] is really so honest in not wishing to live as a hypocrite and really does wish to remain steadfast in his own faith, why does he not present himself for death?’<sup>25</sup>

Since the Maududian concept of religion is the only way to salvation, the Maulana would not allow the same rights and privileges to the followers of any other religion. The missionary work of other religions would be forbidden in a Maududian state. The Maulana says:

‘The execution of apostates has already decided the issue. Since we do not allow any Muslim to embrace any other religion, the question of allowing other religions to open their missions and propagate their faiths within our boundaries does not arise. We cannot tolerate it.’<sup>26</sup>

But can a *kafir* propagate his religion among other *kufar*? For instance, can Christian open missions to work among Jews or Hindus? Could Arya Samajists, who do not believe in idol worship and believe in one God, preach to the followers of pantheist Sanatan Dharma? The Maulana says:

‘Islam can never tolerate that false religions should spread in the world. How can the missionaries of false religions be given a licence to spread falsehood and attract others to the fire towards which they themselves are advancing?’<sup>27</sup>

Maududi himself accepts that Jews and Christians are Ahl-i-Kitab (people of the Book). But if they wish to convert idol worshippers, fire worshippers or polytheists to the worship of one God – the God of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Jesus<sup>9as)</sup> – thus bringing them nearer to Islam, they would be forbidden.

In short, the Maulana concedes only that a born *kafir* cannot be killed if he does not accept Islam. But if this is so, why kill a new *kafir* who has recanted? If a new

*kafir* is to be punished at all, why the death penalty? Why not exile, or life imprisonment, so that Muslim society may not be disrupted? Here Maulana Maududi, true to St Augustinian logic, explains that the apostate is executed in his own interests. He says:

‘There are only two methods of dealing with an apostate. Either make him an outlaw by depriving him of his citizenship and allowing him mere existence, or end his life. The first method is definitely more severe than the second, because he exists in a state in which ‘he neither lives nor dies’.<sup>28</sup> Killing him is preferable. That way both his agony and the agony of society are ended simultaneously.’<sup>29</sup>

But the punishment to which the Maulana is sentencing apostates is not actually St Augustine’s ‘spirit of love’ persecution. There is a life after death and by killing an apostate, the Maulana is directly consigning him to the fires of hell. By saving an apostate from the temporary agonies of an outcast’s

life, the Maulana is sending him to the far greater agonies of hell. Above all, the Maulana is depriving the tragic apostate of the opportunity of repentance and therefore salvation. While a *kafir* has the opportunity of repenting at any stage in his life, the apostate cannot return to Islam and benefit from the compassion of the Great Forgiver (*Al-Ghaffar*) and the Acceptor of Repentance (*AL-Tawwab*).

Reducing the Maulana's logic to its absurd conclusion, one might as well ask: 'Since the death penalty is meant to discourage people who take change of faith lightly from entering our society, how do you propose to stop such wavering people from being born into Muslim homes?'

This draconian policy of force and brutal intolerance is not restricted to the Maududian state. Its foreign policy is also based on force and intolerance. The Maulana says:

'Islam does not want to bring about this revolution in one country or a few countries. It wants to spread it to the entire

world. Although it is the duty of the 'Muslim Party' to bring this revolution first to its own nation, its ultimate goal is world revolution.'

Of course, the final goal of Islam is world revolution. But Islam wants a *spiritual* revolution, not the communist revolution which the Maulana has borrowed from communist ideology. It is no accident that Maududian polemic closely follow communist argument. Substitute the words 'Communist Party' and you find the echoes of Marx and Lenin in Maulana Maududi's writings. The Maududian revolution is not based on *adl* (justice) but on materialism and consequent personal dictatorship. Maududian policy towards neighbouring states and communist foreign policy are not very much different. He writes:

'Human relations are so integrated that no state can have complete freedom of action under its principles unless the same principles are in force in a neighbouring country. Therefore, both for its own safety and the general

reform, a ‘Muslim Party’ will not be content with the establishment of Islam in just one area alone. It should try to expand in all directions. On one hand it will spread its ideology, on the other it will invite people of all nations to accept its creed, for salvation lies only therein. *If this Islamic state has power and resources it will fight and destroy non-Islamic governments and establish Islamic states in their place.*<sup>30</sup>

The paragraph is virtually a copy of the Communist Manifesto.

The Maulana has no hesitation in attributing his aggressive policy to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> himself. The Maulana says:

This was the policy adopted by the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and his rightly guided caliphs. Arabia, where the Muslim Party was first formed, was the first to be subdued. After this the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> sent invitations to all neighbouring countries. *But he did not wait to see whether they were accepted or not.* As soon as he acquired power, he started the

conflict with the Roman Empire. Abu Bakr became the leader of the Party after the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and attacked both the Roman and Persian Empires, and Umar finally won the war.<sup>31</sup>

This is a general declaration of war against all non-Muslim neighbouring states – they are safe only as long as the Maududian state is weak. As soon as the Maududian state has given one year’s notice to its Muslim-born subjects to opt for Maududian Islam or get out and has subdued domestic opposition, it will engage in a war of conquest against its neighbours. Maududi does not agree with the generally held Muslim view that war was forced upon the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, Abu Bakr and Umar by powerful Christian and Zoroastrian empires wishing to crush Islam, and that Muslims, with fewer resources, had to fight back in self-defence.

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# Surah Al-Lahab

*Commentary by Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II<sup>(ra)</sup>. (Translation by Asif Omer from Tafsir-e-Kabeer , Vol 10)*

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In the name of Allah the Gracious,  
the Merciful.

*Perished be the two hands of  
Abu Lahab, and so perish he.  
His wealth and what he has  
earned shall avail him naught.  
Soon shall he enter into a  
blazing fire;*  
(Ch.112:Vs.1-2)

Perish the two hands of Abu-  
Lahab and perish he!

The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, right from the time of his commission declared emphatically that he would be victorious. He predicted that despite being opposed to the hilt he would prevail. He faced terrible trials; attempts were made on his life; grand schemes were staged to wipe out his community of followers. But like the cornerstone which shatters anything striking against it, he prevailed against all opposition.

History stands witness that his claims were entirely vindicated. In circumstances where there could be no hope of survival for him or for his community, he continued to proclaim that he would indeed triumph and that Islam would spread both in the East and in the West; the entire mankind would assemble under his banner; the rule of Islam would spread far and wide. He also talked of the time when followers of his faith would abandon the Qur'an and turn decadent. Their dominion would be abolished and new nations would rise to subjugate them. It would be at that time that Allah would raise the spirit of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> to make Islam dominant once again. These prophecies can be found in the Qur'an and in the books of *Hadith* where they have been further explained by the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>.

All have been literally fulfilled.

Victory foretold from a position of utter powerlessness and prediction of the fall that would follow the eminence of a mighty victory cannot be a creation of the mind. The fulfillment of these prophecies under the most extraordinary circumstances can only mean that the news of the future of Islam was divinely revealed to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, thereby making it a positive proof of his truth and demonstrating his holy origin.

Today the might of Europe stands supreme. Their culture, innovation and technology stand unchallenged. The world is in awe of them and looks up to them. They are considered masters and source of all areas of knowledge and wisdom. Where Europe is pointing to its ascendancy and presenting it as a proof of the superiority of its ways, the Muslim nations of today, who until yesterday were the sole bearers of power and prestige, who were the teachers of the occident, whose horses galloped untrammelled on its soil, find themselves restricted and encircled. The lion, in front of which nations of Europe were like

insignificant mice, today is lame and enfeebled. The mice prance around its body and take bites off its flesh, yet the lion cannot find it in its power to swat them away.

The Muslim of today is despairing and considers Islam to be in its terminal stage. When he visits Europe and sees its material progress, he gives up to hopelessness and returns home carrying the message of defeat. For him, Islam is beyond the point of recovery. On the one hand Islam has been dealt defeat in the political realm, and on the other its own followers have bidden it farewell and have taken the West to be their guide, subservience to which they consider a matter of pride and satisfaction. They have forgotten that their Book contains guidance which is complete and leaves no area of human interest untouched. It obviates the need to search elsewhere. Its light can illumine the soul and by following its teachings one may profit both spiritually and materially.

The prophecies made by the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> about the decline of Islam and the progress of the



European West serves as a powerful test to the truth of his claim. It is mind-boggling how over 1300 years ago these matters were foretold with all the attendant details. He describes these events as if a film is running and the events of the future are playing on a screen. That these events did come to pass is an irrefutable proof that the knowledge thereof was revealed to him from the All-Knowing God.

Therefore the current feeble state of Islam should not cause Muslims to despair. The same God Who revealed through His Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> that Islam would come to a decline also gave the tidings of its re-emergence and regaining of ascendancy over its foes. Those attempting to destroy it would themselves crumble and its banner would once again fly over this world. This would happen through the agency of God's own Will and as it happened at the time of the emergence of Islam, the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> would reappear in the end-times, not in person but in spirit and would act as a magnet to attract God's help and succour manifesting as multitudes of

angels and granting once again dominion to the weak and the helpless. Muslims need not lose hope. Instead they should hang tight to the mantle of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and should prepare and wait with certitude for the times promised to them.

We narrate below certain prophecies from the Holy Qur'an and the books of *Ahadith* about the present times and to which *Surah Al-Lahab* is closely related. Reading it and pondering over it strengthens conviction within a believer that with the decline of Islam having come to pass and exactly as foretold, surely its promised progress will also follow in due course.

In the Latter Days, among the trials that Islam was to face, two adversaries find particular mention. Their special mention is on account of the profound harm they would inflict to the cause of Islam. One has been given the name of *Dajjal*, and the other is known as the Appearance of *Yajooj-Majooj (Gog-Magog)*. In *Sahih Muslim* it is narrated:

‘Hudhaifa bin Usaid Al-Ghifari<sup>(ra)</sup> reported: Allah’s Messenger<sup>(as)</sup> came to us all of a sudden as we were busy in a discussion. He asked: What do you discuss? We said: We are talking about the Last Hour. Thereupon he said: It will not come until you see ten signs and he made a mention of the Smoke; the *Dajjal*; the rising of the sun from the West; the descent of Jesus son of Mary; *Gog* and *Magog* and land-sliding in three places, one in the East, one in the West and one in Arabia at the end of which fire would burn forth from Yemen, and would drive people to the place of their assembly.’

With some reflection one may deduce that *Dajjal* and *Gog-Magog* are different aspects of the same turmoil. This is why only one, *Gog-Magog*, finds mention in the Holy Qur’an without any direct reference to the other, whereas we find tremendous importance attached to the *Dajjal* in the traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. In one *Hadith* it is stated:

‘While speaking of the *Dajjal*, he<sup>(saw)</sup> said: There has been no Prophet who has not warned his people of the (*Dajjal*). Noah<sup>(as)</sup> warned his people about him and likewise I do too.’

A portent of this magnitude could not have been ignored by the Holy Qur’an. *Dajjal* and *Gog-Magog* are different names of the same reality; rather they are names given to aspects of what ultimately is a single threat that Islam would face. This is also supported by the common period of their expected appearance. Both would dominate the world, which further points to the commonality of these two entities.

The literal translation of *Dajjal* is: the deceiver; the pretender. The great turmoil of the Latter Days about which the prophets have forewarned their peoples has two defining properties: perversion of the religious beliefs and ideals, and corruption of politics and the breakdown of world peace. The aspect relating to the perversion of religious beliefs has been called the *Dajjal*: one who falsifies and

deceives. Its aspect to do with disturbance in the realm of politics and the shattering of world peace has been personified as *Gog* and *Magog*.

*Gog* and *Magog*, in Arabic *Yajooj-Majooj*, are derived from the word *ajja*, which means ‘fanning the flames’. The title *Yajooj-Majooj* would be applied to such as would have power over fire. They would use fiery weaponry to gain dominance over the world.

With this preliminary explanation let us turn to the narration in the Holy Qur’ an relating to *Gog* and *Magog*:

*It shall be so even when Gog and Magog are let loose and they shall hasten forth from every height.*

(Ch.21:97)

For a while *Gog* and *Magog* will be kept restricted to the edges of the earth until a time when the barrier confining them would be broken. The breaking down of the barrier means that Islam would lose its political power and the spiritual state of its followers

would be greatly diminished. Muslims will have forgotten their faith. With reference to these times in *Chapter Al-Sajdah*, Allah the Almighty says:

*He will plan the Divine Ordinance from the heaven unto the earth, then will it go up to Him in a day the duration of which is a thousand years according to what you reckon.*

(Ch.32:V.6)

This means that in the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, Islam would see great progress. This period of progress, as described in various traditions, would last three hundred years, after which it would begin to decline and would continue to do so for a thousand years. Therefore the period in question in the above mentioned verse extends to thirteen hundred years from the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. From Ch.21:V.97 it can be gathered that the nations which have been referred to as *Gog-Magog* are distant people living beyond the mountains and separated by the sea. The word used there is *hadab*, which means elevated land as well as the crest

of a wave. When the events foretold here come to pass, these foreign nations would ride the crests of waves across the ocean, as well as they will descend across elevated lands, onto the lands of Asia. We mention Asia here since it was the birthplace of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> of Islam, and would be the natural point of reference in this verse.

Similarly in *Surah Al-Kahf*, Allah the Almighty says:

*...when he reached the place between the two mountains, he found beneath them a people who would scarcely understand a word.*

*They said 'O Dhu'l Qarnain, verily, Gog and Magog are creating disorder in the earth. shall we then pay thee tribute on condition that thou set up a barrier between us and them? He replied: 'The power with which my Lord has endowed me about this is better, but you may help me with physical strength; I will set up between you and them a rampart.*

*"Bring me blocks of iron".*

*They did so till, when he had leveled up the space between the two mountain sides, he said: 'Now blow with your bellows. They blew till, when he had made it red as fire, he said: 'Bring me molten copper that I may pour it thereon.'*

*So they (Gog and Magog) were not able to scale it, nor were they able to dig through it.*

*Thereupon he said: 'This is a mercy from my Lord' But when the promise of my Lord shall come to pass, He will break it into pieces. And the promise of My Lord is certainly true.'*

*And on that day We shall leave some of them to surge against others and the trumpet will be blown. Then shall We gather them all together.*

*And on that day We shall present Hell, face to face, to the disbelievers.*

*Whose eyes were under a veil so as not to heed My Warning, and they could not even hear.*

*Do the disbelievers think that they can take My servants as protectors instead of Me? Surely We have prepared Hell as an entertainment for the disbelievers.*

*Say, 'Shall We tell you of those who are the greatest losers with regard to their works?*

*Those whose labour is all lost in search after things pertaining to the life of this world, and they think that they are doing good works.'*

(Ch.18: 94-105)

It can be deduced from these verses that the two nations of *Gog* and *Magog* will dominate the entire world in the Latter Days, leading to intense rivalry and friction between them. Eventually they will turn against each other and in fiery battles cause mutual destruction. Furthermore, it says that these would be highly industrialised nations steeped in technology and innovation, but forgetful of their duties towards God. Their grand material works and knowledge will not protect them from ruin.

This prophecy clearly applies to the present times. The decline of Islamic political power started in the seventeenth century, which was followed by a struggle for supremacy among the western nations and was accompanied by tremendous progress in knowledge

and sciences. Religion was challenged by philosophy and materialism rendering it an anachronism. New economic and social models were proposed which were anchored in logic and rationality.

The world beheld these developments in awe and wonderment. One such model is Communism. If one disregards God and His teachings and uses logic and reason alone, in my opinion, there can be no satisfactory socioeconomic model short of either Communism or Fascism. Without God entering the picture, there are only two available choices for guiding man's economic direction: Either one accepts that all men are equal so all material wealth should be equally divided among them, by force if necessary; or one believes in the principle of 'might is right'; power alone would dictate who gets to enjoy the bounties of this world. Logic and reason has nothing more to offer in this regard. It is only religion which brings God and higher moral principles into the picture and prescribes a balanced approach.

The Biblical prophecy about *Gog* and *Magog* also speaks of the rivalry that will develop between the two powers leading them into war where they will employ weaponry of fire. In Ezekiel, Chapter 38 verse 18 to 22 we have:

‘And it shall come to pass at the same time when *Gog* shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God that My fury shall come up in My face. For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all My mountains, said the Lord God: every man’s sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him

with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.’

It further says in Ezekiel, Chapter 39 verse 4 to 7:

‘Thou shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou and all thy bands, and the people that are with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shall fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, said the Lord God. And I will send a fire on *Magog*, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord. So will I make My Holy Name known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let them pollute My Holy Name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.’

From the texts quoted above, taken from the Holy Qur’an and the

Bible, we can see that both sources agree on *Gog* and *Magog* confronting each other in the battlefield. The Qur'an mentions in addition, that the political systems and ideologies represented by these powers would perish with this war and that neither would be able to sustain itself much longer beyond that.

The *Ahadith* tell us that at the time of the emergence of *Dajjal* and *Gog-Magog*, Islam will be weak and defenseless. In its protection Allah will send the Messiah who will make his appearance in the East. After his appearance the *Dajjal* would be killed. At that time Muslims will be dispossessed of material power, yet the Messiah and his followers will strive in their mission through propagation and power of the prayer. God Himself would bring about the defeat of *Gog* and *Magog*. Islam will once again flourish and will regain its lost ascendancy. God's favor will return to this world such that a little shall suffice and greed and avarice will go away and people will turn away from materialism and towards spirituality.

Chapter *Al-Lahab* contains the prophecy of these Latter Day turmoils and their final disposition. Allah says: *tabbat yada-abi lahab-in wa tab*, meaning that God will frustrate and destroy those nations and their confederates that will wage a fiery war upon Islam. *Tabba* means to be destroyed; to be killed; to fail in one's objective. It has also been translated as being devoid of all goodness. *Yadun* means hands as well as prestige, power and sovereignty. *Yad* also means a confederacy or alliance. Hence *tabbat yada-abi lahab* would mean the following:

1. Perished be both hands of *Abu-Lahab*.
2. The two alliances of *Abu-Lahab* were destroyed and they failed to meet their objectives.
3. The power, prestige and dominion of *Abu-Lahab* were destroyed.
4. The two groups in alliance with *Abu-Lahab* were rendered devoid of any goodness or advantage.

*Abu-Lahab* literally translates to Father of the Flame, but idiomatically it would mean creator of such things as produce fire and flame. Commentators have also taken it to mean a fair and ruddy countenance.

We have indicated above that *Abu-Lahab* here does not stand for an individual, but it is a nation that would dominate the world in the Latter Days and would create a grave threat against the mission of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> of Islam and his faith. It will gain mastery over fire, and will invent instruments of fire. It will form mighty alliances with other nations that will act as its hands. We see today that there are only two such alliances in the world, one comprising of the western powers and the other of the eastern. *Abu-Lahab* is a collective name given to these groupings, to which a most appropriate title is given that the peoples of these alliances are by and large of fair complexion, and are also the creators of conflagration causing weapons such as the atomic and hydrogen bombs. Therefore the title of *Abu Lahab* aptly describes them in literal and

metaphorical sense. Their destiny would lead them into the fire of their own wars. Moreover, they have monstrously calumnised the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> of Islam in their literature and have thereby created a fire in the world, thus deserving the title of *Abu-Lahab* from that angle as well.

In *tabbat yada-abi lahab*, the word *tabba* has been used in the past tense. In Arabic when an event is certain to occur, it is expressed in the past tense to convey the sense of finality about it. Here *tabba* means: Take it for granted. *Abu-Lahab* and his allies will perish and will be frustrated in their objective of destroying Islam.

In this verse the destruction of *Abu-Lahab's* hands is mentioned before his own destruction, meaning that those nations to which the name *Abu-Lahab* applies, that is the western and eastern powers, will try to make other countries join them and will succeed in forging these alliances. These satellite countries will act as the hands of their masters and will be a source of pride for them and contributing to their hegemony.



But Allah will first create circumstances that will result in the destruction of the satellites and which will culminate in the destruction of their focal point, the entity described as *Abu-Lahab*.

In the *Ahadith* wherever we find the discussion of the future threats against Islam, there we also find that Allah will cause the Messiah to descend who will fight these threats through his prayers. It is clear from the *Ahadith* that no one has been granted the power to fight these foes: *la yada-ni la-ahadin liqitalihim*.

*(Mishkat Kitab-ul-Fitan)*

Muslims will be in a state of weakness, yet Allah will hear the prayers of the Promised Messiah<sup>(aas)</sup> and will create circumstance which will cause the enemies of Islam to crumble and dissolve like salt in water. They will fight amongst themselves through wars. The Holy Qur'an uses the term *yada*, which means hands, to describe the allies of *Abu-Lahab*, while the *Hadith* uses the same term to describe the Latter Day turmoil, which shows that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, was

given detailed knowledge of these events and was shown that it would not be possible to vanquish them in the battlefield through any material means. In conclusion: *tabbat yada-abi lahab-in wa tab* contains the prophecy that the world powers and their satellites which will wage war on the Muslims will face destruction and will be unable to wipe out Islam.

مَا آغْنَاهُ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۖ

*His wealth and what he has earned shall avail him naught.*

The word *ma* in *ma aghna* can act both as a negative or an interrogative. As negative it would mean that the wealth of *Abu-Lahab* will not avail him, and as interrogative it would mean: of what use would be his wealth when it fails to protect him from destruction?

This verse purports to say that these nations would generate great wealth through industrialisation and innovation. Furthermore they would invest their capital in other countries and on the pretext of engaging in trade would occupy

them and appropriate their wealth. The expression used to describe wealth is *maluhu*, which signifies an abundance of wealth, meaning that even the enormity of their wealth will not save them. *Ma-luhu* is followed by *ma kasaba* which is wealth that is acquired. Hence their wealth would be divided into two parts: that generated through their own industry and the other acquired from other countries. This aptly describes the western nations of today which on the one hand have amassed enormous fortunes through industrialization, and on the other have invested heavily in other countries and through it have usurped their wealth and despoiled them of their resources or even occupied them in many cases.

This verse also disproves the notion that *Surah Al-Lahab* is about *Abd al'Uzza*, the Holy Prophet's<sup>(saw)</sup> uncle and his inveterate enemy and persecutor. As discussed *Ma-louhu wa ma-kasaba* implies enormous wealth, which *Abd al' Uzza* did not possess. He was not considered among the wealthy of his times. Owning a few camels does not

make one rich. These terms most appropriately describe the western nations of today whose claim to wealth is universally accepted. Some commentators have taken *ma-kasaba* to mean works, effort and offspring. In that sense these nations would boast of their innovation, industry and alliances, none of which would avail them at the time of disaster, instead these would be its very cause.

سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ﴿٥﴾

*Soon shall he burn in a flaming fire;*

In Arabic the word *naar*, literally meaning fire, can also be used for war. For example, in Ch.5:V.65 *naar* has been used together with war: *Whenever the enemies of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> kindle a fire for war, Allah extinguishes it.* Hence this verse would mean that the nations described as *Abu-Lahab* would get embroiled in a catastrophic war in which fire would be the primary agent of devastation and would be on a scale not seen before in history. This indicates the usage of nuclear weapons, which release enor-

mous heat and have the ability to scorch large areas.

The Arabic letter *seen* on a verb indicates its proximity in time, whereas *saufa* indicates its remoteness. Here the *seen* in the verb *sayasla* signifying nearness in time, tells us that once the machinations of the enemies of Islam reach their high point it would not be long before they are thrust into the fire of war. We see that the western machinations against the Islamic world reached their zenith in 1914, which was quickly followed by war that lasted until 1918. The next war, which was related to the first, started in 1938 and extended until 1945. 1945 saw the use of the first atomic bomb, followed by the testing of the Hydrogen bomb bringing the world to the threshold of disaster.

وَأَمْرَاتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۗ

*And his woman too who goes about carrying firewood.*

*Imra'tun* literally means a wife, but it can also be used for someone subordinate or submissive. In

Ch.2:V36 Allah addresses Adam and says: *Dwell thou and thy wife in the garden.* There wife means not just his consort, but also his followers who were submissive to his wishes. Hence this verse tells us that the nations to whom the title of *Abu-Lahab* applies will have satellite countries acting as its hands and in addition they will have agents in other states which will coax and egg on their leaders to work against Muslims and break its power. They will help in propaganda and will incite them to war, in other words they will provide fuel for the fire.

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ۗ

*Round her neck will be a halter of twisted palm-fibre.*

Though apparently free, these nations will be enslaved to their respective political ideologies and systems that they will not be able to break away from them. Until God sets them free their state of bondage will continue.

# AHMADIYYAT

## Bound to Triumph

The Community's Humble Beginnings only in Keeping with Divine Law. High Aspirations, and Conduct in Conformity with Promised Messiah's Prophecies will Lead to the Desired End.

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*The following is a summarized English version of a sermon given January 29, 1937 by Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> in Qadian. This summary is reprinted from the February 13, 1937 issue of The Sunrise, Lahore.*

If a nation is destined to advance God grants it high ambitions and lofty ideas, but if it is destined to decline its aspirations are lowered. A study of the rise and fall of nations reveals the fact that a nation's decline begins with the decline in its ideas, and its advancement with the advancement of its ideals. Small and low-thinking nations remain content with petty things but advancing nations are inspired by high aspirations. A Persian couplet says: 'one's thoughts are

coextensive with one's capacities'.

### A Tiny Cloud

Almighty God has ordained greatness and glory for the Ahmadiyya Jama'at (Ahmadiyya Community).

Greatness it must and shall attain, whenever it attains it. The beginning would be small – and according to divine custom it must be so – but that small beginning shall be the forerunner of future greatness just as a seed sown is the means of producing so many grains.

Some of the great powers today have armies numbering eight, nine or even ten million men. Compared to them, what were a handful of men (313 in all) it was

who faced the hosts of unbelievers at the Battle of Badr! After straining all their resources the Muslims had been able to bring only this number of men to the battlefield. The Battle of Badr is regarded by us as the greatest battle that was ever fought. All the same, the number of men taking part in it was less than in skirmishes on our frontier. A modern general would have regarded the Battle of Badr as mere child's play. But the discerning know that the battle fought by those three hundred odd men was a battle in which the future destiny of the world was to be decided. Those three hundred men added more to their number and became one hundred thousand, the latter growing up to be millions and spreading all over the world. Their enemies were like the clouds overspreading the skies but without a drop to send down to earth. Yut that small band of Muslim fighters was like the tiny cloud appearing after a drought and a spell of severe hot weather at dawn. To outward appearance such a cloudlet is only a speck in the skies but in a few

minutes it spreads itself in the heavens and sends down water in torrents flooding the whole countryside. The first cloud spanning the vault of heaven but waterless, is blown about by winds; the other, a speck of a cloud, arising from a corner of the horizon covers the whole earth and turns it into a huge sea.

### **Believers' Sacrifice Does Not Go to Waste**

Such is our own case. Fools may laugh at us, laughing at the smallness of our resources, and saying: 'What a people, these Ahmadi!' Some foolish people of the community too, wonder and say, 'What have we to do with worldly glory,' whereas, if there was a grain of faith left in us, we should have known that greatness is meant for us alone to whom the same has been promised.

If *we* have nothing to do with worldly glory, who else has? How strong must our effort and how high must our aspirations be when we have been told by God: *'When there comes the help of*

*Allah and the victory, and thou seest men entering the religion of Allah in large numbers;*’ when we have the Divine promise: *‘Kings shall seek blessings from thy garments’* and when we have the assurance that we shall spread over the world, and, compared us, the other nations would be of little or no importance? How great must be our sacrifices in that case; how great our self-denial? The sacrifice of the soldiers of other nations may go to waste. They know that it goes to waste. But the sacrifice of a man belonging to a nation for whom triumph has been destined by God never goes to waste. The sacrifice of the victors is like the brick which forms part of the building; but that of the losers is like the brick which is thrown into the sea where it crumbles, and is not used in building up the world’s structure. The other brick forms part of the wall and raises it still higher.

### **Not Defeat But Victory**

The sacrifice of a believer, therefore, is never wasted. The undiscerning may regard it as a

defeat. But those who probe deeper regard it as a great victory, for God rears a new tree as the result of every fresh sacrifice of a believer. Just as the sower of seeds appears to a child to be throwing away the grain, whereas in reality everyone knows that it is not being thrown away, but it would grow and produce many more grains like itself.

### **Make Your Conduct Consistent With Future Greatness**

I should like to advise the Jama’at, therefore, to make their conduct conform to the prophecies contained in the Promised Messiah’s<sup>(as)</sup> revelations.

I have been pointing out for the last two or three years that friends should study these revelations, so that they might know how glorious is their future. Many a man is slothful and indolent just because they do not know how bright their future is. Study these revelations so that you might get a glimpse of your great future and then bring your conduct up to the mark to which God wishes you to bring it up. Is there a man more

unlucky than him who stands under the light and still finds himself shrouded in darkness? The unlucky man has spread before him delicacies of all kinds but who has not the power to eat them?

This, indeed, is the state of that unlucky man who has before his eyes the prophecies and revelations of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> proclaimed fifty years ago when there was no sign of the Jama'at; who has seen many of them fulfilled with his own eyes, but who stops at them and ignores the others which are more glorious. He forgets them and contents himself. He is like the frog in the well, with the little he has seen, saying, that all that he *could* have, he has had. He is unlucky indeed! Would that he had not been born so that he had not denied the Word of God!

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