



# THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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## The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

A monthly magazine devoted to the dissemination of the teachings of Islam, the discussion of Islamic affairs and religion in general

*The Review of Religions is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents the pure and true Islam. It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.*

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## Guide Posts

### CHEERFULNESS

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

“I have not seen anybody who smiled more than the Holy Prophet.”  
(Abdullah bin Harith).

Nobody likes a grouser. One steers clear of his presence for he radiates an atmosphere of depression. Everybody would like to be happy but most people do not know the secret of happiness; and even if they do they fail to experience it in their daily lives due to lack of attention to the principles involved. No doubt there are degrees and qualities of happiness but real joy is not a momentary or temporary experience but one which permanently pervades the mind and soul despite the onslaught of multifarious problems and afflictions. Many a martyr has suffered death with a serene and blissful countenance.

Worldly affairs never run smoothly. Every kind of affliction — great or small — is a blessing in disguise for within them lie the seeds of greater benefits and advantages awaiting to be nurtured. This truth may appear absurd but it is an absolute fact. Furthermore they serve to test our mettle and to strengthen our characters. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“We shall surely try you with somewhat of fear, and hunger, and loss of wealth, and lives, and of the fruits of your labour and sometimes your dear children will die; Then give tidings to the steadfast, who when a misfortune overtakes them, do not lose heart, but affirm: We belong to God and are His servants and to Him shall we return. It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and also mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided.”

(2: 156–158).

Let us turn to the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). He encountered all kinds of adversities but always carried his smile with him:

“The Holy Prophet, throughout his life, had to encounter a succession of bitter experiences. He was born an orphan, his mother died while he was

still a small child and he lost his grandfather at the age of eight years. After marriage he had to bear the loss of several children one after the other, and then his beloved and devoted wife Khadija died. Some of the wives he married after Khadija's death, died during his lifetime and towards the close of his life he had to bear the loss of his son Ibrahim. He bore all these losses and calamities cheerfully, and none of them effected in the least degree either his high resolve or the urbanity of his disposition. His private sorrows never found vent in public and he always met everybody with a benign countenance and treated all alike with uniform benevolence. On one occasion he observed a woman who had lost a child occupied in loud mourning over her child's grave. He admonished her to be patient and to accept God's will as supreme. The woman did not know that she was being addressed by the Holy Prophet and replied: 'if you had ever suffered the loss of a child as I have, you would have realized how difficult it is to be patient under such an affliction.' The Prophet observed: 'I have suffered the loss not of one but of seven children' and passed on. Except when he referred to his own losses or misfortunes in this indirect manner, he never cared to dwell upon them nor did he permit them in any manner to interfere with his unceasing service to mankind and his cheerful caring of their burdens." (Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran by Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad).

Cheerfulness was one of the traits of the Holy Prophet's magnetic personality. Again it has been said of him:

"He met everyone cheerfully and courteously."

(Hussain bin Ali).

"Every time he saw me he smiled."

(Jareer bin Abdullah).

It has already been stated that life is full of ups and downs. It is not smooth going all the way so let us take heart from the following lines:

"Life's grim for you? Do not complain —  
Your face should hide your heart;  
For others find the going hard:  
They too must play a part.  
Your courage high, your spirit gay,  
Meet trouble in a splendid way!"

"The folk who might complain but don't,  
Who suffer loss, yet smile;  
Who get more knocks than pence, but still  
Will go the second mile —  
These are the folk who, come what may,  
Find much to sing about each day."

Let us strive to maintain a cheerful and smiling countenance taking further inspiration from the following exhortations delivered by Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad to the young men of the Ahmadiyya Community in Islam:

“You should get in the habit of thinking hard and training yourself in the art of talking with a smiling face. If you are abused return the compliment with a cheerful laugh. I remember an incident of the days when I was a student in the Government College, Lahore. We had holidays and I was on my way to Qadian. A very sharp tongued opponent of the Movement shared the carriage with me. He hurled abuse at me from Lahore and I kept answering back with smiles. He had been impressed with my pleasant face and cheerful manner and when he got off the train at Amritsar he said: ‘If you get two hundred missionaries like yourself you will succeed in winning us over. I tried hard to provoke you but you kept smiling.’”

“You should set an example. It becomes infectious. It is the duty of a khadim (servant of God) to smile and laugh. To become a khadim, therefore, keep a smiling countenance. It is the first requirement.”

“The first born son of my eldest daughter was a very handsome baby but it died at birth . . . When I approached her to console her I found her smiling. It gave me immense pleasure and I told her there and then that Allah would give her a son who will live long. Allah did grant her a second son.”

“In my recent tour of Africa I met and shook hands with five to six thousand Ahmadies in the course of a single function. I was told that scores of Ahmadies were greatly surprised that I greeted everyone with a smile. It cost me neither money nor time but the smiling countenance worked wonders. In short I am trying to tell you that a cheerful manner creates a deep impression.”

We read in the Bible:

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”

(Proverbs 17:22).

A deep-down smile works wonders. It enriches both the giver and the receiver. It refreshes the weary and cheers the discouraged. It costs nothing but gives much. It is infectious and magnetic:

“I often wonder why it is  
That people smile at me.  
I’m very glad they do,  
Because it cheers me up you see.  
I wonder why folk smile at me?  
This question got me beat —  
Unless it is because I smile  
At everyone I meet!”

It has been truly said that a smile is a curve that can set a lot of things straight. The following literary extracts are stimulating pointers:

“Give every living soul you meet the best smile you have ever smiled in your life, even your own wife and children, and see how much better you feel and look. It’s one of the best ways I know to stop worrying and start living. When I begin to do this I find I become more welcome everywhere.”

(How I Learned the Secrets of Success in Selling by Frank Bettger).

“Wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile. Look on the sunny side of everything.”

(As a Man Thinketh by C. D. Larson).

“When addressing a person, never speak without a slight smile or a beam of goodwill in your eyes.”

(Success, Power and Personality by L. S. Clarkson).

“Look pleasant, smile, and speak kindly and cheerily to everyone you meet.”

(Advanced Course in Personal Magnetism by Dumont).

“Smile readily and frequently. The face suddenly becomes alive when its owner smiles. Women become more beautiful and men more handsome. A smile does to the face what the sunshine does to the countryside. Train yourself to smile more. Don’t wait for people to smile at you. Smile when you meet people, smile when you leave them, and as much as possible when you are with them. Greet people with a smile.”

(Psychology Magazine, April 1971).

“It costs nothing, but creates much. It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give. It happens in a flash, and the memory of it sometimes lasts for ever. None are so rich they can get along without it, and none so poor but are richer for its benefits. It creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in a business, and is the countersign of friends. It is rest to the weary, daylight to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and nature’s best antidote for trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen, for it is something that is no earthly good to anyone until it is given away!”

(Frank Irving Fletcher).

Enjoy the delightful description of Charles Dickens:

“He smiles so brightly it seems to spread light and happiness all around him.”

(Life of Charles Dickens. Vol 12. by J. Foster).

We are now able to appreciate fully the value of a smiling countenance. It drives away the clouds of gloom and radiates heart-warming sunshine.

# Seeking God

(Mushtaq Ahmad Bajwa)

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth” (24:36), says the Holy Quran. Everyone who is not blind sees the light. But if one keeps his eyes closed, does not hear one calling, does not enquire, he can have no knowledge of the light. God describes this mental state particularly in reference to the hypocrites living with the believers but it has also a wider application:

“They are deaf, dumb and blind so they will not return.” (2:19).

A. E. Taylor writes:

“We are told in many quarters to-day that ‘God is dead’. It is meant, of course, that God never was alive: for centuries men believed in Him, even when they also hated Him, but this belief was a mere delusion, and now it has become a detected delusion; we *know* that there is no place for God in the scheme of things.”

(Does God Exist?, p. 9).

Before delving into the question of seeking God, it would be proper to mention different views about the Supreme Being in the world.

1. Atheism is the denial of God as the first principle and is thus antitheism, the opposite of theism. It is opposed to any religion or worshipping of God.
2. Agnosticism in its primary reference is commonly contrasted with atheism thus: The Atheist asserts that there is no God, whereas the Agnostic maintains only that he does not know. This term was first publicly coined by T. H. Huxley in 1889. But he used it not in the sense of absolute denial of religion, in which sense it has been used by rationalists. On one hand Huxley and his associates were attacked by enthusiastic Christian polemicists, but on the other hand, Friedrich Engels, the co-worker of Karl Marx, called them “Shame-faced atheists”.
3. Theism is the view that all limited or finite things are dependent in some way on one supreme or ultimate reality of which one may speak in personal terms. It asserts belief in an immanent God who actively intervenes in the affairs of men.



4. Pantheism contrasts with theism, in identifying God with all that there is, and with various forms of monoism, which regards all finite things as parts, modes, limitation, or appearance of some One Ultimate Being which is all that there is.

5. Deism reduces the role of God to mere act of creation in accordance with rational laws discoverable by men. Deists believe that after original act, God virtually withdrew and refrained from interfering in the process of nature and the way of men. The Deist proceeds for most purposes at least, as if there were no God — or only an absent God.

The existence of one supreme and ultimate Being, has been from ancient times a subject under discussion, Plato stated that things change and are in motion but all change does not come from outside, some must be due to the soul and ultimately to a supreme or perfect soul. He combined the motion of the transcendent with the change. His pupil Aristotle made the argument from motion more precise but he coupled it with a doubtful astronomical view. Thus he set a pattern for the more deistic view of God.

In this age of science the philosophers were joined by scientists, Nietzsche said: “Modern physics proves the non-existence of God.” Our Ahmadi Muslim physicist, a Nobel Prize Laureate, Dr. Abdus Salam has, however, through his research found increasing confirmation of his belief in the existence of One God.

Search for a Higher Being is in the nature of man. Did God invest man with this desire and left it to him to seek his Lord? Or, did He Himself enlighten man's path to Himself. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, peace be upon him, who is believed to be the Promised Messiah by his followers, rightly remarks:

“It is a great mistake to imagine that God is like a corpse interred in the earth whose recovery is the business of man. If God has only been discovered through human efforts, it is vain to expect anything from Him. Indeed, God has, through eternity, called mankind to Himself by affirming: I am present. It would be a great impertinence to imagine that man has laid God under an obligation by discovering Him through His own effort, and that if there had been no philosophers He would have continued unknown.”

(The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p. 44).

He has elaborated this point in another book as follows:

“The Being of God is hidden upon hidden and beyond of beyond and is most secret and cannot be discovered by the power of human reasoning alone, and no argument can prove it conclusively; inasmuch as reason can travel only so far that contemplating the universe it feels the need of a Creator. But the feeling of a need is one thing and it is quite another to

arrive at the certainty that the God Whose need has been felt does in fact exist. As the operation of reason is defective, incomplete and doubtful, a philosopher cannot recognize God purely through reason.”

(Haiqatul Wahi, p. 117, Vide Essence of Islam I, p. 28).

The Jews, Christians and Muslims claim to possess belief in One God. A study of Eastern literature shows that they contain belief in One God. S. Radhakrishnan, ex-President of India, in his translation and commentary of Bhagawad Gita, has explained in detail its teaching about God. In Buddhism also, concludes Encyclopaedia Britannica, “finds one much scope to the religious responses that find full expression in theism” (Macro, Vol. 18, p. 269). Confucian religion also contains teaching about a power from beyond the world working for justice within it, a “Heaven-ordained relationship” that provides the basis of ethic and induces a deep consciousness of individuality (*ibid*). The theistic element is also found in the religions of primitive peoples. H. H. Farmer, a British philosophical theologian, writes:

“We may surmise that at moments of living prayers and worship there is in primitive man a turning to a God, as if he were in fact the one and only God, though without any expressly formulated denial of the existence of others; for the time being, the god worshipped fills the whole sphere of the divine.”

(*ibid*).

Red Indians of America and Australian aborigines also possessed belief in God. This fact becomes apparent by the perusal of their traditions. In fact the common factor in all religions was God. This belief is, however, in many old religions, now buried in debris or entangled in man-made rites and traditions. The teaching in these ancient faiths was not ordained by God to be preserved in its purity because it was for a particular tribe or race and also only for a limited period. The code and conduct of morality was according to the development and needs of the community to which the Prophet was sent. The very first detailed teaching is found in Torah, the five books of Moses, but here too it is restricted to Israelites. Even now a stranger cannot be accepted into Judaism. Recently there was a great row in Israel about a non-Israelite's acceptance as “Jew”. Humanity needed a code which was not restricted to a race or nation, which could remain valid for all times, and which could be saved from the interpolations of man and which could be preserved in its entirety.

God guaranteed all this in 98:3-4 and 15:10 in the Holy Quran, so that a seeker after Him could put in all effort to attain nearness to Him with complete confidence and perfect hope. As to Christianity Robert S. Franks, a British Christian scholar writes:

“Now we consider the books of the New Testament in their original inception and character. When they were written, the only authority

recognized by the Christian Church was the Old Testament, the sacred book of the Jewish people, whose central theme is God's choice of Israel. The New Testament writings at first lacked a similar authoritative status; they were, however, important to the Church as charismatic works written for its edification, *Charismata*, or gifts of grace, were universal in the primitive Church (I Cor. xii, 7), and the gift of writing for edification was one of them (Rev. i, 10, 11). There were many other charismatic works in the first age of the Church besides those preserved in the New Testament. The New Testament books were selected from the whole number of such works in the second and third centuries; they were then made authoritative along with the Old Testament on the assumption of their apostolic origin and doctrine."

(The Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 3).

Islam requires belief in the truth of all the Prophets. The Holy Quran declares about all those who say "We believe in some and disbelieve in others, and seek to take a way in between." "These are truly disbelievers" (4:150). Quran refers to the prophecies of Moses about Muhammad and to the similarity of both in bringing new law. The revelation to Jesus is mentioned as Injil, meaning good news because it gave the glad tidings of the advent of the greatest of the Prophets, whose advent Jesus described as the coming of Lord Himself (Matt. 21:40), the appearance of the comforter (John 14:16) or the spirit of the Truth (John 14:17) or as the advent of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15). The word Injil does not refer to the whole of the present four Gospels. Geoffrey Parrinder, Reader in the Comparative Study of Religions in the University of London, writes:

"There remains the difficult problem of the relationship between the Gospel, the Good News that Jesus taught, and the record of his words in the four Gospels. There is no evidence that Jesus ever wrote a line of his teaching . . . The first evangelists collected their material, as Luke says, from eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, and they tried to trace 'the course of all things accurately from the first' (Lk 1. 2.f.)."

"Yet one difference between the Qur'an and the Bible remains in that the latter is not simply teaching but also narrative, and written from varying points of view. K. Cragg has shown what an obstacle this makes to the Muslim who opens the Christian scriptures. The Muslim who addresses himself to the Bible finds a variety of books of independent authorship, stretching over more than a millenium."

(The Call of the Minaret, p. 275 in: Jesus in the Quran, p. 147).

After the escape of Jesus from the cross and his going into the search of the lost sheep of the House of Israel, his disciples turned their attention to the West on account of his rejection by the Palestinian Jews. There they came into contact with Greece and Rome, new doctrines were incorporated falsifying

his true teaching. Robert S. Franks writes about the development of the new creed of Trinity:

“At a Council in Constantinople, A.D. 381, the creed of Nicæa was reaffirmed, and the Cappadocian Trinitarianism was sanctioned as its correct interpretation, in a document now no longer extant, . . . at Chalcedon a creed (what is now generally known as the ‘Nicene Creed’) was adopted as the creed of Nicæa confirmed and interpreted by the Council of Constantinople. Its proper name is therefore the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed.”

(The Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 118).

It was a great tragedy for the Israelites that they rejected Jesus with his sublime teachings and his followers were then obliged to turn to the Gentiles of Europe; and it was a catastrophe that his followers, despite undergoing long persecution, gradually lost the true essence of the teachings of Jesus and succumbed to polytheistic beliefs. All the Prophets of God had been teaching the worship of Allah, One God. The Holy Qur’an says:

“We did raise among every people a Messenger who enjoined; worship Allah alone and shun every transgressor.”

(14:37).

It is indeed sad that a community of a Prophet of God was so misled by atheistic or agnostic philosophies that it committed a heinous transgression: God says:

“They allege: The Gracious One has taken unto Himself a son. Assuredly, you have uttered a monstrous thing! The heavens might well-nigh burst thereat and the earth cleave asunder; whereas it becomes not the Gracious One to take unto Himself a son.”

(19:89–93).

After briefly dealing with religions earlier than Islam, which in their present shapes shall be difficult to be recognised by their respective founders, who shall perhaps offer their apologies to God on the Day of Judgement, as, according to the Quran, Jesus shall submit:

“I said nothing to them except that which Thou didst command me — Worship Allah my Lord and your Lord. And I was witness over them as long as I remained among them but since Thou didst cause me to die Thou hast been Watcher over them and Thou art witness over all things.”

(5:117–118).

God alone could guide one in search of Him to Himself. He did it through His Prophets in various parts of the world. At last the time arrived when guidance in its most perfect form for the whole world and for the whole humanity could be sent. God revealed the Quran in His own words to

Muhammad, peace be on him, during his twenty-two years ministry and declared:

“This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion.”

(5:4).

He also declared:

“We have sent thee not but as mercy for all peoples. Say, surely it has been revealed that your God is but One God. Will you then submit.”

(21:108–109).

God opened a path to Him for people of all races, colours and nations, and gave a guidebook which could never be changed or lost, because He Himself undertook to protect it.

God assured man that no burden of inherited sin has been laid upon him. He made his lifemate of the same species and opened the door of Paradise to them both. He absolved Adam of lapse because it was not at all intentional or deliberate, “he forgot” (29:116).

It is in human nature to seek God and love Him. Islam helps him to seek his beloved. God says:

“Devote thyself single-mindedly to the Faith, and thus follow the nature designed by Allah, the nature according to which He has fashioned mankind. There is no altering of the creation of Allah. That is the everlasting faith. But most people know not.”

(30:31).

The fundamental principles of Islam are One God whose providence extends to the whole universe, one mankind, universality of Divine revelation, accountability for all actions in life after death. These principles are now accepted by almost all religions of the world, which is affirmation of the Quranic truth. In another verse God refers to the belief in God as follows:

“Am I not your Lord? and they answered: Indeed.”

(7:173).

God Almighty sets forth, in the form of question and answer, the characteristic with which He has invested the soul, and that is by its very nature no soul can deny the existence of God.

The door to God is open to all. In Islam there is nothing which could be termed racial, tribal or national or which could debar anyone in his march to his beloved Almighty. God has equally honoured all children of Adam and has not favoured any particular nation or tribe (17:71). Man is born with natural tendency to rise spiritually high but if he rejects God's guidance he sinks low. God says:

“Surely We have created man in the best make; then if he does evil deeds We degrade him as the lowest of the low, save those who behave and do good works; so for them is an unfailing reward.”

(95:5-6).

The human heart is made to become the abode of God. But it should be sound and not infested with evil diseases and idols hidden in its layers. Abraham's prayer recorded in the Qu'ran shows that none shall be safe from disgrace on the day when raised up:

“Save him who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”

(26:90).

Ascent to God is not easy, but man has been bestowed with energy and strength and he has to put in incessant labour for it. God says:

“We have, surely, created man to toil and struggle.”

(90:5).

Man possesses two qualities which made him fit to receive the trust of the Divine Law. God says man is capable of being Zalum (unjust to himself) and Jahul (33:73) (neglectful of himself) i.e., he could be unjust to himself in the sense that he could bear any hardship and undergo any sacrifice for the sake of his Creator and he is capable of being neglectful or heedless in the sense that in the discharge of his great and sacred trust he could be neglected of his own interest and desire for a life of ease and comfort (Commentary, p. 919).

God assures man of reaching his destination:

“Thou, O man, art verily labouring towards Thy Lord, a hard labouring; then thou art going to meet Him.”

(84:7).

The hurdles in the path of the seekers are often placed by his own mind. God says:

“Assuredly, We have created man and we know well what kind of doubt his mind throws up. We are closer to him than his jugular vein.”

(50:17).

God has graciously suggested an antidote to the whispering of the mind:

“O mankind! There has come to you an exhortation from your Lord and a healing for whatever is in the breasts, and a guidance and a mercy to the believers.”

(10:58).

“Exhortation” refers to the Holy Qur'an, in which a cure for every disease of the mind has been prescribed. Let everyone in difficulty turn to the Qur'an for guidance so God may have mercy on him and smooth his way to Himself.

God says about the Qur'an:

“We have sent down to thee the Book to explain everything, and a guidance, and a mercy and glad tidings to those who submit to God.”  
(16:90).

A necessary condition for benefiting from this treasure of knowledge imparting certainty to the mind of the user is complete submission to God. If we submit we shall have good luck to reach the goal.

For one seeking God it is essential to ponder over the creation of Allah. God says:

“Say to them: I exhort you to do one thing and that is that you stand before Allah two and two or singly and reflect.”  
(34:47).

If man reflects, it can lead him from creation to the Creator. God explains it:

“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for people of understanding, those who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth; and say, ‘Our Lord, Thou hast not created all this without purpose. Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire’.”  
(3:191–192).

Let all seekers rejoice for God has promised to show His way to them:

“And as for those who strive to meet Us — we will, surely, guide them in Our ways. Verily Allah is with those who do their utmost.”  
(29:70).

Anas (may God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) said: Allah says: When a servant of Mine advances towards Me a foot, I advance towards him a yard, and when he advance towards Me a yard, I advance towards him the length of his arms spread out. When he comes to Me walking, I go to him running (Bokhari, *Vide Gardens of the Righteous*, p. 28).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (peace of God be upon him) writes:

“Put forth your utmost efforts to recognize God, finding Whom is salvation and meeting Whom is deliverance. He manifests Himself to him who seeks Him with love and sincerity of heart, and He reveals Himself to him who becomes truly His. Pure hearts are His thrones and the tongues that are free from falsehood, abuse and vain talk are the

places of His revelation. He who loses himself in seeking His pleasure becomes a manifestation of His miraculous power.”

(Kashfulghita, p. 8–9, Vide Essence of Islam I, p. xvi).

Among the four main attributes of God mentioned in the first Sura the first two are Rahman and Rahim, both derived from Rahm, meaning mercy. But Rahman means One Who shows mercy gratuitously and extensively to all creation without regard to efforts or work, and Rahim is One Who shows mercy in response, and as a result of the actions of man but shows it liberally and repeatedly. God manifests His attributes of Rahimiyyat by investing man's effort with the best results and saving his efforts from loss by granting him his objective. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) writes:

“When a baby cries and yells for milk in the grip of hunger milk suddenly surges up in the mother's breasts. The baby has not the least idea of prayer. How then do his cries draw milk so close to him? This is a matter of common experience. It is often the case that the mother does not even perceive the presence of milk in her breasts but the cries and moans of the baby suddenly draw it up. By the same token then will our cries unto Allah, the Exalted, fail to draw anything? Certainly, not. Indeed every boon is granted. Only those lacking insight the self-styled savants and philosophers fail to perceive it. If one keeps in mind the relationship between the baby and its mother when pondering the philosophy of prayer, one will find it easy to comprehend it. This kind of mercy teaches that compassion of this type is induced only by prayer. ‘Ask you will be given. Call on Me; I shall respond to you’ (40:61), is not mere words. It is embedded in human nature.”

(Report of the Annual Conference, 1897, pp. 149–150, Vide Commentary of Sura Fatiha, pp. 63–64).

God says:

“Nay, whoever submits himself completely to Allah and he is the doer of good, shall have his reward from his Lord. No fear shall come upon such, neither shall they grieve.”

(2.113).

As explained in the Commentary based on the explanation of the Promised Messiah (p.h.) in Aynae Kamalat-e-Islam, the verse refers to three important stages of the journey of the seekers after God: **Fana** (self-annihilation), **Baqa** (regeneration) and **Liqa** (union with God). The words “Submits himself completely to Allah” mean that all our powers and organs and whatever belongs to us should be surrendered completely to God and devoted to His service. This is known as *Fana* or death which a true Muslim must bring on himself. The second clause “and he is the doer of good” alludes to the state of **Baqa** or regeneration, for when a man gets himself involved in the love of God and all his worldly doings and desires are extinguished, he is,



as it were, granted a new life which may be called **Baqa**. He then lives for God and for the service of man. The concluding words describe the third and the highest stage of goodness — the stage of Liqa or union with God which is also termed as “soul at peace” or Nafs Mutma’inna. God says:

“O, thou soul at peace! Return to thy Lord, thou well, pleased with Him and He well-pleased with Thee. So enter thou among My chosen servants, and enter thou among My Gardens.”

(89:28–31).

The significance of Paradise or Gardens of God is described by the Promised Messiah as follows:

“The reality of the Islamic paradise is that it is a reflection of the faith and actions of a person in this life and are not something that will be bestowed upon a person from outside. A person’s paradise is developed inside him and everyone’s paradise is his faith and his righteous actions, the delight of which begins to be tasted in this very life and one perceives the hidden gardens and streams of faith and righteous action which will become concretely manifest in the hereafter.”

(The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p. 65).

The Promised Messiah writes:

“The purpose of religion is that man should obtain deliverance from his passions and should develop personal love for God Almighty through certain faith in His existence and His perfect attributes. Such love of God is the paradise which will appear in diverse shapes in the hereafter.”

(Surma Chashm Arya, p. 33, wide Essence I, p. 2).

“Abu Huraira, God be pleased with him, relates that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessing of God be upon him said: ‘Allah says: Whoever is at enmity with one whom I befriend should beware of having to do battle with me. When a servant of Mine seeks to approach Me through that which I like best out of what I have made obligatory upon him, and continues to advance towards Me by dint of voluntary effort beyond that prescribed then I begin to love him. When I love him I become his ears by which he hears, and his eyes by which he sees, and his hands by which he grasps, and his feet with which he walks. When he asks Me I bestow upon him and when he seeks My protection I protect him.’”

(Bokhari, Vide Gardens of the Righteous, p. 28).

## **Curb on the Freedom of Religion in Pakistan**

**(Sh. Nasir Ahmad, Zurich)**

In an article published in the magazine "Inquiry" of September 1984 under the heading "Ahmadis — neither here nor there!", the author seeks to "trace the roots of the Ahmadis", but hardly succeeds in arriving at some rational, logical conclusions, supported either by history or by Islamic theology.

Reference is made to the martial law ordinance XX of April 26, 1984, which is said to have been promulgated by General Zia of Pakistan, the military dictator at the time, under pressure by the so-called "Tahaf-fuz-e-Khatm-e-Nabuwwat" Movement (TKN) which, so the article, insisted that the constitutional amendment of September 1974 was not being fully enforced and that "Ahmadis continue to call themselves Muslims and to claim political and legal rights alongside the believers of the majority community".

The world has never heard before that a dictator ever acted "under pressure from the public", as he would have to vacate his chair the moment he succumbed to popular opinion.

The amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan, referred to above, has its own history. From June to September 1974, the National Assembly of the country, which had been turned into a special committee to deal with the "problem" of Ahmadi Muslims, struggled hard to agree on a unanimously-accepted definition of a Muslim. As one definition after the other appeared to exclude one sect of Muslims or the other from the fold of Islam, the exercise was forsaken for another attempt to define a non-Muslim instead of defining a Muslim.

The first thing which strikes here is the novelty and the innovative character of the exercise. In the long history of Islam, never an attempt had been made by a government to define a non-Muslim, let alone a Muslim. The Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him) had laid down specific criteria of a Muslim, but the parliament of the "Islamic Republic of Pakistan" chose to disagree with the Holy Prophet and ignore his definition completely. Why? Because that definition would not exclude Ahmadis from the pale of Islam. So a course of least resistance was adopted in utter defiance of the teachings of

the Holy Prophet. Ironically, all that happened in the name of Islam, thus, in the process, bringing Islam into disrepute. But who cares? The morbid logic of the Mullah has its own ways.

#### A CONCOCTED DEFINITION OF A MUSLIM

The second point to note is that something quite novel was introduced in the definition of a Muslim, and thus the definition given by the Holy Prophet was supplanted to enable the Mullahs to call Ahmadi Muslims “non-Muslims” — itself a contradiction in terms!

The thesis was put forward that one of the fundamentals of Islam was the belief in the absolute and unconditional finality of Prophethood in the sense that no Prophet, whatsoever, could appear after the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him). Let it be stated here categorically and with the greatest possible emphasis that there is no, repeat no such “fundamental” of Islam. It is a pure fabrication intended to mislead the masses of Pakistan who depend on the unlearned Mullah for their knowledge of Islam.

#### A “MINORITY”

The third point worthy of note is that amendment 2 of September 1974 did not stop at declaring Ahmadis as “not Muslims for the purpose of law”; it also declared them to be a minority. Now, the word “minority” in the context of the Constitution of an independent State is something very significant, because it smacks of “second-class citizens”. It is further reminiscent of the days of colonial empire when the concept of minorities was a part of the policy of “divide-and-rule”. No sane citizen of an independent State would ever dream of drawing the divisive lines of “majority” and “minority” to discriminate against a segment of the citizens of a State. Every citizen must enjoy equal rights before law and there should be no talk of a minority for the purpose of law.

The complaint that Ahmadis were claiming same “political and legal rights alongside the majority” is complete nonsense and does not behove any government, let alone a government calling itself “Islamic”. This is one example which shows how far-strayed and alien the bearers of “Islamic” governments today are.

#### WHO DECIDES ON THE BELIEFS OF OTHERS?

The fourth point worthy of note is that the best authority on one’s belief and faith is the person concerned. No other person, committee, court or parliament is competent to pass judgement on the beliefs of others. The only way to determine whether a person is a Muslim, Jew or Christian, is to ask the person concerned and not to set up a committee to decide the question. Whether the person concerned is in reality and in the depths of his heart a

Muslim, Jew or Christian, is not for humans to decide as it would amount to trespassing on the domain of the Almighty Who alone knows the innermost thoughts of people. No other person may presume the right to judge the beliefs of others.

An incident from the life of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him) illustrates the point in a most beautiful manner. During a heavy battle between Muslims and non-Muslims in the time of the Prophet, a Muslim soldier succeeded, after a prolonged fight, to overcome a soldier on the enemy side. War has its own rules which are not applicable to conditions of peacetime. Just at the moment when the Muslim soldier was about to kill his enemy, the latter uttered the words of the Islamic *Kalema*, the profession of faith. But the Muslim soldier killed the opponent nonetheless. When the incident was related to the Holy Prophet, the Prophet was so disgusted at the conduct of the Muslim fighter that he reprimanded him in the severest possible terms and kept on asking him if he had really seen through the inside of the heart of the non-Muslim soldier who, at the climax of the fight, had declared his acceptance of Islam. The plea of the Muslim soldier that the enemy under the circumstances was not sincere in his profession of faith was rejected by the Prophet on the grounds that it was no business of anyone to pass judgement on the sincerity of the beliefs of others.

This incident shows that as far as the affiliation to a faith is concerned, the claim of the person involved is the only criterion which must be taken at its face value with no "buts" and "ifs". By giving its decision in the case of Ahmadi Muslims in 1974 the parliament of the "Islamic Republic of Pakistan" deviated from the path of the Holy Prophet and went out of its way in declaring Ahmadis as "non Muslims".

#### POPULAR SUPPORT FOR ORDINANCE XX?

Pakistan's military ruler Zia went a step further. Ordinance XX was not enacted by a parliament, nor had a committee been set up to consider the "problem". Zia took the whole onus on himself when he promulgated his decree, totally ignoring the teachings of Islam and in complete disrespect for the precepts of the Holy Prophet.

The writer of the article claims that "the Ordinance has won the support from the country's religious leaders and political parties". This is a mis-statement probably arising from the ignorance of the writer of the article. The fact is that the Zia government has up to this day no popular support. The "religious leaders" supporting him are a special brand of Mullahs of a particular sect for whom the vast majority of the people of Pakistan have no liking at all. These bigoted Mullahs have now virtually the reins of government in their hands and they want to impose by force (call it "Islamisation") on the majority of the people of Pakistan an "Islam" of their

own peculiar thinking. They stand for complete intolerance and use of violence in matters of faith, something which has no place in the true teachings of Islam. If Zia and his Mullahs had enjoyed the backing of the general public, then not just a few dozens of Ahmadiis would have been killed but thousands in view of the fact that almost the entire machinery of the government on central and provincial levels has been brought to bear upon the persecuted Ahmadi Muslims.

It is an open secret that the present government would have no chance in open elections. That is the only reason why a so-called "civilian" government has been installed through a manoeuvre whereby only such candidates were allowed to contest the "elections" who had been approved by Zia, a manipulation which rendered the elections of early 1985 a complete farce.

During the martial law, opinions against the regime were not tolerated. The media were not allowed to print statements critical of the martial law regime or its decrees and ordinances. Still some statements did trickle through as the following shows.

1. Three weeks after the promulgation of Ordinance XX, a resolution was introduced in a meeting of the Lahore High Court Bar Association, purporting to approve and welcome the Ordinance. But the resolution was defeated by 113 votes to 12, showing that in the legal circles support for the Ordinance was practically nil. (Daily "Watan", May 18, 1984).
2. Malike Navid Ahmad, Chairman, Pakistan Solidarity Front, said on February 13, 1985, referring to Ahmadi Muslims and the restriction on their religious practices: "The religion of Islam preaches peace and tolerance towards minorities and communities which hold the *Kalema Tayyeba* as the cornerstone of their beliefs and towards those who participated in the struggle for Pakistan under the leadership of Qaid-i-Azam (meaning the Ahmadi Muslims) . . ." He said vested interests, in order to divert the people's attention from the struggle for the restoration of democracy and the 1973 Constitution were trying to use the *Kalema Tayyeba* to achieve their evil designs." ("Dawn", 14.2.1985).
3. The daily newspaper "Dawn" on February 13, 1985, reported a press statement by Mr. Mohammad Hanif Ramay, ex-Chief Minister of Punjab, quoting him as saying:
 

"In a State which came into being in the name of Allah and the *Kalema Tayyeba*, no one has the right to curb the religious freedom of any community, particularly the minorities. This amounts to creating the impression that Islam was spread at the sword-point and not as a result of its benevolence and universal appeal."
4. In an article published in the daily newspaper "Jang", Lahore, on 11.2.1985, Mr. Mohammad Hanif Ramay, attacked the actions of the

Mullahs, supported by government officials in the wake of Ordinance XX, and described them as against the teachings of Islam.

5. A news item reads:

“Six former judges of the Supreme and High Courts have demanded that freedom to practise the religion of one’s choice be guaranteed to all in Pakistan. The current restrictions on forms of prayers and the right to recite the *Kalema Tayyeba* by members of Ahmadiyya community is a gross transgression of the rights guaranteed to the citizens of the State, they said.

They said: “It is a negation of the concept of basic human rights.” The signatories quoted from the speech of the Qaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who said in the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan: “You are free, you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship; in the State of Pakistan you may belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the State.”

The signatories are: Mr. Fakhruddin G. Ebrahim, former Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan; Mr. Mohammad Ali Sayeed and Mr. Fazle Ghani Khan, former Judges of the West Pakistan High Court, and Mr. Abdul Hafeez Memon, Mr. A. Q. Halepota and Mr. G. M. Shah, former Judges of the Sindh High Court.”

(“Dawn”, 23.3.1985).

6. Under the cover of Ordinance XX hundreds of Ahmadi Muslims have been sent to jail for simply displaying their Article of Faith, the *Kalema*. The daily newspaper “Dawn” reported on 15.2.1985 that the former President of the Lahore High Court Bar Association, Sheikh Shaukat Ali, criticised the Home Department circular, directing officials to erase the *Kalema* from the places of worship of Ahmadi. “Those who have issued the erasure orders have done no service to Islam”, he said.
7. Mian Ehsanul Haq, a local leader, criticised in Lahore the Home Department’s circular about erasing the *Kalema* from the Ahmadi’s places of worship. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, Mian Ehsan said erasing the *Kalema* was against the spirit of Islam and the law of the land. (“Dawn”, 14.2.1985).
8. Mr. Aitzar Ahsan, Member, Pakistan Bar Council, said of the practice of erasing the *Kalema* from Ahmadi mosques in the wake of Ordinance XX, that apart from being contrary to the tenets of Islam, any action based on the recent directive of the Punjab Home Department “violates the constitutional guarantees on equality and freedom of worship for all citizens of Pakistan.” He added that narrow-minded religious zealotry and fanaticism must be avoided at all cost and the government must not become party to “this frenzy”. (“Dawn”, 13.2.1985).

9. Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, a former Governor of the Province of Sindh and an ex-Ambassador of Pakistan to the Netherlands, released a statement to the press in which she said: ". . . During the past one year, newspapers have reported occasional murders of Ahmadi notables in mysterious circumstances . . . It is known history that while the Ahmadiyya community supported the cause of Pakistan, most of the Mullah community, their present persecutors, opposed the creation of Pakistan tooth and nail . . ." ("Asian Times", 2.8.1985).
10. Nawab Akbar Bugti, former Governor of the Province of Baluchistan, said in a press statement on November 7, 1985:

"Press reports, originating from Sindh, the Punjab and Baluchistan indicate that undercover groups with indirect support from some government officials are harassing the Ahmadiyya community by interfering not only in their beliefs but are also threatening their life and property . . . A series of murders of Ahmadis have occurred in Sindh, and attacks by unidentified persons on them have become a frequent occurrence . . . It is for the first time in the history of this country that a regime is punishing its own subjects for professing and practising their faith."

#### "CONSPIRACY" AGAINST PAKISTAN

It is a daring insinuation to make that "many in Pakistan continue to believe in the theory of the great Ahmadi conspiracy against Islam and Pakistan". There is no one in Pakistan except a handful of zealots calling themselves "Ulema" and belonging to a certain sect who believe in the theory of a conspiracy against Pakistan. The Founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, certainly did not entertain such a fiction. It was an Ahmadi Muslim, the late Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, who was appointed by the Father of the Nation to the esteemed and highly responsible office of a mediator for Pakistan during the negotiations with the British. In that capacity, Sir Zafrulla Khan was the only one from among all the would-be Pakistanis who had the honour of defending the case of Pakistan before the Boundary Commission. This co-founder of Pakistan was appointed by Mohammad Ali Jinnah in 1947 to be the first Foreign Minister of the newly-born State of Pakistan.

#### "MAULANA" ASLAM QURESHI

Reference has been made in the article to a certain "Maulana Aslam Qureshi", "known for his strong anti-Ahmadi feelings". This "Maulana" is assumed to have disappeared and a concoction has it that Ahmadis are responsible for his mysterious disappearance. Enough to say just one word about this obscure person: He was convicted of an attempt on the life of Mr. M. M. Ahmad, a prominent Ahmadi Muslim in the central Government with the rank of a Cabinet Minister. The attack took place moreover, on a day

when Mr. M. M. Ahmad was officiating as the Head of State during the absence abroad of President Ayub Khan. Seen in this light, the crime ranks with high treason. How strange that a person with such a criminal record should be designated with the title of a “Maulana” and Ahmadis should be blamed for his disappearance. Or did the “Maulana” commit yet another heinous crime before he absconded? The accusation also sheds some light on the status of other “Maulanas”, “Mullahs” and “Ulema”.

#### AHMADIYYA “IN CONFLICT” WITH ISLAM?

The author of the article alleges that the claim of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement “conflicts with one of the fundamental principles of Islam which is that the Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him) is the last of the Prophets”. This point has already been discussed earlier. If this were one of the fundamentals of Islam, then the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him) should have been the first to know this and proclaim it. He did enumerate the five fundamental tenets of Islam, but this one was not among them. It is a pity that baseless claims are made and wrong things are attributed to the teachings of Islam. This alone shows some of the degree of depravity of some of today’s “Muslim” religious leaders.

The renowned book of Hadith (sayings of the Prophet), Bukhari, contains a saying of the Holy Prophet, as related by Ibn Omar, enumerating the five fundamental points which go to make a Muslim:

1. The profession of the Article of Faith, the *Kalema*, which means that none is worthy of worship except Allah and Mohammad is Messenger of Allah.
2. The Prayer,
3. The Zakat (poor-tax),
4. The Hajj — Pilgrimage to the Holy House of Ka’aba,
5. Fasting in the month of Ramadan.

#### COURT RULINGS ON AHMADIS

The said article makes another revelation to the effect that “under the civil courts of the British Raj, the Ahmadis were ruled to be non-Muslims . . . After independence, the Pakistani courts made similar rulings.”

The statement is not just over-simplification, it is forthright untruth. Before dealing with it, a clarification is called for. No court has the jurisdiction of pronouncing a judgement on the beliefs of others. If all the courts of India and Pakistan unanimously decide that Ahmadis are not Muslims, then all those judgements would be so many cases of exceeding the jurisdiction. Ahmadi Muslims do not consider themselves Muslim because in the eyes of a court they are Muslim. They are Muslim because from the depths of their hearts they believe in Islam, in the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him), in the Holy Qur-ân and in all the fundamentals of Islam.



Now to the court decisions: The writer of the article seems to base almost all his points on simple hearsay. His statement is utterly wrong, and quite the opposite is true. Some rulings of High Courts are reproduced here so that no misunderstanding arises if some ruling of a lesser court is produced.

Madras High Court 1922: In the case *Naran Takat vs. Prakkal*, the court ruled:

“Ahmadis are a sect of Musulman, and a person who joins Ahmadi faith, does not become an apostate . . . As already stated, they (Ahmadis) accept the Kalema, the Prophethood of Mohammad and the authority of the Qur-ân. These undoubtedly are the essential conditions for a person to be a Mohammedan, and they are complied with by the Ahmadis; that would seem to make them Muslims governed by the Mohammedan Law.”

(“Indian Cases”, Volume 71, page 65).

Patna High Court 1917: In the case *Hakim Khalil vs. Malik Israfil* and others, the High Court upheld the decision of a lower court to the effect that Ahmadis were Muslims.

(“Indian Cases”, volume 37, page 302).

Karachi High Court 1972 (long after the creation of Pakistan):

In the case *Mrs. Aisha Kureshi vs. Hashmat Ullah*, the court reaffirmed the definition of a Muslim as one who recites the Article of Faith, Kalema, thus indirectly arriving at the same conclusion as in the case above. The court said:

“Mere recital of Kalema is enough for a person to become a Muslim.”  
(“Pakistan Legal Documents”, December 1972, page 653).

Lahore High Court 1968: We reproduce a decision of the Lahore High Court (Pakistan) at some length to make the point quite clear once and for all.

Agha Abdul Karim, Shoaib Kashmiri and others — Petitioners  
vs.

Province of West Pakistan — Responding  
Writ Petition No. 937 of 1968/Decided on 22.7.1968  
(Reported in “Pakistan Legal Documents” 1969, pp. 289).

Before Justice Mohammad Gul and Justice Karam Elahi Chauhan

Question: Muslim or non-Muslim

“The whole burden of argument of the Petitioners’ learned counsel was that Ahmadis are not a sect of Islam, and the Petitioners’ right to say so is guaranteed by the Constitution. But learned counsel overlooked the fact that Ahmadis as citizens of Pakistan are also guaranteed by the

Constitution the same freedom to profess and proclaim that they are within the fold of Islam. How can the Petitioners deny to others what they claim for themselves, is beyond our comprehension. Certainly not by terrorising them.

The question at the root is how far the Petitioners and others like-minded can in law prevent the Ahmadis from professing that, notwithstanding any doctrinal differences with the other sects of Islam, they are as good followers of Islam as anybody else who calls himself Muslim.

We are obliged to consider this aspect of the matter because the Petitioners' learned counsel in the course of his argument referred to certain parts of Munir Inquiry Report on Punjab Disturbances 1953, highlighting the doctrinal differences between the Ahmadis and other sects among Muslims and to certain incidents, where certain persons, professing to be Ahmadis, were dubbed as *Murtadd* (i.e. apostates) and in some cases killed. Two judgements one of a subordinate court in the former Punjab, and the other from a District Council in what was once Bahawalpur State, wherein it was held that Ahmadis are not a sect of Islam, were also placed within record. We wonder how these instances are relevant. The judgements are subordinate courts and they are not relevant even under Section 13 of the Evidence Act 1872.

As to the instances of Ahmadis being *Murtadd* and done to death, all that we need to say is that these are sad instances of religious persecution against which human conscience must revolt if any decency is left in human affairs. How far these instances are opposed to the true Islamic precept and injunction would be manifest from Chapter 2, Verse 256 of the Holy Qur-ân which guarantees freedom of conscience in clear, mandatory terms which are translated thus: 'Let there be no compulsion in religion.' Freedom of thought and conscience could not have been guaranteed in clearer terms."

Very significant seem to us the findings of the *Sindh High Court* in the case.

Maula Bakhsh vs. Charuk and others.

The court ruled:

"It is not the business of a court to decide who is a Muslim. What one says is to be accepted."

("Pakistan Legal Documents" 1952, page 54).

A noteworthy difference in the conditions under Mr. Bhutto and the present persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan must be mentioned. It has been the practice of civil or military rulers of Pakistan to use the Ahmadiyya issue to divert attention from the failures of the government in

connection with their inability to solve internal problems of economic and social nature. Mr. Bhutto found himself in a fix and succumbed to the pressure by the Mullahs. The government of General Zia was and is virtually a Mullah regime. This time the pressure is not from the Mullahs but on the Mullahs exercised by the regime. Evidence is available to show that the demonstrations and demands of the Mullahs are not of their own making, but they are part of a well-prepared scheme of the regime with the intention of perpetuating its hold by abusing the Ahmadiyya issue.

### **The Greatest Victory**

Forgiving all our enemies and slanderers and all who have wronged us and hurt us is not easy, especially with some natures. It is difficult to get rid of the resentment that burns within, even after many years. But there is only one way of escape, and that is in the silence to send love, benediction and full forgiveness to those who have wronged us. When we can love them so much that we can pray for them as earnestly as we pray for ourselves, really and truly, without any reservation at all, we have won the greatest victory of our spiritual life.

(H. T. Hamblin)

# **The Mahdi**

**(Maulvi Sher Ali, B.A.)**

(This article has been reproduced from the 1908 May issue of the Review of Religions. — Editor.)

The Holy Prophets prophecy of the advent of a holy champion of Islam (or a Mahdi as they call him) is a prophecy of a world-wide reputation. There has been no age but has witnessed the appearance of a pretender to this office. Mahdi is a holy and pure name; it means one that is *guided* in the right path. But it is painful to note that ignorant and fanatic mullahs have represented the holy holder of this title in such dark colours and some of the pretenders that set themselves up as Mahdis allowed themselves to commit such horrible atrocities that the word *Mahdi*, a holier and more innocent name than which does not exist, now carries with it a most terrible signification. The holder of this holy title is represented by fanatic mullahs and maulvis as a bloody warrior who will deluge the earth with infidel blood. These foolish priests of Islam know of no other means of propagating the holy religion of Islam and believe that the Mahdi too will resort to sword as the only means of propagating it. Alas, a great injustice has been done to this holy name and a very innocent and harmless title has been misrepresented as the terrible title of a bloodthirsty man-killer. The object of this article is to clear off the errors and misconceptions that having accumulated round the name of the Mahdi through long centuries have hidden the reality from men's eyes, and to represent it in its true light by showing its true significance.

## **INAUTHENTICITY OF THE TRADITIONS RELATING TO THE MAHDI**

The first difficulty that one meets with in studying the prophecy of the advent of the Mahdi is that one is confronted with a mass of traditions almost all of which are admittedly inauthentic. The late Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal State, an eminent theological writer of the Ahl-i-Hadis sect, took great pains to collect all the traditions regarding the advent of the Mahdi in his famous work the Hujaj-ul-Karamah, and speaking of the authenticity of these traditions observes on page 365 of that work: — “There is no doubt that in the chain of the narrators of most of the traditions there are persons who were

careless, of bad memory, weak or of feeble judgment and had other faults. . . . These weak and faulty traditions, taken collectively bear evidence to the truth of the fact that the Mahdi shall appear in the latter days, though there are very few of them that are pure." Thus according to this learned writer, the only thing that the traditions conclusively prove is that a Mahdi must appear in the latter days. As to the details of his appearance nothing can be said with certainty owing to the inauthenticity of the traditions. The same view is expressed by the learned theologian elsewhere when he says: "All the traditions that relate to the appearance of the Mahdi, the events, the occurrences, the dangers and the conquests of his time, etc., only show the truth of his appearance, *in whatever way it may be*," (page 384). The concluding words are significant. They show that in the opinion of the writer, the traditions that speak of the advent of Mahdi are almost all so self-contradictory and inauthentic that they prove nothing beyond the fact that a Mahdi is to appear. As to the details, the traditions are hopelessly at variance with each other so that we can not say with certainty how the appearance is to take place.

These remarks of a learned theologian will give the reader an idea how far the traditions that speak of the advent of the Mahdi are reliable. The unreliability of these traditions may further be judged from the fact that they find no place in the two well-known works on the traditions, *viz*, the Sahih Bukharee and the Sahih Muslim, works which the consensus of Muslim opinion has declared to be more authentic than any other collection of traditions. These two books that enjoy the distinction of being the most reliable works on tradition have nothing at all to say as to the advent of a Mahdi. This shows that the learned compilers of these works did not look upon these traditions as authentic enough to have a place in their collections and hence they rejected them. To what further conclusion this circumstance gives rise, I shall state further on.

Most of the traditions are unreliable not only because their narrators were untrustworthy but also because there is much evidence in the traditions themselves which points to their unreliability. The traditions are full of contradictions. They disagree on the name of the Mahdi, his lineage, the place and the time of his appearance, and the period for which he will live on the earth after his appearance. I quote below some of the traditions in order to show how they contradict each other on almost every important point.

(a) *Traditions giving the name of the Mahdi.* — Abu Daud has the following tradition: — "Even if there remain only one day to the end of the world, God will lengthen that day until He raises therein a man from me (or from my family) whose name will coincide with my name and whose father's name will coincide with that of my father."

The same author has another tradition which represents Ali saying: "This

my son, Hasan, is a leader as the Holy Prophet styled him, and there shall appear from among his descendants a man who will be called after the name of your prophet, whom he will resemble in character and not in personal appearance.”

Both these traditions, if literally interpreted, mean that the Mahdi's name is to be *Muhammad*.

There are other traditions which give the Mahdi's name as *Ahmad* and not *Muhammad*. Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan observes on page 352 of his work already referred to that according to some traditions, the name of the Mahdi is Ahmad and that of his father Abdulla. One of the traditions runs thus: “A crier shall cry from the heavens: O people, verily God has rid you of the tyrants and the hypocrites and their hosts and made the best of his servants a lord over you, so join him at Mecca, for he is the Mahdi and his name is Ahmad, son of Abdullah.” (Iqtirab-us-Saah, page 66).

Again, there is a tradition which gives his name as Isa (Arabic form of Jesus). This tradition will be found in another part of this article.

As to the name of his father, the Shiahs contend that it is Hasan and not Abdullah.

(b) *Traditions regarding his descent.* — On this point too there is a hopeless confusion in the traditions.

Firstly, there are traditions that represent him as a descendant of Fatima. Abu Daud reports on the authority of Umme Salma: “The Mahdi is from my (*i.e.*, the Holy Prophet's) family, from the children of Fatima.” We have now to see whether the Mahdi is to be a descendant of Hasan or Husain, the two sons of Fatima. Here there is a great split in the traditions, some representing Mahdi as a descendant of Hasan and others denying it and representing him as a child of Husain. I have already quoted a tradition from Abu Daud which represents the Mahdi as the seed of Hasan. It runs thus: “Ali looked at his son, Hasan, and said: ‘This my son is a leader, as the Holy Prophet styled him, and there shall appear from among his descendants a man, who will be called after the name of your prophet, whom he will resemble in character, but not in personal appearance.’”

Another tradition to the same effect is narrated by Tammam and Ibn-Asakar and runs thus: “There shall appear in the last days a man from the children of Hasan, who, if confronted by mountains shall remove them from their resting place and shall make his way through them.”

Against these traditions, we have others according to which the Mahdi is to be a descendant of Husain and not of Hasan. Ibn Asakar narrates on the authority of Jabir: “Verily Mahdi is from the children of Husain.” The Shiahs stick to traditions which declare the Mahdi to be a descendant of Husain. An

attempt has been made to patch up this difference in another tradition which declares the Mahdi to be a descendant of both Hasan and Husain. Tabrani and Abu Nuaim narrate on the authority of Ali Halali: The Holy Prophet said to Fatima, "By Him who raised me with truth, verily the Mahdi of this religion is to be from these two, *i.e.*, Hasan and Husain." It would have been well if this difference had ended with Hasan and Husain, but unfortunately there come forward others, who announce the Mahdi to be descending from quite a different stock, thus excluding both Hasan and Husain. For instance, there are a number of traditions in which the Mahdi is represented as a descendant of Abbas, the uncle of the Holy Prophet. Kaab Ahbar is said to have narrated the following tradition: "The Mahdi is to be a descendant of *Abbas*." *Dar Qutni and Ibn Asakar* narrate as follows: "Osman (the 3rd caliph) said, 'I heard the Holy Prophet say that the Mahdi was to be a descendent of his uncle, *Abbas*.'" Another tradition is narrated by Khateeb, which says: "The Holy Prophet said, 'O Abbas, God commenced this religion, Islam, with me, and it is nigh that He should perfect it with a child of thine, who shall fill the earth with peace and equity after it has been filled with injustice and iniquity, and it is he who shall perform his prayers with Jesus, son of Mary'." Similarly there are many other traditions which represent the Mahdi as one of the Abbasides. But the party of the Omayyads have not been behind that of the Abbasides in claiming the Mahdi as one of their own number. They have gone so far as to apply the prophecy to a pious king of Omayyad dynasty, *viz.*, Omar bin Abdul Aziz. Jalal-ud-Din Sayooti quotes the words of Wahab bin Munabbah on page 158 of his work, the *Tarikh-ul-Khulafa*, which run as follows:

"If there is any Mahdi among the followers of the Holy Prophet, he is Umar, son of Abdul Aziz."

Similarly there are traditions which show that the Mahdi is to be from the children of Omar, the second caliph.

Thus there are five great people in Islam that respectively claim the Mahdi as belonging to their own community, *viz.*,

- (a) The children of Hasan.
- (b) The children of Husain.
- (c) The Abbasides.
- (d) The Omayyads.
- (e) The children of Omar.

It may also be noted here that the descendants of Ali from his wives other than Fatima hold that the Mahdi must be a child of Ali, but not necessarily from his wife Fatima, and they have their own traditions to depend upon. While these various people claim the Mahdi as one of their own number, each quoting traditions in their support, there are traditions in which no particular community is specified, but it is declared in general terms that the Mahdi is to

be from among the followers of the Holy Prophet. I have already bothered my readers too much with quotations on the question of the descent of the Mahdi, so I will now content myself only with pointing out the fact that there are traditions which do not partake of any secretarian character and which speak of the Mahdi as appearing from among the followers of the Holy Prophet. Any one who refers to works on tradition, such as Abu Daud, etc., will find traditions in which the Mahdi is spoken of as appearing from among the followers of the Holy Prophet.

It is curious to note that not only various communities, but also the leading sects of Islam have each put forward claims with regard to the Mahdi. The Shias believe that the Mahdi will uphold the cause of Shiism, destroying every Sunni that will be found on the earth. The *Muatazlas* deny the very coming of the Mahdi. The Hanafis declare that the Mahdi is to be a follower of their Imam, Abu Hanifa. The Wahabis, on the other hand, fly into a passion at this claim of the Hanafis and hold that the Mahdi will be a staunch upholder of their sect. It is amusing to see these various sects quarrelling with each other on this point. A representative of the Wahabi sect, the author of the *Hadees-ul-Ghashiya*, may be quoted here to give the reader an idea of how these various sects vie with each other in claiming the Mahdi as one of their own number. The writer says on page 352 of his work: "If we live long enough to see the time when the Mahdi comes or the Messiah descends from the heavens, we will hail these gentlemen, the Hanafis, and ask them to tell which of us was in the right, they or we. Then they will know the rate of flour and *dal* and then they will learn their error."

(c) *Traditions relating to the land of the Mahdi's appearance.* — On this point too, the traditions clash with each other, as they do on other points. The following are the various places which have been named as the localities where the Mahdi is to make his appearance.

1. A village named *Kada* (I shall have to refer to this tradition later on and hence refrain from quoting it here).

2. *Medina.* *Abu Daud* quotes a long tradition in the course of which we have the following words: "There shall be a difference on the death of a Caliph. There shall then appear a man from among the people of Medina, who shall fly to Mecca." Commenting on this tradition. Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan observes on page 358 of his work already referred to:— "By a *man* in this tradition is meant the Mahdi and the tradition shows that the Mahdi shall not only be born at Medina but also make his appearance there."

3. *Mecca.* Naim bin Hamad narrates the following tradition: "The Mahdi shall appear at Mecca at the time of the night prayer." (See Siddiq Hasan Khan's work page 363). Ali Muttaqi in his treatise entitled *the Mahdi* observes:—



“O Reader, know that it is related in the stories of the prophets and in the traditions and in the writings of the Holy Saints that the Mahdi shall be the seed of Husain, the name of his father coinciding with that of the Holy Prophet’s father, viz., Abdullah, and he shall be born at Mecca and shall also die there.”

4. The land known as the *Maghrab*, i.e., North Africa.

Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan says on page 358: “Qirbati says in his book, the *Tazkira*, that the place of the birth of Mahdi is the Western land (the Magrab). From there he shall come by way of sea.”

5. The *Masjid-i-Aqsa* in Bait-ul-Muqaddas (Jerusalem). Siddiq Hasan says on page 358:—

“It is also related that the Mahdi shall appear from the *Masjid-i-Aqsa*.”

6. *The East*. — Abu Nuaim and Ibn Asakar narrate as follows:—

“There shall appear in the *East* a man from the descendants of Hasan, son of Ali, who, if confronted by mountains, shall remove them and shall make a way through them.” This is one of the traditions on the authority of which it is asserted by some that the Mahdi shall be a descendant of Hasan. The tradition has already been quoted. Ibn Maja relates another tradition which says:— There shall appear men in the East who shall render assistance to the Mahdi.

7. *Khorasan*. In the Musnad of Ahmad, we have the following report: “When you see black banners coming from Khorasan, go unto them, for there you shall find the Caliph of God, the Mahdi.”

(d) *Traditions concerning the period of the Mahdi’s ministry*. — Here too there is a disappointing disagreement in the traditions. The following are the various numbers of years for which, it is said, the Mahdi shall live in this world after the public declaration of his mission:—

- (1) 5 years.
- (2) 7 years.
- (3) 9 years.
- (4) 19 years and a few months.
- (5) 20 years.
- (6) 24 years.
- (7) 30 years.
- (8) 40 years.

It is needless to quote all these conflicting traditions. The following quotation from Siddiq Hasan’s work already referred to will do. “The traditions regarding the period of the Mahdi’s ministry are conflicting. Some traditions give the period as 5, 7, or 9 years, some give it as 7, some as 9; some say, he shall not live for less than 5 years and more than 9 years, some give the

period as 19 years and a few months, some as 20 years, some as 24 years, some as 30 years, while there are others that give the period of his ministry as 40 years" (page 380). The traditions which give the period of his ministry as 40 years are believed to be the most trustworthy.

(e) *Traditions relating to the time of his appearance.* — Though most of the traditions represent the Mahdi as a contemporary of the Promised Messiah, yet there is a tradition which gives the time of his appearance as intermediate between the time of the Holy Prophet and that of the Promised Messiah. The tradition runs thus: "God will never destroy a people whose beginning is marked with my appearance, middle by that of the Mahdi, and end by that of Jesus," (see Siddiq Hasan Khan's work, page 384). The above are only a few of the numerous discrepancies to be met with in the traditions bearing on the advent of the Mahdi, and what I have said above is sufficient to show the unreliability of most of the traditions relating to the Mahdi.

#### THE FANATIC MULLAS AND THE GHAZI MAHDI

It is a pity that traditions that are not only utterly unreliable, but also injurious to Islam and threatening to public tranquillity are preached from the pulpit. Traditions representing the Mahdi as a warrior who shall destroy all non-Muslims stand lowest in the scale of authenticity, yet it is these traditions that are trumpeted abroad by fanatic Muslim priests as if they were the most authentic. Their conduct would have been excusable, had the traditions on the basis of which the Mahdi is represented as coming with sword in his hand and deluging the earth with infidel blood been reliable and trustworthy; but when it is seen that of the traditions regarding the advent of the Mahdi, those that depict him as a bloody warrior are the most unreliable, and that the Maulvies are not unaware of the fact, one is compelled to condemn their preaching as most mischievously dangerous. They not only degrade Islam in public estimation by their preaching a warlike Mahdi, but they are also a menace to public peace. If their motives had been good, if they had been the well-wishers of Islam, then instead of exciting public feeling for Jihad, and making the ignorant masses look fondly to the time when the imaginary Mahdi shall smite the heathen world with his sword and plunder its treasures, they ought to have exposed the unreliable character of the traditions and calmed down the public feeling by making the masses hold soberer views regarding the Mahdi. Then they would have done a service, not only to the Government, but also to Islam. But in order to let the reader know what kind of teachings are disseminated among the credulous and confiding masses, I give below a few quotations from the *Iqtirab-us Saah*, which is generally believed to have been the work of Siddiq Hasan Khan, though purporting to have been written by his son. On page 94, the Mahdi is represented as inviting people to God by means of Sword; on page 64, we have the following words: "He (the Mahdi) will fight battles and draw treasures, conquer city after city

and subjugate the whole world from East to West. *The Kings of India shall be brought into his presence with chains round their necks.*" Then the writer adds by way of comment: "I say there is no monarch in India at present; there are only some chiefs, Hindu or Muhammadan, but they are not independent rulers, nay, they are only rulers in name. *The great rulers of this country are Europeans and probably they will remain the rulers till that time, and therefore they shall be brought into his presence,* or it may be that by that time the rule of some other monarch may be established here." Similar views are expressed in other works of Siddiq Hasan Khan. For example see the Hujaj-ul-Karamah, page 374.

I have already quoted Siddiq Hasan Khan to show that he believes most of the traditions relating to Mahdi to be inauthentic, proving nothing beyond the fact that a Mahdi must appear, yet this very writer whose vast learning commanded the esteem of the whole Muslim India openly teaches that the European rulers of India shall be brought in chains before the Mahdi. This book was published in 1301 A.H. The mischief that such writings may work is inestimable. It is impossible to eradicate the deeply rooted error of Jihad from the hearts of the ignorant Muslims as long as a bloody Mahdi is preached by fanatic Mullahs. There may be certain Mullahs, like Muhammad Husain of Batala who secretly assured the Government that the traditions which speak of a warrior Mahdi are unreliable, but such assurances are of no avail unless the minds of the duped masses are purged of these mischievous beliefs by an open and vigorous exposure of the errors. I leave this subject here to return to it at the end of the article.

# **Islam and Russia**

**(Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah)**

## **Islam**

Islam is the name of the religion preached by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) who appeared in Arabia fourteen hundred years ago. Islam comes from the Arabic word “Salam” which means “peace”. Islam also means “complete submission” i.e. complete submission to the will of God. The follower of Islam is known as a “Muslim” which means peaceful and submissive. A Muslim, therefore, in submission to the will of God, has to devote his or her life in establishing peace on earth.

One who follows Islam believes in making peace. Islam, as a religion for mankind has been chosen by God Almighty (Holy Quran 5:4). Almighty God is the “Source of Peace” (59:24). The Holy Quran leads into the “the path of peace” (5:17). The Holy Prophet Muhammad says “Begin your conversation with peace”. The greeting of Muslims to one another is “peace be on you.” When the ignorant address them, they say “Peace” (25:64). Peace shall be the greeting of those in paradise (10:11). Peace, peace will be the words heard in paradise (56:27). Also, the goal to which Islam leads is the “Abode of Peace” (10:26).

It is, therefore, quite clear that the follower of the religion Islam believes in peace and peace only. Islam, as such, is the religion where one finds peace.

With the passage of time Muslims lost their hold and grandeur which once they enjoyed spiritually and otherwise. They fell into a state of spiritual humiliation. In the thirteenth century of the Muslim calendar, such deplorable degradation reached its climax. A Messiah Cum Mahdi was restlessly awaited to bring back the spiritual uplift of the Muslims. The earthly and heavenly signs were being fulfilled for the appearance of the expected one. Under these circumstances, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, born at the appropriate time in the small town of Qadian, India, was raised for the revival of Islam. Hazrat Ahmad proclaimed that in him all the prophecies concerning the Advent of Promised Messiah Cum Mahdi (Rightly Guided) had been fulfilled.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad came to know in 1880 A.D. that he was the Promised Reformer but he did not form any organisation immediately. It was, however, 22 March, 1889, under the directions of Almighty Allah that Hazrat Ahmad formally established an organisation to bring back the glory of Islam. The Ahmadiyya Movement was then established for the propagation of Islam. The Advent of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad marks the beginning of a new era in bringing back the glorious days of Islam.

Almighty Allah graciously revealed to Hazrat Ahmad:

“Rejoice! your time for your wish to be fulfilled has approached near and the feet of the followers of Muhammad (Peace be on Him) will (once again) be firmly established on the path of Light.”

(Translated from the original revelation in Persian).

The rise of Islam is now clearly associated with the efforts and activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement because the Ahmadi Muslims are the true followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and urged to follow righteousness as prescribed in Islam. Hazrat Ahmad declared without reservation:

“We are Muslims by the Grace of God.”

Muhammad (peace be on him) is our spiritual Leader and Guide. Ahmadi Muslims proclaim and sincerely believe in the Kalima:

“There is none worthy of Worship besides Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger.”

It is evident that the Ahmadiyya Movement has been established to propagate Islam. Islam will be triumphant over all religions in all parts of the world through the evangelistic activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement. By the Grace of Allah, the kingdom of God will be established on earth through the sacrifices and efforts of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi passed away peacefully on the morning of May 26, 1908. He was succeeded by Hazrat Maulana Noor-ud-Din with the title Khalifatul Masih. The Ahmadiyya Movement continued the propagation of Islam during that time. After his demise Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad was elected Khalifatul Masih II. He was the Promised son of the Promised Messiah. During his lifetime the Ahmadiyya Movement gained universal momentum and the branches of the Movement were established in many parts of the world. However, at the time of his election, some of the followers of the Promised Messiah did not pledge allegiance to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad, and left Qadian. They established their Headquarters in Lahore under the name Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-e-Islam. The name has now been changed to Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Lahore.

The partition of India into India and Pakistan occurred in 1947 during the time of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II. The Headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Movement had to be moved to Pakistan, temporarily in Lahore and then to Rabwah. Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, passed away peacefully and on November 8, 1965, his son Hazrat Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad was elected Khalifatul Masih III. The propagation of Islam continued through his lifetime. He passed away peacefully and then on June 10, 1982, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, another son of Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad Khalifatul Masih II, was elected Khalifatul Masih IV. The election of the Khalifa is apparently conducted by people but actually the members of the electoral college have the guidance of Almighty Allah in making their decision.

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad Khalifatul Masih IV is now Head and Imam of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. This is an auspicious period, for a long awaited prophecy has once again been fulfilled. The prophecy is as follows:

“It is also said that he (the Promised Mesaih) shall die and his kingdom (spiritual) will descend to his son and grandson”.

(Talmud, New York, Collier and Sons, 1901, p. 34).

## **Russia**

Rus was the original name of the state where Russia took its start. Earlier written records about Rus and its people come from 6 A.D. However, eastern salvs who established the state had made their appearance much earlier. There have been academic discussions for the name Rus. Some say that Rus is of Slavic or Scandinavian origin. Nevertheless, some contend that the territory was named Rus after the river known as Ros.

During the 8th and 9th centuries (C.E.) the settlement in the East European Plain began to unite and the land of Russia was being born. Thus in olden days Russia appeared in the warmer, brighter, wider deciduous regions near Kiev which was one principal city of Rus.

About 988 (C.E.) Christianity was established in its orthodox form as the state religion of Rus. Then writing began to spread and churches as well as monasteries sprang up in Russia. The Russia of 10th to 12th centuries (C.E.) was a strong and progressive Christian state.

In the thirteenth century, the hordes of Changiz Khan over-ran Russia from the East. Later, his grandson Batu Khan conquered the country and thus Russia was dominated by Tatars for about a century and defeated by Taimur in 1395 A.D. Taimur conquered Armenia, Georgia, Asia Minor, India and established a vast empire with Samarkand as its capital. After Taimur's death in 1405, the vast empire began to disintegrate into separate principalities. The rulers began to war among themselves. A campaign to unify them began in

Moscow, a city first mentioned in Chronicles in 1147. But it took another century before the principal Russian lands were united by 1521.

A title of Tsar, for the first time, was assumed by Ivan IV the Terrible, in 1547. A limited form of monarchy known as Government by Estates' was then established. The passage of law in 1597 went in hand with the rise of absolute monarchy in Russia. The country was undergoing a transition from Government of estates to autocratic rule. The economic and political portions of the gentry were strengthened under the 1649 Code. Peasants with all their kith and kin were made the property of the Landlord. A peasant could be separated from his wife and children, sold like cattle or flogged to death. Fugitives were then pursued regardless of any time limit and when captured faced a death penalty. The increased oppression led to a peasant revolution. During the 18th century, absolute monarchy was firmly established in Russia continuing through the reign of Peter I (the Great) who was given the title of Emperor, in 1721. He founded a new city St. Petrograd in 1703 and transferred the capital there. It seemed that the absolute monarchy of Catherine II (1762–1796) was unassailable. But during her reign the Fourth Peasant revolution occurred which lasted for two years. During the reign of Alexander I, Russia was invaded by Napoleon in 1812. At the first stage of the war Russia had to retreat; but then the tide turned and Napoleon was defeated.

Russia's first railway which linked St. Petersburg and Moscow came into operation in 1851. Peasant disturbances continued in Russia and cases of army unrest became visible. December 1825 saw the first revolutionary action against Tsarism. It was led by progressive officers, members of nobility and gentry. They came to be known as Decemberists. The death of the reigning Tsar Alexander I hastened the uprising. According to the secret plan the insurgent regiments were to seize the Tsar's residence, The Winter Palace, but nothing materialised. The new Tsar Nicholas I had the square surrounded by loyal troops and the insurgents were mowed down by gun fire. A revolutionary situation was shaping up in Russia culminating in the Manifesto of February 1861 which abolished serfdom in Russia. That date opened a new chapter in the history of Russia. Then Russia entered into the epoch of capitalism which lasted from 1861 to 1917.

During the first forty years of capitalism in Russia, large scale industry was developed. The indigenous Russians became victims to the capitalist and feudal methods of exploitation of labour. Then principal groups of the working people found the emergence of a unified anti-colonial movement led by Russian workers. That made it easier for the national liberation movement to be included in the nationwide struggle against Tsarism and imperialism.

A group of revolutionaries emerged known as Narodniks or the Populists. They regarded the peasant as the chief figure in the emancipation struggle.

The Populists wanted to abolish the autocracy and the class of landlords, and to put an end to capitalism. Unsuccessful attempts were made eight times on the life of Alexander who was eventually, killed in a bomb explosion in March, 1881. Alexander III became Tsar and his reign lasted from 1881 to 1894.

In the early nineties workers staged group strikes. Another kind of revolutionary then emerged. They turned from the Peasant Socialism preached by the Populists to the Proletarian Socialism founded by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Marxism then became social thought in Russia. However, the task of applying Marxism to Russia fell to Lenin whose real name was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov. Lenin's father was an educator. Lenin passed his examination in Law and wrote some books. Lenin founded The League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the working class. It marked the beginning of a new period in the emancipation movement in Russia. The workers then came to replace the intellectuals as the leading revolutionary force. The party later split into two branches. The Bolsheviks who were the followers of Lenin and the Mensheviks who supported Plekhanov and Martov. Nicholas II had come to power as Tsar in 1894 and was mercilessly executed in 1917.

Japan started war with Russia on June 26, 1904, ending with a peace treaty on August 23, 1905. Russia lost Port Arthur and South Sakhalin and recognised Japan's dominant interest in Korea. According to the Bolsheviks, the war demonstrated the rottenness of Tsarism, exposing its anti-popular nature. The discontentment with the regime became widespread among the Russian population. The Tsarist government was particularly harsh in dealing with the members of the Bolshevik party. The revolutionaries had demanded the confiscation of the estates of the landlords. The Tsar had failed to resolve any of the conflicts that had led to the revolutionary storm. There were series of serious strikes and the discontentment against the Tsar was quickly spreading among the working class. However, many members of the Bolshevik party, including Lenin, had been driven into emigration or put behind bars. Thus the leadership of the Soviet was seized by the Bourgeois party. It was then resolved that "It was only a Bourgeois government that could replace Tsarism." A Bourgeois Provisional government was formed on March 2, 1917. Late that day Nicholas II abdicated as The Tsar, Emperor of Russia. The popular revolution had won but the revolutionary struggle launched by Lenin continued.

On March 27, 1917, Lenin left Switzerland where he had been hiding since 1914. Having returned to Petrograd, Lenin raised the slogan "All Power to the Soviets". The Provisional government ordered the arrest of Lenin and he was compelled to hide again. In early October 1917, Lenin illegally returned to Petrograd (the name of the capital had earlier been changed from St. Petersburg to Petrograd) and personally directed an army uprising. It was



victory for the Socialist Revolution (October 24–25, 1917) in the Soviet Russia. The State Bank, industry and railways were nationalised. Foreign and domestic loans contracted by Tsaris and Provisional governments were annulled. Production and distribution of products came under Control. Basic principle to make living was introduced:

“He who does not work, neither shall he eat”.

Moscow was made the capital of the Russian Federation on March 12, 1918. The U.S.S.R. was established on December 30, 1922. The Soviet Union is the successor to the Russian Empire of the Tsars following the 1917 revolution. It is still generally called Russia. It's population is third in size after China and India. Geographically it is a vast land. Time difference between eastern and western boundaries is 10 to 11 hours. Then dusk falls in the West it is dawn in the East.

In the words of Sir Winston Churchill: “Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery”. However, the Russian people want to be quoted correctly. The type of image which other people have about Russia is given in a story told by a Russian journalist:

“It seems a woman from Britain came here on a tour of Moscow Zoo. But when she passed the exhibit with a camel, the British woman stopped and exclaimed: Ah, you poor horse! What have those Communists done to your back”.

Ahmadiyya Concern:

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, may God bestow on him long and healthy life, recited the Holy Quran, Al-Imran verses 111–112 in his Friday sermon on November 21, 1986. He devoted a portion of his address explaining that the followers of Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) are endowed with three distinctive features — which make them better than other people. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV elaborated on the first characteristic which makes Muslims better than others which is that they do not ask others to serve them but rather feel obliged to serve mankind at large irrespective of race, colour or creed.

The second distinctive feature is that Muslims always persuade others to do good and abstain from evil. By good and evil here simply mean the universally regarded good and evil characteristics of any nation, religion, anywhere and in any part of the world. The third feature which makes Muslims better than others is their firm belief that Allah is One, Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. The third feature distinguishes them from people living in Russia where the concept of “no God” is vogue these days. Thus Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV pronounced that according to the Holy Quran the followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) are certainly the best people for they are raised for the good of mankind in as much as they seek pleasure in serving

mankind, they ask others to do good and stay away from evil. Also, they believe in God.

Ahmadies, being the true followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam, have a challenge to meet in the criteria of being the best people raised for the good of mankind. They should be at the service of mankind, ask others to do good and abstain from evil, and also proclaim the Oneness of Allah throughout the world. It is therefore the genuine interest and concern of the Ahmadiyya Movement that people living in Russia should also come to the fold of one God.

The Ahmadiyya Movement is the torch bearer of Islam. It is a matter of time, God willing, that the people of the Soviet Union will accept Islam through the preaching activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Long ago an Ahmadiyya missionary was sent to Russia but he was put in prison and ill-treated for a long time. He was kept in captivity for two years and two months then pushed across the border out of Russia. There has been secrecy surrounding the Russian Society, but recently Mr. Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, has openly condemned the party mistakes of the past. It appears that he is determined to introduce key changes in the Soviet system. And this is a very healthy sign.

There are certain prophecies that the people of the Soviet Union will be blessed with belief in One God through the missionary activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad the Promised Messiah, prophesied that a day will come when the Czar of Russia would meet a tragic end. In those days the Czar of Russia, Nicholas II, was enjoying full power. But, later on, the prophecy was fulfilled when the Czar was first forced to abdicate. And then the Czar, the Empress, Tsarevich, (crown prince) and Tsar's four daughters were mercilessly murdered by Bolsheviks.

There are other prophecies of the Promised Messiah about Russia awaiting to be fulfilled:

"I see the spiritual sceptre of Czar in my hand." This is, Islam will overcome all other religions in Russia.

(Tazkira, Urdu, p. 458).

"I see innumerable members of my organisation in Russia like granules of sand."

(Tazkira, Urdu, p. 813).

The prophecies will certainly be fulfilled, but in the words of the Promised Messiah:

“This matter is of revelation from God  
And will come to pass without reservation.  
But you have to wait for sometime by  
Being patient, righteous and enduring.”

(Tazkira, Urdu, p. 540).

# **Lunar and Solar Eclipses as Signs of the Promised Messiah**

**(Saleh Mohammed Alladin)**

Almighty God says in the Holy Quran:

“He (God) is the Knower of the unseen; and He reveals not His secrets to anyone, Except to a Messenger of His whom He chooses”

(72: 27,28).

The Messengers of God have close contact with God and are given knowledge of the unseen by Him. They have the distinction of being granted abundance of revealed knowledge and they make remarkable prophecies.

Our most revered master the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) had prophesied the advent of a Messiah and Mahdi (Divine Reformer) in the latter days through whom faith would be restored in the world and the renaissance of Islam would be brought about. The Holy Prophet mentioned several signs which would mark the advent of the Promised Messiah. In this article, I wish to draw attention to a remarkable prophecy concerning the occurrence of lunar and solar eclipses at the time of the advent of the Promised Messiah.

Darqutni, an eminent authority on Hadees (i.e. sayings of the Holy Prophet) who lived from 918 to 995 A.D. had recorded that the Holy Prophet said:

“For our Mahdi there are two signs which have never appeared before since the creation of the heavens and the earth, namely, the moon will be eclipsed on the first night in Ramazan (i.e. on the first of the nights on which lunar eclipse can occur) and the sun will be eclipsed on the middle day of Ramazan (i.e. on the middle one of the days on which solar eclipse can occur); and these signs have not appeared since the creation of the heavens and the earth.”

(Darqutni Vol. 1 page 188).

The collections of Hadees of both Sunni and Shia sects mention these signs. Eminent Muslim scholars have been quoting this Hadees in their books. The

Ahmadiyya Pocket Book by the late Malik Abdur Rahman Khadim Saheb may be seen for these references.

The Holy Bible also mentions of the darkening of the sun and of the moon not giving light, in connection with the signs of the second coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:29).

Lunar and solar eclipses occur according to the laws of nature. The moon is eclipsed when the shadow of the earth falls on it and the sun is eclipsed when the disk of the moon prevents the light of the sun from reaching the earth. The eclipses take place when the sun, the earth and the moon, are all in the same straight line or very nearly so. If the earth's orbit around the sun and the moon's orbit around the earth, were in the same plane, there would have been a lunar eclipse and a solar eclipse every month at full moon and new moon respectively. But actually the two orbital planes are inclined to each other by an angle of about 5 degrees, on account of which the maximum number of eclipses in a year does not exceed 7 (4 or 5 being solar and 3 or 2 being lunar). The minimum number of eclipses which can occur in a year is two, both being solar.

The lunar eclipse occurs at full moon and the solar eclipse at new moon. The month of the Islamic calendar (Hijra) begins with the sighting of the lunar crescent and not from the new moon as given in astronomical almanacs. The latter is the time when the sun and the moon have the same longitude. If the Hijra calendar is used, the dates on which a lunar eclipse can occur are 13, 14 and 15; and the dates on which a solar eclipse can occur are 27, 28 and 29. The prophecy thus requires that the lunar eclipse should occur on the first of the three nights in Ramazan, i.e. on 13th Ramazan, and the solar eclipse should occur on the middle of the three days in Ramazan, i.e. on 28th Ramazan.

In the Hadees, the word Qamar is used for the moon and not Hilal. The crescent of the first night is called Hilal while the word Qamar is used for the moon from fourth night onward. Thus the interpretation that the first night in Ramazan implies 13th Ramazan is also supported by the word Qamar used in the Hadees.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (peace be on him) claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi in the year 1891 on the basis of Divine revelations which he received. In support of his claims, he gave numerous arguments. But the contemporary theologians rejected his claims and he met a storm of very severe opposition. The prophesied eclipses occurred in 1894 (1311 Hijra). The lunar and solar eclipses both occurred in the month of Ramazan on the specified dates and both were visible from Qadian, the place of the Promised Messiah. The lunar eclipse occurred on 13th of Ramazan (21st of March after sunset) and the solar eclipse occurred on Friday, 28th of Ramazan (6th of April).

Soon after these celestial signs were witnessed, the Promised Messiah wrote a book entitled “Noor-ul-Haq” (i.e. Light of Truth) Part II, which was devoted to a discussion of the grand fulfilment of the remarkable prophecy of the Holy Prophet. In this book he explained in the light of Divine revelation that the true interpretation of the Hadees is that in the time of the Mahdi the moon will be eclipsed in the first of the three nights in which it is full, i.e. on 13 Ramazan, and that the sun will be eclipsed on the middle day out of the days on which an eclipse can occur, i.e. on 28 Ramazan. The Promised Messiah emphasized in this book that this is a great Divine sign and such a sign was not shown for any other Divinely appointed reformer in the past. The Almighty God has manifested the authenticity of the Hadees by the fulfilment of the prophecy. The Promised Messiah drew attention to several properties of the eclipses which make the Sign very impressive. He even offered a reward of one thousand rupees to anyone who could show the like of it in the past. He wrote as follows:

“Can you present a sign like this in any age in the past? Do you read in any book that some person had claimed to be from the Almighty God and then in his time in Ramazan lunar and solar eclipses occurred as you have now seen? If you are aware then relate it and you will get one thousand rupees as reward if you can show. So prove it and take this reward and I make the Almighty God a Witness on this promise, and you also be witness and God is the best of all witnesses.”

(Noor-ul-Haq, Part II, page 21).

Let me mention some properties of these eclipses of 1894 which make the Sign very appealing. When a lunar eclipse takes place it is seen from more than half of the earth’s sphere but a solar eclipse is seen from a much smaller area. It often happens that a solar eclipse is visible from a sparsely populated area or from an ocean. The solar eclipse of 6 April 1894 was visible from many places in Asia including India. The Promised Messiah and his companions also saw it from Qadian. The Promised Messiah wrote in “Noorul Haq” that people should ponder over this fact that the sign was manifested in his place. He thus wrote as follows:

“O servants of God, ponder and think. Do you consider it permissible that the Mahdi should be born in the countries of Arabia and Syria and his Sign should be manifested in our country; and you know that the wisdom of God does not separate the Sign from the person for whom the Sign is meant. Then how could it be possible that the Mahdi should be in the east but his sign should be in the west. And this should be sufficient for you if you are really seekers after truth.”

The time at which an eclipse occurs depends upon the place. The words of the prophecy, namely, the lunar eclipse will occur in the first night and the solar eclipse will occur in the middle, were fulfilled in two ways in Qadian. Not

only did the lunar eclipse occur on the first of the three nights, i.e. on 13 Ramazan, but also it occurred in the beginning of the night in Qadian. The solar eclipse not only occurred in the middle day, 28 Ramazan, but also occurred in Qadian in the forenoon. It did not occur early in the morning and it was over before noon, in Qadian. It thus divided the days of the eclipse more or less into two halves.

Eclipses are of different kinds. Some are prominent and some are faint. A lunar eclipse can be partial or total. The lunar eclipse of 13 Ramazan 1511 Hijra was partial. Solar eclipses may be classified into four categories, namely, partial, annular, annular-total and total. Of these four types, the first type is the most common and the third type is the rarest. In the third category, the vertex of the moon's shadow just reaches the earth. Professor Mitchell has deduced from the data of past eclipses that in an average century the total number of solar eclipses were 237, out of which only 10 were of the third type. (Eclipses of the Sun by T. A. Mitchell, Columbia University Press, New York, 5th Edition 1951 page 53) The solar eclipse of 28 Ramazan 1311 Hijra (6 April 1894) was of the third category. It was a spectacular eclipse.

Prof. T. R. von Oppolzer has given some details of the present and future lunar and solar eclipses from 1208 B.C. to 2161 A.D. in his book "Canon of Eclipses" (Dover Publications, New York, 1962). He has shown by means of maps the paths of only the prominent solar eclipses, i.e. those of the second, third and fourth categories. The path of the solar eclipse of 6 April 1894 is included in Oppolzer's map (Chart 148). One can see the path of totality passing through India and a large part of Asia.

In his book "Noor-ul-Haq", the Promised Messiah has drawn attention to the fact that the solar eclipse of 28 Ramazan was a spectacular one as testified by the well-known newspapers of the time, *Pioneer* and *Civil Military Gazette*.

The eclipses of the sun and the moon are also mentioned in the Holy Quran as signs of the latter days. The Holy Quran says:

"When the sight is dazzled, And the moon is eclipsed, And the sun and the moon are brought together."

(75:8,9,10).

As elucidated by the Hadees, the expression the sun and the moon are brought together implies that the sun will also be eclipsed. The Holy Quran thus supports the Hadees under discussion and the Hadees gives valuable details. It is worthy of note that while the Holy Quran uses the word "Khasaf" for the lunar eclipse, it does not use the word "Khasaf" for the solar eclipse. Commenting on this point, the Promised Messiah wrote that in this way the Holy Quran has hinted that the solar eclipse will be an extraordinary one.

According to another Hadees, the eclipses would occur twice in Ramazan.

In the year 1895, lunar and solar eclipses also occurred in the month of Ramazan on 11 March and 26 March respectively. These eclipses occurred in the West. These eclipses were not visible from Qadian, but when these eclipses occurred the dates in Qadian were 13 and 28 Ramazan respectively. The Promised Messiah made mention of these eclipses also in his book “Haqiqatul Wahi” on page 195.

Objections have been raised that lunar and solar eclipses have occurred in the month of Ramazan several times and hence this could not be a reasonable criterion for the recognition of a Divine Messenger. A study of the frequency of the occurrence of the eclipses shows that in a period of about 22 years, we have a year, or more commonly, two consecutive years in which both lunar and solar eclipses occur in the month of Ramazan over some part of the world or the other. This is irrespective of the dates of Ramazan. But it is worthy of note that the occurrence of both eclipses on the specified dates of Ramazan from a particular place is quite rare. The presence of the claimant is also a vital part of the prophecy. The Signs are for the benefit of the Mahdi. The Promised Messiah wrote:

“As a matter of fact since Adam to the present time nobody ever made a prophecy like this. This prophecy has four aspects: (1) the occurrence of the lunar eclipse on the first of the eclipse nights, (2) the occurrence of the solar eclipse on the middle of the eclipse days, (3) the occurrence in the month of Ramazan, (4) the presence of the claimant who is rejected. Hence if the greatness of this prophecy is denied, then show a parallel to it in the world.”

(Tohfa Golarviya page 29).

In an article published by Mr. Bhazi Munajjam in *Weekly Chatan*, Lahore, dated 25 July to 1 August 1983, it was rightly mentioned that lunar and solar eclipses occurred in the month of Ramazan in the years 1807, 1829, 1851, 1873, 1894, 1937, 1959, and 1982. But the author neither mentioned the dates of Ramazan for any of these eclipses nor did he mention any other claimant of being Mahdi who advanced any of the pairs of eclipses as a sign of his truth. I requested the staff of the Positional Astronomy Centre, India Meteorological Department, Calcutta 700053, to calculate the dates of Ramazan for the eclipses that occurred during those years as well as for the eclipses that occurred in Ramazan in the year 1894. The results obtained by them are given in Tables 1 and 2. Since the Islamic month begins with the sighting of the lunar crescent, the dates of the Islamic month for the same eclipse can differ with place. In the tables the dates are given with respect to Qadian. It can be seen from the tables that out of the ten cases studied, only in the case of the year 1894, both eclipses were visible from Qadian on the specified dates. It is remarkable that appropriate eclipses occurred at the time of the Promised Messiah and the prophecy was fulfilled in a glorious way. All praise to the Almighty God. May His choicest blessings be on the Holy Prophet.



The Promised Messiah wrote:

“We do not discuss how often solar and lunar eclipses have occurred on the particular dates in the month of Ramazan from the beginning of the world till today. Our aim is only to mention that from the time man has appeared in this world, the lunar and solar eclipses have occurred as signs only in my time for me. Prior to me, no one had this circumstance that on one hand he claimed to be Mahdi Mauood (Promised Reformer) and on the other, after his claim, in the month of Ramazan, on the appointed dates, lunar and solar eclipses occurred and he declared the eclipses as signs in his favour. The Hadees of Darqutni does not say at all that solar and lunar eclipses did not occur ever before; but it does clearly say that such eclipses never occurred earlier as Signs.”

(Chashma Marifat page 314).

It can also be inferred from the words of the precious prophecy that these signs are meant only for the Promised Messiah whom the Holy Prophet has referred so affectionately as “our Mahdi”. Even if another Reformer appears later and the eclipses occur on the specified dates of Ramazan in his time, he would not be able to say that such a Sign has not been shown for any other Divine Reformer before him since the creation of the world, since the Sign has already been manifested for the Promised Messiah.

The Promised Messiah even declared on oath that the lunar and solar eclipses were Divine Signs for him. He wrote:

“I swear by God in Whose Hand is my life that He has manifested this Sign on the sky to testify my truthfulness, and He manifested it at a time when the Maulvis named as Dajjal (Anti-Christ), biggest liar, infidel and even biggest infidel . . . I have been given such a sign which was not given to anybody else from the time of Adam to the present time. In short, I can stand in the sacred precincts of the Kaba and swear that this Sign is for testifying my truthfulness.”

(Tohfa Golarviya page 33).

In a poem, the Promised Messiah wrote:

“O my dears, the man who was to come, has already come,  
Even the sun and the moon have disclosed this secret to you.”

### **Acknowledgement**

I am grateful to the staff of the Positional Astronomy Centre, India Meteorological Department, Calcutta 700053, India for kindly providing the information given in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1**  
**SOLAR ECLIPSES**

S. No.	Date	Type	Time (IST) of junction h        m		Date of Moon's first visibility at Qadian	Date of 1st Ramzan	Hejri date at the time of Solar eclipse (Ramazan)	Visibility of eclipse over Qadian	Remarks
1.	20-XI-1807	t	17	19	—	Data not available		—	Partial phase likely at Sunset Eclipse time is after Sunset at Qadian
2.	4-IV-1829	t	03	54	6-III-1829	7-III-1829	29	Not visible	
3.	28-VII-1851	t	20	11	—	Data not available		—	Eclipse occurred over north Atlantic, north pole etc.
4.	20-XI-1873	p	09	07	—	Data not available		—	
5.	6-IV-1894	an	09	31	9-III-1894*	10-III-1894	28	Visible	
6.	26-III-1895	p	15	56	26-II-1895	27-II-1895	28	Not visible	
7.	19-VII-1917	p	08	31	21-VI-1917*	22-VI-1917	28	Not visible	Eclipse time is around midnight of 20/21 July.
8.	3-XII-1937	an	04	42	5-XI-1937	6-XI-1937	28	Not visible	
9.	8-IV-1959	an	09	00	10-III-1959	11-III-1959	29	Not visible	
10.	20/21-VII-1982	p	24	27	22-VI-1982	23-VI-1982	29	Not visible	

\* Moon may have become visible one day earlier on these occasions if meteorological conditions were good.

**Table 2**  
**LUNAR ECLIPSES**

S. No.	Date	Type	Time (IST) of opposition h        m		Date of Moon's first visibility at Qadian	Date of 1st Ramzan	Hejri date at the time of Lunar eclipse (Ramzan)	Visibility of Lunar eclipse over Qadian	Remarks
1.	15-XI-1807	p	13	40	—	Data not available	—	Not visible	
2.	20-III-1829	p	19	35	6-III-1829	7-III-1829	15	Visible	
3.	13-VII-1851	p	12	51	—	Data not available	—	Not visible	
4.	4-XI-1873	t	21	22	—	Data not available	—	Visible	
5.	21-III-1894	p	19	51	9-III-1894*	10-III-1894	13	Visible	
6.	11-III-1895	t	09	12	26-II-1895	27-II-1895	13	Not visible	Eclipse time is before Sunset
7.	5-VII-1917	t	03	10	21-VI-1917*	22-VI-1917	14	Visible	„ „
8.	18-XI-1937	p	13	52	5-XI-1937	6-XI-1937	13	Not visible	„ „
9.	25-III-1959	p	01	47	10-III-1959	11-III-1959	15	Visible	„ „
10.	6-VII-1982	t	13	00	22-VI-1982	23-VI-1982	14	Not visible	„ „

\* Moon may have become visible one day earlier on these occasions if meteorological conditions were good.

1. All computations have been done for Qadian (75° 23'E; 31° 49'N).
2. Longitudes and latitude of Sun and Moon are required for calculating the first visibility of the Moon. It could not be calculated for some dates for which longitude data were not available.
3. The time (I.S.T.) of eclipse is important in fixing the Hejri date because the latter changes at Sunset. The time of geocentric conjunction/opposition as given in "Canon of Eclipses" by T. R. Von Oppolzer has been adopted for this purpose. The Hejri date current at the time of the eclipse has been given.
4. For testing whether the eclipses were visible over Qadian or not, the method given in "Canon of Eclipses" by T. R. Von Oppolzer has been followed. The results have been confirmed with Ephemeris whenever available.

## The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

The Review of Religions is the oldest magazine of its kind published in the English language in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent. Its first issue was published in 1902 and it has been continuously published since.

It bears the distinction that it was initiated under the direction of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah himself.

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