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THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world reformer and the Promised Messiah whose advent had been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). The Movement is an embodiment of true and real Islam. It seeks to unite mankind with its Creator and to establish peace throughout the world. The present head of the Movement is Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. The Ahmadiyya Movement has its headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan, and is actively engaged in missionary work.



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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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EDITORIAL

LIGHT OF AFRICA

Africa has been referred to as the dark continent. Perhaps it was termed dark in the sense that upto the middle of the nineteenth century much of its vast interior regions had not been discovered until the explorations of Dr. David Livingston and other geographers. Now every square mile has been accurately mapped.

African countries have not only advanced in political, economical and educational status but also in spiritual elevation which is of most importance. They are now becoming the torchbearers of spiritual light, and this light which they are irradiating is destined to spread over Europe, America and, indeed, the whole world. What is this light? It is the light of Ahmadiyyat - the True Islam which was first brought to Africa in the earlier part of this century by the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India (1835 - 1908) – the long awaited Promised Messiah and Mahdi. To-day hundreds of thousands of Africans have not only accepted the truth of the Promised Messiah but are also living witnesses of the transforming, efficacious and spiritual power of Islam. They are shedding its Divine light for all to see.

The Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam - Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, has recently completed a seven week tour of the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria from 19th January - 27th February 1988. During this tour not only were the delighted people much impressed by him for his spiritual qualities but he was also much drawn towards them and impressed by them. He found them humble, friendly, open-hearted and most hospitable. They were hungry for truth and affection which he poured upon them in abundance. He found that those who had joined the fold of the Promised Messiah were reflecting the holy ideals of Islam to a high degree. He has drawn this observation to the notice of Asian Ahmadis whom he has advised to emulate their devotion and not to think that they necessarily excel over others in the Islamic way of life. Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad has expressed his conviction that Africa would play a vital role in the propagation and rise of Islamic values throughout the world.

During his tour Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad met presidents, paramount chiefs, government ministers and religious leaders including leading Churchmen. All displayed to him the utmost courtesy and respect.

He expressed and demonstrated his deep interest and concern for the economical and spiritual welfare of the countries he visited and he offered his help and prayers for the fulfilment of these objectives. He has urged Ahmadies to dedicate their services whole time or part time to help these countries with their professional knowledge and skills in the line of medicine, engineering, education etc. Many persons have and are rendering active assistance with the true Islamic spirit of love and sympathy for the welfare of these people who have suffered much from the exploitation of foreigners.

The tour was successful and fruitful in every way and already Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad has commenced schemes for the betterment of the people of those countries in addition to those which have already been in operation. It is hoped that a more detailed report of the tour will be published in the next issue of the Review of Religions.

HEAVENLY BROTHERHOOD

“Verily the righteous will be placed amidst gardens and fountains. Enter therein (paradise) with peace and safety. And We shall remove whatever of rancour may be in their breasts so that they may become as brothers seated on thrones facing one another.”

(Quran 15:45 - 48)

EXEMPLARY CONDUCT

In domestic life the conduct of Muhammad is exemplary. As a husband his fondness and devotion were entire. As a father he was loving and tender. In his youth he lived a virtuous life; and at the age of twenty five he married a widow forty years old, during whose lifetime for five and twenty years he was a faithful husband to her alone.

(Sir William Muir, Life of Muhammad.)

GUIDE POSTS

OBJECT OF FASTING

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

God has revealed that the primary object of fasting in the manner prescribed by Islam is the acquisition of righteousness:

“O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed before you, so that you may become righteous.”
(Quran 2:183)

This should be the foremost desire and aim of a Muslim. Through self-analysis he should always be aware of his shortcomings and weaknesses; and at the same time he should be ever anxious to overcome them and to make constant progress towards his cherished goal - righteousness and self-purification. He should never be satisfied with his present spiritual condition. Elsewhere in the Holy Quran God says on the subject of righteousness:

“Verily the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most righteous among you.” (49:14)

“The best provision is righteousness.” (2:198)

“O ye men worship your Lord who created you and those who were before you that you may become righteous.”
(3:52)

It is perfectly clear that the paramount aim in the life of a Muslim is to acquire the mantle of righteousness which again is emphasized in the Holy Quran:

“The best and the most elegant dress is the raiment of righteousness.” (Quran 7:27)

The holy month of Ramadhan is now upon us and we should take full advantage of this wonderful opportunity to derive as much spiritual benefit from it as possible because God has promised immense heavenly blessings for those who observe the month with earnest devotion. How is fasting a means to enable one to become more righteous? At the outset one should possess a strong desire to improve in righteousness. If one is indifferent or not much concerned

about this matter then one is unlikely to undergo much of a spiritual change for the better. Fasting itself does not produce automatic holiness. One should be imbued with the true spirit of fasting. The Holy Prophet has said:

“He who abstains from food and drink during the period of fasting but does not strive to safeguard himself against moral lapses, starves for no purpose.” (Bukhari)

Some essential points which should be kept in mind and observed while fasting now follow:

THE HOLY QURAN

While the reading of a portion of the Holy Quran should be our daily practice, we are well advised to study it more diligently during the month of Ramadhan and so fill our minds with its divine and holy truths. Where there exists a congregation of the faithful they usually get together to listen to a commentary and explanation of a portion of the Holy Quran daily. Whether or not one is able to attend these instructive sessions one should at least make time to read and study the Holy Book in one's own home or elsewhere. The Holy Quran is a revelation of Divine truths and a cure for all spiritual ills.

PRAYERS

As a devout Muslim one should be regular and strict in the observance of daily prayers every day of one's life; but during Ramadhan one should endeavour to pray with greater fervour and pathos because God has said that during this holy month He answers prayer more than ever. Special value has been placed on Tahajjud prayers (voluntary pre-dawn prayers). At all times these prayers are very efficacious especially during Ramadhan when God rains down His blessings and succour profusely upon sincere and devout supplicants.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

One should pay particular attention to one's personal behaviour including one's manner of talk. One should guard one's tongue very carefully against quarrelling, backbiting, sarcasm, rudeness and, in fact, every kind of unpleasant behaviour. One should strive to adopt a pleasant and loving nature and endeavour to be patient with everybody whatever may be their mannerisms or defects; and resolve that this attitude should become a permanent feature of one's character for ever after.

CHARITY

During the month of Ramadhan one is exhorted to be specially charitable towards others. While fasting one is able to realize and sympathise to a greater extent with one's less fortunate brethren who suffer by the millions from lack of sustenance and even starvation. One is urged to help them and, at the same time, one feels grateful and proffers thanks to God for the good fortune one enjoys. Charity means practical kindness which is not limited only to financial and material donations. It covers all kinds of good works for the betterment of mankind. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said:

“Every good work and every kind deed is charity.”

A kind word, good deed, helping hand, tenderness, sympathy, cheerfulness, friendliness are all practical demonstrations of charity. God says in the Holy Quran:

“Hasten to vie with one another in good works.”(3:15)

“And slacken not in your zeal for the sympathy of your people.” (4:105)

Charity is the noblest employment. It is righteousness in action.

AVOIDANCE OF SIN

Sin is the violation of a Divine commandment of one kind or another and is usually caused by submitting to temptation. Fasting aids one in self-control and self-restraint which one is able to apply in resisting temptations when they arise. Fasting strengthens one's power of self-mastery which is a priceless weapon against the forces of Satan along with the efficacy of prayer. Furthermore while fasting one is reminded how much more important it is to avoid sin than it is to avoid daily nourishment for a period of time. Fasting is a potent spiritual exercise for the development of righteousness which is the ultimate object of fasting.

JEWEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

“Wonderful is the jewel the name of which is righteousness. Blessed is he who practises righteousness. So O ye Muslims! perfect your righteousness.”

(HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD)

SOURCES OF THE SIRAT

(Part 1)

A CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF ISLAM

(HAZRAT MIRZA BASHIR AHMAD)

The birth and rise of Islam took place at a time when the greater part of the world still lived under primitive conditions. Communication between one country and another was slow and difficult, the printing press had yet to be invented, and even the art of writing was in its infancy. A few countries did possess these elementary arts, but Arabia was not one of them. Arabia was, on the whole, illiterate. Its condition was indeed very peculiar. Externally, it was cut off from the rest of the world. Internally it was without any social, political, or intellectual movement which might have raised it in the scale of culture and national consciousness. Learning, where it did exist, amounted only to literacy. Therefore, beyond a few relics and inscriptions belonging to those times, we have no records of Arabia before the rise of Islam, and it is obvious that such records cannot provide the basis of a history. Records of the empires and kingdoms which flourished on the borders of Arabia – the empires of Rome and Persia – refer occasionally to Arabia. But, as one would expect, these references are very slender and yield only very trifling details, from which no idea can be had of the conditions of the country as a whole. The same may be said of the Biblical records and the books of the Old Testament which contain occasional references to Arabia.

PRE-ISLAMIC TRADITIONS AND POETRY

Our main source of pre-Islamic Arabian history is to be found in Arabia's own historical traditions. As already stated, the Arabs were not used to writing. Still they were able to conserve the floating traditions of their country, and these passed intact from one generation to another, thanks to the wonderful memory possessed by the Arabs. [Sir William Muir, *Life of Mohammad* (1923 edition), Introduction p.16.1]. Every tribe had members who carried in their heads the history not only of their own tribe, but also the history of many neighbouring tribes. Arabian genealogy (*Ilm al-Ansab*) has had many votaries distinguished in pre-Islamic Arabia, and to them we owe whatever knowledge we have of the tribal history of the country before the advent of Islam.

In pre-Islamic poetry, also, we have sources of early tribal history. The art of poetry had attained a high level of development before Islam, in some respects even higher than that of Islamic poetry. Every tribe had its poet who depicted in powerful bedouin verse, the achievements of his tribe. These verses were regularly recited at their meetings [Muir, op cit, Introduction p.52] of the pre-Islamic poets:

(1) Imr al-Qais, (2) Nabigha Dhubyani, (3) Zuhair, (4) Tarafa, (5) 'Antra, (6) 'Alqama, (7) 'Asha, (8) 'Amr b. Kulthum, (9) Harith b. Hilliza, (10) Omayya b. Abi Salt, (11) K'ab b. Zuhair, (12) Labid, (13) Hassan b. Thabit, and (14) Khansa are particularly well-known. Much of their poetry has been preserved, and the powerful reading which it makes is, in a sense, without parallel in the poetry of any other people or country. The last four of these poets – of whom the very last was a poetess of good repute – entered Islam in the time of the Holy Prophet himself. [Kitab al-Sh'ir wal-Shu'ara, by Ibn Qutaiba ---

Many would perhaps wonder and ask, how centuries of history of a great country can at all be preserved in its oral traditions? But we should remember that at that time the historical culture of most people was confined only to oral traditions of this kind. The difference between these and Arabian traditions was that while the former were carried in their heads by all and sundry, and were eventually collected as they were found, the later were carefully preserved in years and oral tradition, in the wonderful memory of the Arabs.

In any case, the oral traditions of the Arabs, which were later committed to writing, constitute our great source of pre-Islamic Arabian history. But for them, we should know nearly nothing of this history. Thus, it is impossible to ignore them.

These pre-Islamic traditions are recorded in several books, but their most complete record is contained in the work of the famous Muslim historian Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarir al-Tabari. [Born 224, died 310 A.H.] Tabari collected the greater part of these traditions and gave them a systematic form. Most of the later historians turn to him for material. I will have more to say about him later on.

With the advent of Islam there opened up a new chapter of Arabian history. The Holy Prophet (born 570 A.D., died 632 .A.D.) made his advent to the dreamy people of Arabia, and then, as a man dead asleep wakes up to a loud and sudden sound, Arabia woke up to his message. The message made history for Arabia. It put an unknown desert on

the map of the world. It was as though something, which had long been enwrapped in darkness was suddenly turned to the fullest light of the sun. For the life of the Holy Prophet and for the early history of Islam we have material which is as extensive as it is reliable. No religious founder ever left behind him such material as did the Holy Prophet, to enable coming generations to reconstruct his life-history. This material is to be found in several forms, and to an account of these forms I now turn.

THE HOLY QURAN

First and foremost is the Holy Quran. According to Muslim belief, the Holy Quran was, to letter, revealed by God to the Holy Prophet. The revelation of it was spread over all the twenty-three years of the Prophet's ministry which began with a revelation, and closed with a revelation. If the verses of the Holy Quran are distributed over the whole of the Prophet's ministry, the mean quantum of revelation per day turns out to be something less than a verse or 10 words on an average. The ministry lasted for about 7,970 days and the number of verses in the Holy Quran is only 6,236 and the number of words is 77,934. [Kitab al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Quran, by Suyuti, Vol.1, pp.66 and 72].

From this it appears that the Holy Quran was revealed at a very slow pace, and even admitting that breaks in revelation on some days were made up by longer revelations on other days, the quantity of Quranic revelation, on any single day, was never so long as to make its commission to writing or to memory at all a difficult task.

The Holy Prophet used to dictate the verses as they were revealed and, under divine guidance, he used also to prescribe the places in which they were to be recorded. There are a number of reliable traditions supporting this view. According to one, attributed to 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas, the Holy Prophet's cousin, 'Uthman, the third Khalifa (and one of the scribes who wrote down the Quranic revelation in the Prophet's lifetime) used to say that when a number of verses were revealed together, the Holy Prophet would summon one of the scribes and dictate to him the verses revealed, assigning to each its Sura (chapter) and its place in the Sura. If only one verse was revealed, even then a scribe was sent for, the verse dictated and its place assigned. [Tirmidhi chapter on Tafsir-ul-Quran].

The scribes of the Holy Prophet are well-known in Islamic history, their names and their lives being on definite record. The best known among them were Abu Bakr, 'Omar, 'Uthman, 'Ali, Zubair b. al-'Awwam, Obayi b. Ka'b, 'Abdullah b. Rawaha, and Zaid b. Thabit

all devoted companions of the Holy Prophet, most of whom accepted Islam in the very beginning. [Fath-ul-Bari, Vol.IX, p.19: and Zurqani, Vol.III, pp.311-326-4]. It is evident from this list that, from the very beginning of divine revelation, the Holy Prophet had a reliable and trustworthy company of scribes to take revelation down as it came. The Holy Quran was thus committed to writing as it was revealed, and with the writing down of it naturally grew the present order of its verses, which order divine design had conceived differently from their chronological order. The death of the Holy Prophet marked the completion of the revelation of the Holy Quran. Accordingly, Abu Bakr, the first Khalifa, in consultation with 'Omar, ordered Zaid b. Thabit, one of the scribes, to collect together the different portions of the text, and secure it in the form of a book. Zaid b. Thabit, who was a hard-working and a very intelligent young man, applied himself with great industry, and guided by the strictest oral and documentary evidence, for every single verse, prepared a complete copy of the Holy Quran in the form of a book. This authoritative copy was later placed in the safe custody of one of the wives of the Holy Prophet – Hafsa, daughter of 'Omar. [Bukhari, Kitab Fada'il al-Quran, 'The Collection of the Quran.']. When Islam spread to different countries, 'Uthman, the third Khalifa, ordered the preparation of accurate copies of the text collected by Zaid, and then had them issued to all parts of the Muslim Empire. [Bukhari, Kitab Fada'il al-Quran, 'The Collection of the Quran.'

Also Fath-ul-Bari, Vol.9, pp.17 and 18]. The Holy Quran was also committed to memory as it was revealed, and wonderful arrangements existed to this end. A number among the Companions of the Holy Prophet memorised the text in the order in which the Holy Prophet dictated it and which the Holy Quran was ultimately to have, and while the number of those who had learned small portions of the text was very much larger, the number of those, who had learned the whole of the Quran during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, was also pretty large. Four of them were certified by the Holy Prophet himself and, having been found satisfactory in every way, they were appointed by him to teach the Holy Quran to other companions. [Bukhari, Kitab Fada'il al-Quran, Chapter, 'The Reciters of the Quran.']. At the death of the Holy Prophet, when the Holy Quran was gathered as a book, the number of those who knew the whole of it by heart, mounted very rapidly. During the reign of 'Omar, the second Khalifa, a Muslim army in a single cantonment included no less than 300 Huffaz i.e. men who could recite the whole of the Holy Quran from memory. [Kanz al-'Ummal, Chapter on the Quran, Section: Fada'il al-Quran.]. These arrangements, designed and determined by God, secured the Holy Quran against all possible interpolation and interference. Subsequently, so many accurate copies became available in all countries, and so

large became the number of those who knew the Holy Book by heart, that the possibility of interpolation was completely eliminated. And today, as admitted by friend and foe alike, there is not the least doubt that the Quran which we possess is the very Quran which was revealed to the Holy Prophet. It is the same text, and has the same order which the Holy Prophet, under divine guidance, prescribed for it. I quote some European Christian writers in support.

Says Sir William Muir:-

“There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text.”

Again:-

“To compare their pure text with the various readings of our Scriptures is to compare things between which there is no analogy.”

Again:-

“There is every security, internal and external, that we possess the text which Mohammad himself gave forth and used.”

Yet again:-

“We may upon the strongest assumption affirm that every verse in the Koran [The same as Quran. While quoting I have retained the form used by the authority quoted] is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mohammad himself.”

Similarly Noeldeke, the great German Orientalist, says:-

“The Koran of ‘Uthman’¹ contains none but genuine elements.”

Again:-

“All efforts of European scholars to prove the existence of later interpolations in the Koran have failed.” [Sir William Muir op cit, Introduction, pp.22,23,27,28].

The value of the Holy Quran as an historical document does not merely lie in the fact that it has been protected since the time of its revelation. It also lies in the fact that havinvg been revealed gradually during the twenty-three years of the Holy

Prophet's ministry, it is contemporary record of his life. There is not a period of his life which is not illumined by some part or another of the text of the Holy Book. This is the deeper significance of what Hazrat 'Aisha (the Holy Prophet's consort) said of him, viz.:

“Verily his character is the Quran.” [1]

The Holy Quran in a way is a record of the daily round of activities, the moral qualities and all the little ways of the Prophet. No other historical person possesses such an authentic, and such a powerful contemporary record of his life. There have indeed been those – and there are some even today – whose ‘lives’ have been written and published in their lifetime or soon after. But the distinction which the Holy Prophet possesses in the Quran, as a day-to-day record of his life, is possessed by no one else. [2] Western writers have openly acknowledged this fact.

Says Sir William Muir:-

“The importance of this deduction can hardly be over-estimated. The Koran becomes the ground-work and the test of all inquiries into the origin of Islam, and the character of its Founder. Here we have a storehouse of Mohammad's own words recorded during his life extending over the whole course of his public career, and illustrating his religious views, his public acts and his domestic character. By this standard of his own making, we may safely judge his life and actions, for it must represent either what he actually thought or what he affected to think. And so true a mirror is the Koran of Mohammad's character, that the saying became proverbial among the early Muslims, His character is the Koran.”

Professor Nicholson, the well-known Orientalist of England, writes in his Literary History of the Arabs:-

“Here we have materials of unique and incontestable authority for tracing the origin and early development of Islam – such materials as do not exist in the case of Buddhism or Christianity or any other ancient religion.”

In short, the Holy Quran, as an authentic historical record, is unsurpassed by any other record pertaining to any other person in the world. Its contemporaneous character is unquestioned, which not even its detractors dare deny.

CRUSADE FOR FRIDAY HOLIDAY

(A. M. Chaudhary)

When God's plan for this planet reached the point of perfection He revealed His directives in detail to His choicest Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). Friday was chosen as a special day for Muslims as was Saturday for the Jews. According to Divine declaration in the Holy Quran the Jews were cursed for not giving due importance to the observance of Saturday.

In early times Muslims performed Friday prayers with all sincerity and fervour. The spacious mosques built in later centuries by Muslim emperors also tell the tale of the faithful attendance of the congregational Friday service. However, when Islam touched the extreme boundaries of deterioration and intense spiritual darkness enveloped the world, the offering of the five daily prayers suffered a serious set-back in general and people forgot, in particular, the significance attached to the Friday service. The gradual disappearance of Muslim rulers from the scene of the political arena and the dominance of the followers of other faiths over the larger part of this planet set up barriers in the way of Muslims to discharge their religious duties even if they wished, although very few orthodox adherents were left.

God, however, came to their rescue. He fulfilled His prophecy about the advent of the Promised Messiah for the revival of the lost values of Islam. The Promised Messiah completed his mission and passed away in 1908 leaving the continuance of the gigantic task of the renaissance of Islam to be pursued by elected caliphs who are in a position to provide Providential panacea for every problem. The present Caliph, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV, Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, has alerted the members of the Jamaat (community) about the relaxed attitude towards the observance of Friday prayers and exhorted them to do everything possible to bring back the lost spiritual significance attached to this day in the Holy Quran. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih devoted the whole of his Friday sermon delivered on 1st January, to have Friday recognized as a holiday in the whole of the Muslim world. The translation of the Quranic verses recited by him is:

“ O ye who believe! When the call is made for Prayer on Friday, hasten to the remembrance of Allah, and leave off all business. That is better for you, if you only knew.

And when the prayer is finished then disperse in the land, and seek of Allah's grace, and remember Allah much, that you may prosper.

But when they see some merchandise or some amusement they break up for it, and leave thee standing. Say 'That which is with Allah is better than amusement and merchandise, and Allah is the Best Provider.' (62: 10-12)

- (1) In light of the above Divine advice Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said that it applies to the dormant spiritual state of affairs to be experienced in the latter days - the days of the advent of the Promised Messiah. We are seeing with our own eyes the indifferent attitude of Muslims towards the attendance of Friday service.
- (2) Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah who came to rectify the beliefs and practices of many other creeds besides Islam felt this problem very strongly. On 1st January, 1896, he peacefully petitioned the British Government to give the due right of leave for Muslims to attend Friday prayers. His way of approach was very courteous and attractive. He pointed out that while the British and Hindus were having their holiday on Sunday, so the Government should be gracious and generous enough to grant partial leave to Muslims on Friday to enable them to attend Jumah service. This would win it their good will and prayers.

This demand was renewed in 1911 by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih, the first successor of the Promised Messiah. After a two year struggle the Government accepted the justification of the demand and granted partial leave to the Muslims in general to attend Friday prayers.

- (3) In his sermon delivered on Friday, 1st January, 1988, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV said that it was a strange coincidence that today God has guided a humble khalifa of the Promised Messiah to raise the same voice to start a crusade for the revival of a Friday holiday or partial holiday to enable Muslims to attend Friday service. He said there would be a two pronged programme involving the operation of a universal campaign by approaching the mass media through letters to the newspapers and by sending deputations to government officials and educational authorities to grant Muslims their religious right to attend Friday service in the mosques.

- (4) In the light of the Quranic injunctions it would seem more appropriate that leave should be granted in good time to make preparation for the service. Permission has been granted to carry on with one's business after the service is over. All efforts, therefore, should revolve around this point. This right has been granted to Muslims in America. There is no reason why it should not succeed also in other parts of the world. Patience, perseverance, determination and sincerity of purpose are required.
- (5) If the results of the campaign are not satisfactory then sacrifice will have to be undergone. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said that, if necessary, time off would have to be taken without pay in order to attend Friday prayers. Children should not be sent to school on Fridays and members should press this pious point in every possible manner to the authorities. This procedure will bring lots of blessings in its trail for members and their families. In addition to personal progress, this step will be an obligation on the whole Muslim world. Prayer and practical planning should go side by side.
- (6) Hazrat Khalifatul Masih emphasized that before embarking upon any action in this respect everyone must be completely convinced about the sacredness of Friday. If we are careless and negligent then our campaign will bear no fruit because hollow words produce no reaction. He then related some of the relevant traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) giving a glimpse of God's wrath on those who neglect Friday prayers.
- (7) The literal meaning of Jumah is 'Day of Union', The Holy Prophet (peace be on him) warned in clear words that God will set a seal on the mind of that Muslim who absents himself from three consecutive Friday prayers without a genuine reason and that he will become quite insensitive of its sacredness and will lose its blessings. God has prescribed Friday service on every Muslim till the Day of Judgement. The Holy Prophet went to the extent of expressing his view that if an Imam for a community was available, then whatever might be his calibre, just or unjust, good or bad, a person should not stay back from attending the service on Friday otherwise God may never bring together his business or unite the dispersed members. There would be no blessings in any of his undertakings. Such a person would have no reward for his daily prayers zakat contribution or for his pilgrimage. Even his fasts would also go waste unless he repents.

What a terrible punishment for non-attendance of Friday prayers! Any further comment is not needed after such a strongly worded warning.

In conclusion, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih urged members of the Ahmadiyya Community to cherish real respect for Friday and particularly devote this year, 1988, for carrying out an energetic crusade for the re-establishment of reverence for Jumah - the Friday service. The Promised Messiah was the Imam of the faithful and he took up this challenge by raising his voice in this connection. We must not rest on our oars until we have impressed upon the world our view point by dint of determination and prayers. May God be our Helper!

IMPORTANCE OF FRIDAY PRAYER

Of all the obligations of a Muslim, the most important is prayer, and of all the prayers, none is so essential to be recited in congregation as the Juma (Friday) service prayer. The Juma is in fact the greatest Muslim festival. The Holy Quran regards it as a holiday. A whole chapter of the holy book entitled the Juma has been devoted to it. In that chapter Almighty God commands Muslims to quit all their worldly affairs when they are summoned to prayer of Friday, to assemble in mosques and to say the Juma prayers with due observance of all the requirements of the Law. The person who does not act in obedience to these injunctions is regarded by the Holy Quran as guilty of a deadly sin and almost outside the circle of Islam. Far more stress has been laid upon attendance at the Juma sermon and prayers than upon Eid. It is on account of this importance of the Juma in the Muslim faith that Friday has universally been observed as a holiday among the Muslims from the very earliest time that Islam took its rise.

(The Promised Messiah)

BACKGROUND OF EASTER AND ITS TRADITIONS

(Hussain M. Sajid M.D.)

Among the Christian holidays, Easter holds special significance as it denotes the events of the crucifixion and atonement, the basic creed of Christianity. Christians believe that Jesus rose again from the dead three days and three nights after he was crucified. Easter is celebrated on one Sunday morning each spring. The faithful arise early on this day, watch the sunrise and some, because of their forty days of partial abstinence called Lent will be over, will rejoice and participate in a religious service. Strange as it may seem, other festivities of this presumably religious day include chocolate rabbits, coloured eggs, egg-hunting and egg rolling games. Free thinking Christian scholars in bewilderment have often questioned all these incongruous activities. Why rabbits? Why not a puppy or a kitten? Rabbits do not lay eggs, and then why eggs, why not oranges or onions etc., because they also roll. Easter and its associated festivities, in this age of reasoning and enlightenment, beg for an explanation and a systematic analysis of this religious tradition. The questions to be answered are simple as well as multiple, such as what is Easter? When was Easter initiated in history? Is there any scriptural evidence to celebrate this religious rite? Why is it always celebrated on Sunday? Why not on some other day of the week and how is the cuddly little innocent bunny rabbit, supposedly a magnificent egg-laying rabbit, attached to Easter? Is it a true scientific fact or a fable touching the horizons of mythology? Christian faith contends that Sunday was the day on which Christ rose from the dead and that his resurrection is the very reason for observing Easter. But, to add further to this predicament, the scriptures do not support the contention that Christ's resurrection occurred on a Sunday.

Easter rites start with Lent. The origin and the significance of Lent itself is shrouded in obscurity. According to the Catholic Encyclopedic Dictionary:

“The origin of the penitential season of Lent is obscure, its length has varied in different ages, but the principle of a fast of forty days (Lat; Quadragesima, It; Quaresima, Fr; Careme.) has been recognized since the fourth century.”

Hoeh, in Plain Truth 1983 states:

“The Lent was observed 2,000 years before Christ was born. The source of the word Lent is an old English word Lencten meaning the ‘spring’ of the year as the Lent was originally celebrated with the coming of the spring season. These days it has been changed to winter. The Bible is silent about Lent. It did not originate with Christ. None of the apostles celebrated it, not even Paul or Peter”.

About a hundred years after the death of the last of the twelve apostles, we find mention of Lent and Easter in a letter written by Irenaeus, a bishop from Gaul (the old name of France in the days of the Roman Empire) to the bishop of Rome which mentions the controversies in these words:

“For the controversy is not only concerning the day (Easter) but also concerning the very manner of the Fast, for some think that they should fast one day, others two, yet others more, and some forty.”

There was nothing certain or definite about Easter and Lent at that time. Jesus and the apostles had not addressed this question as none of them practised it and the coming generations were left in darkness and without guidance to the design of their own mind wanderings, even though the observance of these customs had originated long before the birth of Jesus. “And this variety in its observance “ continued Irenaeus” has not originated in our times, but long before in that of our ancestors. It is likely they did not hold to strict accuracy, and thus formed a custom for their posterity according to private fancy.

(Eusebius: Church History; Book 5, Chap: 24) It clearly denotes that Lent was not commanded by God but rather it came in to the Church through custom and private fancy. It is also apparent that Christians adopted these customs from their gentile neighbours. At this point the question arises, when did the Christian Church adopt the celebration of the customs of Lent and Easter? The answer is provided by Cassion, a Catholic prelate of the fifth century. He writes “As long as the perfection of the primitive church remained inviolable there was no observance of lent, but when men began to decline from the apostolical fervour of devotion -- then the priests in general agreed to recall them from secular cares by a canonical indication of fasting -- (Antiquities of the Christian Church; Book 21, Chapter 1). Cassion’s time was much closer than the time of the present day authorities. He leaves no doubt that fasting was decided upon and imposed by the priests after the days of the apostles and the early Church. This was

not based upon any religious creed or the practice of Jesus or any of his apostles, rather it was politically motivated to secure converts from amongst the gentiles. The Catholic Encyclopaedia records:

“In any case it is certain from the Festival Letters of St. Athanasius that in 331 A.D. he enjoined upon his flock a period of forty days of fasting preliminary to Holy Week, and second that in 339 A.D. after having travelled to Rome and over the greater part of Europe, he wrote in the strongest terms to urge this observance of Lent upon the people under his jurisdiction.”

The name Easter may have come from Eostre, a Teutonic goddess of spring, or from the Teutonic festival of spring called Eastur. (The World Book Encycl; Vol. VI, page 25) Rev. Alexander Hislop in tracing the worship of a goddess Mother and her Divine Son writes on pages 20 and 21 of his book *The Two Babylons*:

” The origin of that mother, so widely worshipped, there is reason to believe, was Semiramis, who was worshipped by the Babylonians, and other eastern nations under the name of Rhea, the great Goddess Mother. Certain feasts were celebrated connected with the only begotten divine son of the virgin mother --- The feast of Astarte or Ishtar, the queen of the heavens or the virgin goddess of spring and fruitfulness, was observed on the first Sunday after the full moon following the “Spring Equinox” ----- The Vernal Equinox occurred at that time when the sun in its elliptical revolution, as it passed the Equator, made the shape of a cross in the constellation of Aries or the ‘Lamb’. This was taken as the triumph of the Sun-God, whose virgin queen had succeeded in rescuing her only begotten son, who had sacrificed his life to the powers of darkness to save humanity and send him to heaven to look after his believers. Therefore, he became ‘Aries’ or ‘The Lamb of the Heavens’. This event is celebrated with hot-cross buns; the round bun represents the sun and the cross on it as the magical sign made by the sun, which saved the saviour from the imprisonment of the forces of the darkness.”

The name for Easter in some languages come from the Hebrew ‘Pesah’. Spanish speaking people call Easter, ‘Pascua’. The Italians call Easter, Pasqua and the French, the ‘Pasques’. Many customs connected with the Easter season come from the pagan festivals of spring. Others stem from the Passover celebration.” (The World Book Encycl; Vol. VI p 26). “The triumph of the Sun-God was, therefore

and quite naturally ascribed to the influence of Aries (the Lamb of the Heavens). The Lamb thus became the symbol of the Rising Saviour and his passage from the underworld into the height of heaven.” (Pagan and Christian Creed, p 39). In ‘The Golden Bough’ p 348-356, Frazer writes about the Phrygian virgin-born son of God who was bled to death hanging crucified from a pine-tree. His blood renewed the fertility of the earth and thus brought new life to humanity. He also rose from the dead. Frazer states:

“In celebrating his death and resurrection, his image was fastened to a pine-tree cut in a form of a cross on March 24th and the day was called “The Day of Blood” since on that day the deity was bled to death. The image was then laid in a tomb, when there was wailing and mourning. But the coming night changed their sorrow to joy. The tomb was found empty on the next morning i.e. 25th March, when the festival of the resurrection was celebrated. These rituals included a baptism of blood and a sacramental meal”.

“Easter decorations and paintings often include the figure of a lamb as a symbol of Jesus. The World Encyclopaedia offers another interpretation that this symbol is adopted by the Christian Church from the Jews on erroneous grounds and remarks “the symbol of the lamb comes from the Jewish Pesah (Passover Holiday). The Jews sacrificed a lamb, called a paschal lamb, during their traditional Passover ceremony in the Temple in Jerusalem. Early Christians interpreted the sacrifice of the paschal lamb as a forecast of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Surely a far fetched irrational interpretation.”

Eggs represent the new life that returns to nature about Easter time. The custom of exchanging eggs began in ancient times. The ancient Egyptians and Persians often dyed eggs in spring colours and gave them to their friends as gifts. The Persians believed that the earth had hatched from a giant egg! It was but natural for such ritual and dogmas to find their natural niche amongst dogmas of Trinity and bodily Resurrection. Early Christians of Mesopotamia were first to use coloured eggs for Easter.

The story behind the Easter Bunny is even more incredible and defies any rhyme and reason for adoption by a religion which claims to be established by God, The All Wise and the Source of All Wisdom. Many children are made to believe that an Easter Bunny brings their share of Easter eggs and this man made ritual is played in Washington on the lawn of the White House every year by mature and supposedly honest truth-speaking adults in the presence of the news media.

The World Book Encyclopaedia states:

“This belief probably comes from Germany. One legend says that a poor woman dyed some eggs during a famine, and hid them in a nest as an Easter gift for her children. Just as the children discovered the nest, a big rabbit leaped away. The story spread that the rabbit had brought the Easter eggs.”

Was it in Jerusalem, the place of the alleged resurrection of Jesus, that the first Easter was celebrated? No, it was rather Rome. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt, was influenced by Roman customs. It was at Rome that not only Easter, but also Lent entered the Church. Neither the apostles nor the Gospels imposed these customs. Socrates Scholasticus (4th century A.D.) wrote in his Ecclesiastical History:

“Neither the apostles, therefore nor the Gospels, have anywhere imposed Easter. Wherefore in as much as men love festivals, because they afford them cessation from labour, each individual in every place, according to his own pleasure has by a prevalent custom celebrated Easter The Saviour and his apostles have enjoined us by no law to keep this feast just as many other customs have been established in individual localities according to usage, so also the feast of Easter came to be observed in each place according to the individual peculiarities of the people in as much as none of the apostle legislated on the matter. And that the observance originated not by legislation, but as a custom, the facts themselves indicate.” (Ecclesiastical History, Chap; 22).

Irenaeus admits in his famous letters that Lent and Easter entered the Christian Church at Rome during the time of Bishop Xystus of Rome and the name Easter denoting spring was retained to designate the festival of the Resurrection. About the middle of second century a long drawn out dispute occurred between Western and Eastern Churches over the exact date for the early church, a subject on which Bede wrote two volumes. The Eastern Church terminated Lent fasting and began Easter celebration on the 14th day of Jewish month, Nisan, thus linking with the Jewish feast celebrating the Exodus from Egypt B.C. They were called Quartodecimans (quartus decimus, fourteenth) by the Western Church. The Western Church celebrated Easter on the Sunday following the

14th day of the full moon of the equinox. The Church of Antioch continued to celebrate at a different date, on the first Sunday after the 14th day of Nisan:

“It was at this stage (in the tenth year of Commodus’ reign i.e. around 189 A.D.) that a controversy of great significance took place, because all the Asians dioceses thought that in accordance with ancient custom they ought to observe the 14th day of the lunar month (14th Nisan, the day of the Passover Full Moon) as the beginning of the Paschal festival --- But nowhere else in the world was it customary to arrange their celebration in that way --- so Synod and conferences of bishops were convened, presided by Bishop Theophilus of Caesarea and Narcissus of Jerusalem and at Rome by Bishop Victor.” (The History of the Church by Eusebius, Book 5; 23:1, p 229-230)

The discussion waxed hot and by harsh measures Pope Victor (189-189 A.D.) terminated the quartodeciman controversy by threatening with excommunication all those who failed to comply with the Roman custom. The General Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. paved the way to a final settlement. At the first Council of religious heads at Nicaea, not the Pope of Rome but Constantine in his capacity as Pontifex Maximus issued a number of regulations to be observed by the members of the Church. These regulations among others include that the birthday of Christos or Christ should be celebrated at the Winter Solistice, the birthday of Nimrod-Mithra and called it “X-Mas”.

He also decided on which Dies Solis or Sun-God’s day of the year Easter should be regularly held, and God instead of being one and alone as taught by Jesus was reduced to a ‘Trinity in Unity’ according to Nimrod’s teachings as in Mithraism. In spite of these threatening measures there was no harmony in observance of Easter. Eusebius further relates in The History of the Church Book 5; 14:1 that:

“The Asian bishops who insisted that they must observe the custom transmitted to them long ago were headed by Polycrates, who in the letter which he wrote to Victor and the Roman Church set out in the following terms the traditions he had received ‘we for our part keep the day scrupulously, without addition or subtraction.’ Polcrates mentions the names of many Church fathers and martyrs and states that all of these kept the fourteenth day of the month as the beginning of the Paschal Festival, in accordance with the Gospel

(John XII 1-12 shows that the crucifixion took place on Passover day, which was always 14th Nisan.) not deviating in the last but following the rule of the Faith. Last of all I too, Polycrates, the least of you all, act according to the tradition of my family, some members of which I have actually followed; for seven of them were bishops and I am the eighth, and my family have always kept the day when the people put away the leaven. So I, my friends, after spending sixty-five years in the Lord's service and conversing with Christians from all parts of the world and going carefully through all Holy Scriptures, am not scared of threats."

Referring to the bishops who were with him and who wrote and shared his opinion, he writes:

"I could have mentioned the bishops who are with me and whom I summoned in response to your request. If I write their names, the list will be very long, --- they approve my letter."

There upon Victor, head of the Roman church, attempted at one stroke to cut off from the common unity all the Asian Dioceses, together with the neighbouring churches, on the ground of heterodoxy. He condemned them in letters in which he announced the total excommunication of all his fellow-Christians there. But this was not to the taste of all the bishops. We still possess the words of these men, who very sternly rebuked Victor, among them was Irenaeus, who wrote on behalf of the christians for whom he was responsible in Gaul:

"The dispute is not only about the day, but also about the actual character of the feast. --- Such variations in the observance did not originate in our own days, but very much earlier, in the times of our forefathers, who apparently disregarding strict accuracy -- in their naive simplicity kept up a practice which they fixed for the time to come."

"Lent, though it was celebrated for a varying length of time, one or two days or for several weeks, traditionally was always called the celebration of 40 days according to the original length of the fast, traced to ancient Babylon 4000 years ago." (Ninevah and Babylon; by Layard; Ch: 4, p 93)

It was not until the 8th century after Christ that the final number of 40 days was fastened on the whole Church from Ireland to Asia Minor.

Bede provides us with the lively account of this dispute and the scholarly way in which this whole dispute was set to rest. He states that the local Royal household in Northumbria was split down the middle. The queen had gone over to Roman customs. The King was still using Celtic ways. As a result, he explains:

“When the king had ended Lent and was keeping Easter, the queen and her household was still fasting”.

Enough to ruin any family's Easter. The matter was resolved when the king called a meeting at Whitby, in 664 A.D., between the two sides. Oddly they both agreed to accept his decision, and he decided for Rome or his wife. (Bede; A History of the English Church and People). Up to the 12th century every day within the Eastern Octave (the eight days immediately following the fast) was a holy day of obligation. Today, however, in most countries even Easter Monday and Tuesday have been abolished as days of obligations.

Frazer in his famous book “The Golden Bough” has compared the similarities between the ceremonies of the pagan goddess Adonis and those of Easter. He writes:

“The whole custom ... sepulchre as well as plates of sprouting grain ... may be nothing but a continuation, under a different name, of the worship of Adonis. Nor are these Sicilian and Calabrian customs the only Easter ceremonies which resemble the rites of Adonis ... When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully continued to plant the seed of the new faith on the old stock of paganism, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis.” (page 400)

“Under the names of Osiris, Tammy, Adonis and Attis, the people of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead. The worship of Adonis was practised by the Semitic peoples of Babylonia and Syrian and the Greeks borrowed it from them as early as 7th century B.C. The true name of the deity was Tammuz; the appellation of Adonis is merely the Semitic Adon, ‘Lord’ a title of honour by which his worshippers addressed him. But the Greeks through a misunderstanding converted the title of honour into a proper name.” (p378).

He further states:

“The tragical story and the melancholy rites of Adonis are better known to us from the description of Greek writers or the brief references of the prophet Ezekiel, who saw the women of Jerusalem weeping for Tammuz at the north gate of the temple.”

Christianity, in its evangelical zeal to secure as many converts as possible from other religions even compromised its own basic tenets, formulated pagan rites as its own thus making Christianity more palatable to accept. In the process Christianity borrows extensively from other nations irrespective that may it be a heathen or a pagan or a Jewish custom. The tragedy is that it has done its best to legitimise these borrowed customs and festivals as its own and made them parts of its liturgy.

THE DOOR OF REVELATION

Do not think that the Revelation from God is not possible in the future: that it was possible only in the past: do not think that the holy spirit cannot come down now. I tell you truly that every door can be closed but the door for the coming down of the holy spirit. Open all the doors of your heart to receive it. With your own hands you remove yourself to a distance from that sun when you close the window through which light can enter. Therefore, get up at once and throw this window open, so that the light of the sun should, of its own accord, enter your heart the simplicity and inevitability of a natural process. When God has not closed the doors of His blessings upon the world, when in fact He has multiplied them even more than before, do you venture to presume that he has closed upon you the doors of his spiritual blessings, even at a time when they were needed most! No, no; not at all. Rather has that door been opened beyond any possible shadow of doubt.

(HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD)

SURROGATE PROCREATION

(We reproduce a letter written by Mr. Abdul Majid of Pittsford, New York to the Editor of the Daily 'U.S.A. - Today')

Sir,

The use of surrogate mothers as a means of procreation for childless couples has been a matter of debate for quite sometime. The various types of opinions expressed on page 8A of your esteemed newspaper dated September 3rd, 1987, make very interesting yet thought-provoking reading. The following observations of N.J. Superior Court Judge Harvey Sarkew was made in his judgement in the Baby M case:

“If one has the right to procreate coitally, then one has also the right to procreate non-coitally.”

The above observation of the judge, viewed in the perspective of those wives who cannot conceive due to some organic defect through normal coitus, would be quite in the fitness of things. In their case, insemination by mechanical device with the sperm of their own husbands would be quite justified normally, legally and spiritually. What is agitating the minds of the people at large, is the question of non-coital procreation through hired mothers who are not the wives of the sperm donors, for the simple reason that it would amount to the commission of indirect adultery.

As a matter of fact the Christian world is faced with an enormous dilemma. On the one hand, there is a natural urge for children, and on the other hand the Bible (New Testament) does not permit the husband of an unproductive wife to have another wife with a view to having children. They are, therefore, forced to adopt such immoral methods as surrogate mothers as an inevitable alternative.

It appears from the Old Testament that almost all the prominent Prophets of the Bible, like Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, had more than one wife [the latter having as many as seven hundred wives besides three hundred concubines (1 Kings 11:3), but the New Testament has placed a complete embargo on having more than one wife without regard to the genuine needs of mankind in practical life. There can be no denying the fact that situations can arise where a second marriage becomes a genuine necessity. Obviously the Old and New Testaments have gone to one and the other extremes. Neither the taking of unlimited number of wives is desirable, nor is the placement

of undue barriers on taking a second wife, in all and any circumstances, is advisable, and even not practicable. The system of surrogation which, in fact, is a sinister and abominable substitute for a second wife, is an example. Neither of the two are in conformity with the course of nature.

As against the teachings of the Bible, the teachings of Islam are well balanced. It permits polygamy but with limits and strict conditions which is the only moral, legal and natural way of doing things to meet the ends in times of need. The Christian world has already emulated the teachings of Islam in respect of divorce against the teachings of the Bible (New Testament) which does not permit divorce except on grounds of adultery (Math. 19:9) whereas physical and mental cruelty has now also been included, by law, as a valid ground for divorce. Similarly, the need for having a second wife, in inevitable situations, is the only solution for the ills which have overtaken society in the form of surrogate mothers. Come what may, nature will take its course sooner or later; but better sooner than later that the bare fact of practical life in this regard be recognized and acted upon as has also been done in the case of divorce.

EFFICACY OF PRAYER

“God had made prayer a most potent instrument. God’s revelation has repeatedly come to me saying that all success will be achieved through prayer. Indeed prayer is our only instrument. We have no other instrument for the achievement of our purpose. Whatever we beg of God in secret, God brings it about and makes it manifest. Most people however, are not aware of the true significance and the real philosophy of prayer. They do not know how much attention, earnestness, devotion and steadfastness is needed to achieve one’s purpose through prayer. In truth, true prayer is to experience a kind of truth.”

(The Promised Messiah)

MARTYRDOM OF HAZRAT SAHIBZADA ABDUL LATIF

(A.H. Ghazi)

“And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah that they are dead; nay they are living, only you perceive not.”
(2:55)

The Holy Quran is quite explicit about the martyrdom in the cause of Allah - that their sacrifice will not be wasted. In fact, it was the sacrifice of those countless early Muslims that firmly laid the foundation of Islam.

Sacrifice is indeed a trial, and Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“And We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and fruits; but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who, when a misfortune overtakes them, say, ‘Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return.’ It is these on whom descend blessings from their Lord and also mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided.” (2: 156-158)

Hazrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif, Raees of Khost, Afghanistan, was a highly noble, blessed and rightly-guided Momin. Alas, he was stoned to death by the then Amir of Afghanistan Habibullah Khan on 3rd July, 1903 in Kabul for believing Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. Hazrat Sahibzada was not the first Ahmadi martyr in Afghanistan; about two years earlier, Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib’s disciple Hazrat Maulvi Abdur Rehman was suffocated to death on the orders of Amir Abdur Rehman, then ruler of Afghanistan and the father of Amir Habibullah Khan. Since then many more Ahmadis have sacrificed their lives in the cause of Allah, may God be pleased with them. I intend, however, to dwell specifically on the tragic martyrdom of Fadide-Zawar Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib and to pay homage to his blessed memory as well as to refreshen our faith, God willing!

Writing about these two martyrs, the Promised Messiah begins his book ‘Tazkiratul Shahadatain’, with the following sentence:

“Although many kinds of atrocities are being perpetrated under the sun these days, yet the barbarity that I shall presently

relate is so tragic that it makes the heart shudder and the body tremble.”

The Promised Messiah also wrote about Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib's martyrdom:

“You have heard how Sahibzada Abdul Latif, who was one of the most respected, noble and famous chiefs of the State of Kabul, and who had nearly fifty thousand followers, was stoned to death, most cruelly, by Amir Habibullah Khan.”
(The Review of Religions, February 1907)

Who was Hazrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif to whom the Promised Messiah, be peace on him, paid such a glowing tribute, and why was he martyred?

Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib belonged to a very noble Afghan family, his father being the chief of his tribe, and who owned about 30 thousand acres of land in his village Saidgah, in Khost District as well as in Bannu in the North West Frontier as it was then. He was educated in the religious Madrassas (school), and was well renowned for his scholarship in Islam, piety and integrity. He had about 50,000 followers, and the Amir of Afghanistan Abdur Rehman Khan appointed him as his religious adviser and tutor to his son Habibullah Khan.

Afghanistan was in chaos and turmoil. The Royal family feuds had encouraged foreign powers - both Russia and Britain, to meddle in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Amir Abdur Rehman was proclaimed Amir of Kabul on July 20th, 1880 and the British formally handed over to him the Kingdom of Kabul on 11th August, 1880. The Amir writes in his autobiography:

“When I first succeeded to the throne of Kabul, my life was not a bed of roses. Here began my first severe fight against my own relations, my own subjects, my own people.”

It was during his reign that the unpopular Durand Line was drawn in 1893, separating Afghanistan from the British Empire.

Hazrat Sahibzada was one of the two members of the Afghan Government's delegation which attended these boundary demarcation negotiations, while the British delegation was headed by Lord Mortimer Durand, hence the

demarcation was called the “Durand Line”. The appointment shows Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib’s eminence and high political status.

A new and fateful chapter begins at this juncture of his life. There was an Ahmadi clerk Syed Chan Badshah in the British delegation. During the course of demarcation work, Syed Chan held many conversations with Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib during which he made reference to the Promised Messiah, peace be on him. Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib was himself a recipient of revelation, a man of immense learning and scholarship and fully aware of the prospects of the Promised Messiah in those prevailing times. Naturally he showed great interest in Syed Chan’s reference to the Promised Messiah. Syed Chan gave him the Promised Messiah’s book “Aaina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam” to read. That book changed his life, as he later commented:

“I could not sleep for a moment that night. I finished the book and was fully convinced of the claims of the Promised Messiah.”

The Commission finished its work on the 3rd December, 1893, and on returning to Kabul, King Abdur Rehman received the members of the delegation with great honour at a specially arranged reception and praised them in his speech at his court for the valuable work and service they had rendered to their country.

Maulvi Abdur Rehman’s visit to Qadian

Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib was most anxious to establish contacts with the Promised Messiah, peace be on him. Soon after returning to Kabul, he sent one of his most trustworthy and prominent disciples, Maulvi Abdur Rehman Sahib, to Qadian. He visited Qadian many times at Hazrat Sahibzada’s expense, and kept him informed about the Promised Messiah, his mission and his latest revelations. His last visit to Qadian was in 1900 and when he returned to Kabul for the last time, he took along with him some pamphlets about Jihad published by the Ahmadiyya Movement which he presented to the learned Ulemas of Afghanistan. According to the pamphlets, it was against the teachings of Islam, explained by the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, to kill the British people in the name of Jihad without a proper and open declaration of war against them. Jihad, according to Ahmadiyya teachings, can only be undertaken in the defence of religion against any enemy who is out to destroy religion by force, or who seeks to change people’s belief at the point of the sword; but in such a war the declaration of Jihad must be made by the Head of

the believers. Unless responsibility for Jihad is vested in the Head, Muslims will not know when, where or how the duty of Jihad is to be pursued.. Without responsible readership and without organized effort, a Jihad would be next to useless. If conditions requiring Jihad arise, and there is responsible leadership, then every Muslim who keeps out will be a sinner. Thus when Ahmadis belonging to any country have not participated in Jihad, it was because they did not consider the circumstances warranted it.

As Abdur Rehman himself admits, the Amir was under great pressure and was troubled by the internal and family feuds. One way of showing his mastery over the affairs and thus to impress his enemies at home was to wage war against the British, although he was helped to the throne of Kabul by them. It was therefore not the time and place to discuss the subject of Jihad. Hazrat Maulvi Sahib was arrested and tried by the Ulemas (religious leaders). Hazrat Maulvi Abdur Rehman, however, was fearless, and he put his views to the Amir as an Ahmadi with courage and remained steadfast. Unable to rebut his views and notwithstanding the clear teachings of Islam enunciated in the Holy Quran, the Amir succumbed to the pressures of opportunists and the forces of darkness. He pronounced as desired by the Ulemas, a guilty verdict against Hazrat Maulvi Abdur Rehman. He became the first martyr by strangulation at the hands of Amir Abdur Rehman's government in 1901. The punishment of Allah was swift and severe.

The Amir was succeeded by his son Habibullah Khan and the coronation ceremony was performed by Hazrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif. He requested and was granted leave by Amir Habibullah Khan to go on pilgrimage as well as given a generous allowance to cover expenses. He left Kabul for Lahore in the middle of October but on arrival there he learned that owing to the plague epidemic, the Turkish Government, which was then the Government of the Hejaz, had banned the Indian pilgrims from entering Arabia. He decided , instead, to visit Qadian and to meet the Promised Messiah and to find out for himself about Ahmadiyyat.

Hazrat Sahibzada arrived in Qadian in the beginning of 1902 and was so struck by the piety and love of Islam of the Promised Messiah that at the very first meeting he requested to be initiated into his "Bai'at" straight way. The Promised Messiah accepted his Bai'at and he later wrote about him that:

"I found him incomparably sincere and honest in his adherence to me and in accepting my claim. His heart, like his

radiant face, was absolutely pure. The most enviable quality the deceased sage possessed was that he always gave preference to matters of religion over all worldly affairs. His zeal and enthusiasm for the faith was so highly advanced that it would not be an exaggeration if it was likened to a lofty mountain and even this resemblance would fall short of the truth. I fail to find adequate words of praise for this venerable sage who for the sake of obedience and fidelity to me, has sacrificed everything - his possessions, his honour and even his life as if all these things were mere trash.”

In February 1903 Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib took leave of the Promised Messiah to return to Kabul. The Promised Messiah accompanied him as far as Batala canal, quite a few miles from Qadian, to see him off. Before departing Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib prostrated himself at the Promised Messiah's feet and wept. The Promised Messiah was himself very much moved visibly. The news of his acceptance of Ahmadiyyat preceded his arrival in Kabul - the land of lawlessness, disorder, infidelity and rebellion, misruled by a bunch of fanatics and ignorant clowns, headed by an 'absolute Amir'. He was lured into the trap and promptly arrested and brought to Kabul as a prisoner. Why? Because he had accepted Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Promised Messiah. His former pupil urged him to give up his new found faith which amounted to apostacy according to his corrupt belief. The only concession the Amir made was to arrange a public discussion at Hazrat Sahibzada's request with the Ulemas on the question of Ahmadiyyat, and whether the belief in the Promised Messiah amounted to apostacy. The public discussion was held in the Jamia Mosque over three days and Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib put forward his arguments in favour of the 'Claim of the Promised Messiah', 'the truth about Jihad', and 'the death of Jesus Christ' according to the Holy Quran, the Traditions and the views held by the Muslim illuminaries down the ages.

The panel of judges chosen to try Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib consisted of two sworn enemies of the Promised Messiah - Dr. Abdul Ghani and Maulvi Najaf Ali, of Jalalpur Jattan, Gujrat (now in Pakistan). They had great influence at the Amir's court at that time and their biased verdict was a foregone conclusion guilty of apostacy and punishable by death by stoning! Amir Habibullah did not even read the papers presented by Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib. No reasons were given for the verdict. Amir Habibullah tried his best to induce him to renounce Ahmadiyyat in the presence of the Ulemas so that he could set him free. But nothing could induce him to renounce the truth.

It was on the 14th July 1903 (17th Rabi-us-Sani, 1321 Hijri), that Hazrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif Sahib, his feet and hands in chains and

a decree of apostacy hanging around his neck, was led to the old grave yard of Kabul in a great procession. The ignorant masses were jubilant, hurling abuses and insults at him, and were led by their mullahs, the Amir Habibullah Khan and the Chief Qazi, mocking and shouting. For them it was great fun, a day of celebration, a day to remember! A day to remember it was! He was put into a two and a half feet deep pit, and buried upto his waist. It was afternoon, and the cruel and ignorant crowd, now in its most savage and hysterical state, was so eager to kill the man in the pit, who professed that he was a Muslim; who believed in the unity of God and the Messengership of the Holy Prophet, be peace on him; who prayed towards Mecca and believed in the Holy Quran, and who had committed no crime and had breached no law. Yet here he was, charged for a trumped up crime of apostacy, waiting to be stoned to death! The Amir approached him for the last time and requested him to recant in vain. He replied that he was anxious to meet his Maker and that he was already smelling the scent of heaven.

The Amir asked the Qazi of the city, Abdur Razzaq, to throw the first stone but he requested the Amir to throw the first stone being the King. Amir Habibullah said to him that he being the Head of Sharia Court and being responsible for the decree of apostacy, it was his duty to throw the first stone. So he did. It is also said that the first stone was thrown by Sirdar Nasrullah Khan. Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib saw the stone coming towards him and loudly recited the Kalima-e-Shahadat and on being struck, turned his head towards Mecca, reciting loudly:[Insertion]

Now the reckoning. Following upon his martyrdom, there appeared a sudden storm in the evening which was so severe that the people believed this was due to the unjust killing of Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib. A certain Mr. F. A. Martin, who was Engineer-in-Chief to the Amir of Afghanistan for many years, describes this incident in his book "Under the Absolute Amir" thus:

"Before being led away from the Amir's presence to be killed, the Mullah (Hazrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif) prophesied that a great clamity would overtake the country, and that both the Amir and the Sirdar (Nasrullah Khan) would suffer. About 9 o'clock that night, the day the Mullah was killed, a great storm of wind suddenly arose and raged with violence for half an hour, and then stopped as suddenly as it came. Such a wind at night was altogether unusual, so the people said that this was passing of the soul of the Mullah."

More punishment was soon to follow as described by Mr. Martin:

“The cholera broke out and, according to former outbreaks another visitation was not due for four years to come, and this was also regarded as part of the fulfilment of the Mullah’s prophecy, and hence the great fear of the Amir and the Prince, who thought they saw in all this their own death, and it accounts also for the Prince losing control of himself when his favourite wife died. The murdered Mullah was a man with a large and powerful following and the two Mullahs, who gave verdict for his death, lived in constant fear of retaliation from his followers who had sworn to avenge him. One of them contracted cholera and almost died of it.”

Sirdar Nasrullah Khan dreaded a similar end and constantly lived in fear. Mr. Martin writes:

“Sirdar Nasrullah Khan who was of course obliged to remain in his city Palace since the Amir did not go away into the country, spent most of his time on his prayer carpet. So I was told by those who were with him when his favourite wife contracted cholera and died. He was described as being almost mad with grief at her loss and fear of disease attacking him next.”

Hazrat Sahibzada’s remains were removed after forty days by one of his disciples - Noor Ahmad Kabli, who buried it at his village Syedgah. This so infuriated Sirdar Nasrullah Khan that he had the coffin removed and buried in an unknown place.

Now let me turn to the fate of these murderers: Amir Habibullah Khan was found murdered on the morning of February 20th 1919 in his tent. He was shot through the ear. There was full guard in attendance; the assassin was never found. He was succeeded after a brief struggle by his third son Amanullah. Amanullah had his uncle, Sirdar Nasrullah Khan, arrested, and at a public Durbar held on April 13th 1919, he was declared to be guilty of instigating the murder of the late Amir Habibullah Khan. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but died shortly afterwards, most probably by strangulation, although his death was not announced until some months later. No one knows where his body was dumped. He was survived by a son and a daughter. Amir Amanullah had the boy murdered and took Sirdar’s daughter as his wife in secret. In May, 1929 he fled the country after a Tadjik bandit leader known as Bacha Saqqa overthrew him from

power, leaving her behind to face the revolutionaries' justice. Amanullah Khan died in exile many years later.

Amanullah's cousin Nadir Khan returned from exile in October 1929, and after defeating Bacha Saqqa, proclaimed himself to be the new King, but was assassinated in 1933 and succeeded by his son Zahir Shah. He was on the throne until the mid-seventies when he was overthrown by his brother-in-law Sardar Daud. Zahir Shah is still living in exile, but Sardar Daud was murdered by revolutionaries in a socialist-oriented coup. The country is now under Soviet occupation, with one-third of its population driven to Pakistan, and the rest existing as serfs and prisoners in their own country. There is no viable leadership and no plan to rid the country of foreign occupation. The present rulers are totally dependent upon Soviet arms and those so-called Mujahideen are begging Christians and Jews for arms and money to wage Jihad against the heathen non-Muslim Russians! No Muslim country is participating in their so-called Jihad!

Dr. Abdul Ghani who had given his verdict against Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib, was found guilty of a conspiracy against the King and was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. Furthermore, his young son Abdul Jabbar was killed while shopping in Kabul bazar! His only other son died in Jalalpur Jattan where he was a mere tonga driver!

I have tried very briefly to give an account of Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib's life and have also accounted for the fate of those culprits involved in taking his life. They sought to extinguish his life in the hope of halting the march of true Islam, that is, Ahmadiyyat, yet within a short span since Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib's martyrdom, the Afghan Royal House of long standing has either been annihilated physically or been driven out of Afghanistan's life altogether and forever. The country itself and its people are facing a dark and bleak future. On the other hand, Hazrat Sahibzada Sahib has become an integral part of the glorious history of Ahmadiyyat, the only hope for mankind.

PRESS RELEASE
(Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry)

REPORT FROM NAWABSHAH, SIND, PAKISTAN:

**ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS ON AHMADI MUSLIMS
CONTINUE IN PAKISTAN:**

1. Three persons entered the clinic of an Ahmadi dentist Mr. Naseer Ahmad at PADIDAN, NAWABSHAH, SIND at about 11 A.M. ON 18th January 1988 and asked for treatment. As the Ahmadi doctor started the examination of one, the other attacked him with daggers, causing seven wounds on his body. While the doctor collapsed to the ground bleeding profusely, the assailants escaped shouting, "We have killed a swine."

2. Four masked men of the same gang attacked another Ahmadi, Mr. Abdul Aziz, owner of a medical store at 'Qazi Ahmed', Nawabshah at about 7.30 p.m. on the 18th February 1988. He was stabbed seventeen times with daggers. Six of his wounds were in his abdomen. Mr. Abdul Aziz was rushed to the local hospital. Later on police arrested two of the assailants, while the third was killed accidentally by his own accomplices during the attack. The fourth assailant is still at large.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Association U.K. condemns such attacks on their members in Pakistan and puts the blame solely on the Government of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has been engaged in vicious propaganda against this peaceful community in Pakistan since 1984.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association demands that the Anti Ahmadiyya Ordinance of 1984 be repealed immediately.

BOOK REVIEW

(Naeem Osman Memon)

THE CRUCIFIXION BY AN EYEWITNESS

INDO AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY, CHICAGO

REPRODUCED BY: SAYED ABDUL HAYEE, LAHORE, PAKISTAN

PRINTED BY: NAFEEES PRINTERS

The Crucifixion by an Eyewitness, an eyewitness's account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is claimed to have been based upon an ancient document discovered by a member of an Abyssinian Mercantile Company at Alexandria in Egypt. The original publishers of this book claim that the document, written by a personal friend of Jesus Christ some seven years after his crucifixion, was found hidden in a library of an ancient house formerly occupied by Grecian friars.

Originally written in Latin, the letter begins with the details of Jesus's birth in Nazareth; his flight to Egypt with his parents, assisted and protected secretly by members of the Essene Order; his initiation to the Essene Order at a monastery at Jutha and his return to the land of his domicile. It then gives a lengthy story of Jesus's visit to Jerusalem where as a child he engaged in a dialogue with the learned men of Jerusalem; his sudden disappearance from the holy city and eventual reunion with his mother at Sopherim on the fourth day.

The author of this ancient letter claimed to have been found at Alexandria then proceeds to give a detailed story of how Christ was subjected to the cross; how fate saved him from death; how Joseph and Nicodemus managed to revive him from the swoon which had been mistaken for death and how the Essene brotherhood assisted him to escape from Jerusalem. And finally, how, after six months of his deliverance from the cross, Jesus died as a result of the injuries suffered during his ordeal on the cross and was buried at a secret place along the shores of the Dead Sea.

While a casual reader of this account might think that this particular version of Jesus's life follows the accounts of the four Gospels quite closely, a close scrutiny of the document may yet prove

that the entire purpose of the whole exercise is to modify the synoptic version of Christ's life in relation to such events or incidents as are either found suspicious or unintelligible.

In this version of events for instance, the writer is at pains to stress that Christ did not die on the cross since the prospects of his return from death is a myth which an intelligent mind refuses to accept. He also attempts to give a rational explanation to the mythical story of the opening of the graves and such other supernatural events alleged to have been experienced on the death of Christ. A reasonable attempt has also been made to explain as to how the story of Christ's ascension to heaven came to be believed.

One does not deny that such a version of Jesus's life, ministry and death may well suit the purposes of those organizations which claim that Christ neither died on the cross nor ascended to heaven in his physical body. Yet, in all fairness, it would be naive to accept the evidence of this alleged 'eye witness' as genuine since this allegedly 'ancient document' is replete with fraudulent evidences which one cannot easily ignore. For instance, this letter is claimed to have been written some seven years after the crucifixion of Christ and if this claim were true, then one would be at a loss to understand as to how the author of this letter happened to have any knowledge of the existence of the four Gospels since modern research has proved that neither of these appeared before, at the least, 66 AD while the letter is pretended to have been written in around 40 AD. One also needs to consider as to why the letter was originally written in Latin and not in either Aramaic or Hebrew or even Greek. Latin, one must stress, did not replace Greek as a language of the Roman bishopric until around the later part of the second century.

These evidences however are not the full extent of the suspicious nature of this letter. Not only is there a large variety of other suspicious evidence available in the main body of the alleged letter, one finds that the German translator's closing remarks on this letter give one enough reason to reject the authenticity of this entire publication.

80 YEARS AGO

NOTES & COMMENTS THE TOLERANCE OF ISLAM

(The following is an extract from the Review of Religions dated March/April, 1908)

The article published under the heading “the attitude of Islam towards other religions” in the January Number of this magazine has been, as it were, a news to people who have long been accustomed to look upon Islam as a religion that cannot bear the expression of an opinion contrary to its doctrines. The Arya Patrika of Lahore declares its inability to pronounce any judgement as to the correctness or incorrectness of the views expressed in the article, its excuse being that it is unable to understand the Arabic verses of the Holy Quran quoted therein. We think a reference to any English translation of the Holy Quran could have satisfied it. Moreover, if the early history of Islam shows that the sword was resorted to, it also shows that whenever the opponents of Islam desired peace, the Holy Prophet made peace with them which would never have been the case if he had been fighting to enforce his religion upon his opponents. The truce made at Hudaibiyya, for instance, shows how the Holy Prophet even consented to forbear from performing certain religious ceremonies for which purpose he had travelled for about a fortnight with 1,400 companions when the Meccans were seen to be willing to allow the Muslims to live peacefully for some time.

On the same article, the Review of Religions has, however, some very valuable remarks in its March number. It says:-

“The Review of Religions for January, which is published in the Punjab, contains a remarkable article on the tolerance of Islam, which is a translation of a paper written by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, and read at a Religious Conference held at Lahore under the auspices of the Arya Samaj. The writer quotes several verses from the Quran, which he maintains, make it obligatory upon all Muhammadans ‘to accept all the prophets who are accepted by large numbers of the human race. According to the Quran it is a sufficient argument of the truth of those prophets that they are accepted as true by a great part of the world, and that the assistance and support of God was granted them at every step. High is the

dignity of God, and He is above such things as that He should make millions of human beings the devoted followers of a person whom He knows to be an impostor and a deceiver and a liar”.

“ ‘This’, says Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, ‘is a very sound and stable principle.’ It certainly carried us very far, for it amounts to an assertion that no lie or imposture can possibly deceive millions of creatures. This exceeding wide basis of tolerance may be commended to our Broad Church friends. It is, indeed, news to hear that what has hitherto been regarded as the most intolerant of all creeds should recognize the divine mission of all its rivals.”

At the end it is added:—

“This is all very good hearing, but I rather suspect that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad would have had a short shrift if he had preached this doctrine to, let us say, the late Mahdi, (Mahdi of the Sudan) or to any other distinguished apostles of the faith.”

It is true that a great misconception has prevailed up to this time as to the real attitude of Islam towards other religions and ignorant Muhammadans are themselves to blame for it, but a great change has been brought about by the peaceful teachings of the Ahmadiyya Movement, and even the dangerous doctrine of the advent of a Ghazi Mahdi has now been abandoned by some of the most orthodox members of such sects as the Wahabis who have for a long time been supposed to be strong advocates of the doctrine. We are sure that better and some correct views of the true nature of Islam would soon become prevalent among the Muhammadans as well as the non-Muhammadans.

ISLAM AND RUSSIA

(Part 7)

(Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah)

Communist Russia:

Russia is Communist, strictly materialist and avowedly atheist. It was so written 2587 years ago and it has now been done. It was also written that being mighty and powerful, Russia would move towards its fatal end and make way for the ultimate victory of Islam. So it will also be done - Insha Allah. It was, as such, destined that Russia would become a powerful and great nation before the promise of the downfall of Communism approaches nearer. Thus the power and influence of Communist Russia would be a passing phase; and when the Russians come into conflict with Anglo-American nations, communism would end in destruction as a punishment from heaven.

There is an unbroken chain of prophecies and warnings against the danger of communism. It thus shows that Communism is not a calamity of an ordinary dimension, rather of such magnitude that God, through His Prophets, has warned mankind against it from earliest times.

The expression latter days or latter years indicates the time of the second advent of Jesus. At that time the Israelites would be gathered from the various corners of the world and become settled again in the land of Palestine. According to the earliest prophecy that is the time when Russia would become a great and strong power.

No friendly understanding is possible with Communism, because the very basis of Communism is world domination through the destruction of religion, faith and all moral and spiritual values and complete subordination of mankind to the doctrines and ideology preached by Engels and Marx and later practised by Lenin and Stalin. Sometimes there may appear a short shift in the policy and practice of Communist countries. But their objectives remain unaltered and firm. Communism denies God and seeks to destroy religion altogether. Sometimes claims are made by Communist Russia about complete freedom of religion in the country. But the actual evidence is otherwise being based on Communist law and actual practice in the

country. As such, no religious liberty is possible in Communist Russia.

The Holy Quran has warned about the rise of Communism but has also given the glad tidings about its downfall. The Holy Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, alerted his followers to be watchful about Communism which denies the existence of God. The Promised Messiah and his successors have been informing people to be vigilant about the dangerous situation created by Communism.

Communism officially denies God. And people who believe in God must pray, seek His help and take every wise precaution, make necessary preparation to combat the evil of Communism being spread.

The majority of people in the West proclaim faith in God but true faith in believing One God is generally missing. The Bible records: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is One Lord" (Deut: 6:4). And Jesus who was a righteous prophet of God, believed in One God, and preached One God: "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, that is God." (Matth. 19:17). His followers, however, have set him up as an equal to God and as a partner in the Godhead. Generally, instead of calling on One God, the Christians, call on Jesus as if he were perfect God. The Muslims, however, have very strong belief in One God.

"Say, He is Allah the One! Allah, the Independent and Besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him."(Chapter 112)

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah and the second successor of the Promised Messiah, proclaimed that there is Only One God and called people to God. He said:

"So, lend ear to the voice of a humble servant of God who calls you back to the pure Unity of God and cleanse yourselves of the error of exalting one to a partnership in the Godhead who was but a righteous servant of God, beloved of Him and loving Him but jealous of His Unity and His Majesty and who would be the first to disclaim any such position to which the Church today is vainly seeking to exalt him. Like Jesus, the person who addressed this appeal to you in the name of the One God, is humble and is to-day looked down upon and is treated with contempt by the greater part of mankind and is repudiated both in his own country and abroad, yet, he is accepted of God

as he is the promised son and successor of God's messenger in this age who came in the power and spirit of Jesus and was thus the Promised Messiah in whose advent were fulfilled the prophecies concerning the second coming of Jesus. It is the voice of one who is humble and of little account in the eyes of men, but in the eyes of God he is worthy of honour for he invites mankind to God and to the path of truth and righteousness." (Communism & Democracy, pp 12-13)

The Russian Revolution became a reality on October 25, 1917. Imperial Russia ceased to exist and the Soviet Union took its birth. October 25, 1917 has another date November 7, 1917. Imperial Russia used the Julian Calendar that had earlier been superseded in all other European nations by the Gregorian Calendar. It was, however, January 26, 1918 that a Soviet decree fixed February 1, 1918 as February 14, 1918. The October 25, 1917 Revolution, Julian Calendar has thus date November 7, 1917 which is according to the Gregorian Calendar.

It was first prophesied 2587 years ago and later on supported by other prophecies, that Russia, an unknown and insignificant territory, will rise to become a mighty power. These prophecies would be fulfilled in the 'latter days' – – the period of the Promised Messiah. Russia now occupies almost half of the world known as the Russian Block. The other half of the world is the Anglo American Block. Both these super powers will come into conflict being catastrophically in contrast with one other. Out of the ruins and destruction would emerge the peaceful and spiritual rule of the Promised Messiah which would last till the end of life on earth.

When Karl Marx was staggering conceptually to lay the foundation of Communist Russia, the foundation of an old prophecy to be fulfilled was being laid down. Karl Marx died in misery and poverty in 1883 without his dream becoming reality. His close friend and co-worker Friedrich Engels lived for another 12 years and still there was no Communist take over. The 20th century arrived and the revolution had yet to come.

Karl Marx left his home country Germany to find peace somewhere else. He came to Paris but later on was expelled from France. Then he came to London where he settled. He was a young man of 29 when the Communist League commissioned him to draw up a manifesto in November 1847 and no one could have realized its profound impact later on. He sought the help of his 27 years old associate Friedrich Engels to draft and edit what came to be known as the Communist Manifesto.

Both these friends were living through the evil effects of the Industrial Revolution. They saw the existing social economic and political system as cruel and grossly unjust. They sincerely believed they could uproot the current system and replace it with something better. Karl Marx sighed over the deplorable working conditions, poor housing and painfully low wages of the growing masses of the industrial workers. He coined two words of latin derivation which have since become very popular, the Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie. Originally the word Proletariat referred to the poor citizens of Roman society, the lowest class. But Karl Marx applied Proletariat on the poor wage earners and the workers. Whereas, Marx called the capitalists Bourgeoisie, a minority dominated by wealthy people, businessmen, enterpreneurs etc. Marx was grieved at the exploitation of the workers, the Proletariat, by the capitalists, the Bourgeoisie. The solution, Marx conceived, was that the workers, the Proletariat needed to take over from the Bourgeoisie factories, the tools, the lands and the capital for themselves. As such Marx wrote in the Communist Manifesto: "The distinguishing feature of Communism is the abolition of the bourgeois property." That was the theory of the Communists summed up in a single sentence. And the means suggested to take over the Bourgeoisies by the Proletariat was use of force and violent attacks to bring out the Communist revolution. This would usher the era of "dictatorship of the proletariat" as Marx used the phrase.

On October 25, 1917 (Julian synonymous with November 7, 1917 Gregorian) the revolution became a reality. Lenin eventually succeeded in taking the reins of Communist Russia into his hands in 1917. Guided by the Communist Manifesto, Lenin sought to create a new type of society - a classless society where everybody would be equal. But the envisioned classless society soon came into conflict with the reality of running the affairs of a government by untrained people. Lenin then encountered difficulty to put into operation the guide lines of the Communist Manifesto. Putting into practice the Communist Manifesto, Lenin wanted to run Communist Russia without a secret police, no cumbersome state machinery and no large standing army. However in reality, when Lenin died on January 21, 1924, secret police, a professional army and an oppressive bureaucracy were all in operation. In simple words the theory of the Communist Manifesto could not be translated into practice and reality by the first Director of Soviet Russia.

Then against the wishes of the deceased Lenin, Soviet Russia had a tyrant dictator Joseph Stalin until 1953. Instead of creating a classless

society, the dictator Stalin and those around him terrorized the Communist nation. After Stalin, other dictators kept the same anti-religious attitude, filled the Communist society with many ills and kept strict secrecy behind the iron curtain of Russia. Nevertheless, since March 1985, a new leader Mikhail Gorbachev has taken control of Communist Russia. Mr. Gorbachev has coined a new word 'Glasnost' which means openness. Mr. Gorbachev has sternly denounced Joseph Stalin declaring that the director committed "enormous and unforgivable" crimes and that a campaign to rehabilitate his victims will resume (Newspaper Report). Mr. Gorbachev has promised to alter the Soviet State apparatus and wishes to bring about dramatic changes in the way the Soviet Government would function in relationship to its own people. Gorbachev is talking about peace with America. Gorbachev has recently published a book and says: "There is no place for us to escape the Americans and the Americans have no place to escape from us. Therefore we need to seek improvement of relations." It appears as if Gorbachev is visualizing the catastrophic danger lurking on the horizon and wishes to avert it. But there is mockery in the actions of Mr. Gorbachev. In his book he writes about his efforts to streamline and modernize the Soviet economy based on a more humane approach to Government. And the reforms require the country to work for a congenial world atmosphere in which the changes can take place. But recently his protegee Boris Yeltsin, whom Gorbachev had brought to power two years ago was stripped of his party post. Yeltsin simply said that the Soviet Union is far from the freedom and reform that Gorbachev is talking about. (Newspaper Report)

YAJOOJ—MAJOOJ

The terminology of Yajooj or Gog and Majooj or Magog has variously been used for two super powers in the latter days of the time of the Promised Messiah. The two super blocks will come into catastrophic conflict with each other. The destruction will result in turning people to God and the seeking of peace will pave the way for the ultimate victory of Islam. Through the efforts of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, the Kingdom of God will be established on earth. Russia is identified as Yajooj or Gog; and America with allies is identified as Majooj or Magog. (Roohani Khazain, Vol. 3, pp. 369-373) Yajooj and Majooj are reckoned to be the offspring of Japheth son of Noah. (Kanzulammal, Vol. 6; 129)

The root of Yajooj, Majooj, is the word Ajeej or Aji, which means fire. That is these two nations would employ and play with fire, firearms, and other powerful fiery weapons, which on coming

into conflict, will bring awful destruction in the world. These destructive powerful nations causing havoc will perish themselves encountering each other. This will bring the quest for peace and the victory of Islam over all other religions of the world.

Both Yajooj, Majooj or Gog, Magog, the two super powers symbolize the enemies of establishing the Kingdom of God. It was prophesied 2587 years ago that then Rus, an insignificant territory on the world map, would one day in the distant future, emerge as a powerful anti-religious nation. It was also predicted at the same time that a nation, U.S.A., which had yet to be born, would also rise to become another powerful nation. This was to happen during the latter days of the age of the second advent of Jesus Christ. It was predicted that the catastrophic conflict of the two super powers would result in the saved people glorifying God and accepting Islam as the religion chosen by God.

The Muslim tradition says that both Yajooj and Majooj, the super powers, will shoot their arrows against heaven. Then God will send worms into their nostrils, necks or ears, which will kill them to the last man in one night so that the smell of their corpses would fill the earth. (Muslim; Ibn-i-Majah)

It is also related that in the latter days of the time of the Promised Messiah, the nations that are Yajooj and Majooj (Gog, Magog) will come over the mountains, sail over the seas and spread into the plains to dominate the whole world. It is also said that Gog and Magog (Yajooj, Majooj) will make great strides in material progress. They will acquire great wealth and gain prosperity. Then they will become involved in an armed conflict with each other. They will pour down fire over each other from the sky. In this way they will become the means and instrument of one another's destruction.

The Encyclopaedia Britanica, however, records another legend. An independent legend of Gog and Magog surrounds two colossal wooden effigies in the Guildhall, London. They are thought to represent survivors of a race of giants destroyed by Brutus the Trojan, the legendary founder of London, and brought there to act as porters at the gate of the royal palace. Effigies of Gog and Magog have existed in London from the time of Henry V. The first figures were destroyed in the Great Fire 1666 and replaced in 1708. The second pair was destroyed in an air raid in 1940 and again replaced in 1953. (Encyclopaedia Britanica, Vol. 5; p. 330)

FULFILMENT OF PROPHECIES

Divine prophecies are fulfilled at an appropriate time but need the patience as well as the understanding of the believers and faithful.

The Holy Quran says:

“ Say ‘I have warned you all alike and I know not whether that which you are promised is near or far; (21:110)

Foot Note:

“God is not bound by days and hours for the fulfilment of His promises. He knows best if and when a certain prophecy is to be fulfilled. (F.N. 1927; English Commentary)

As the history of religion shows, some prophecies are fulfilled not during the time of the Prophets but at the hands of their followers. For example, the Holy Prophet of Islam was shown in a vision that the keys of the treasures of the Roman and Persian Empires had been put into his hands. But actually they came into the hands of his followers during the period of Hazrat Umar. Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad writes in his book ‘Communism and Islam’:

“The prophecies concerning Communism clearly contain a warning that Communism will spread over a large part of this earth. But there are also prophecies which foretell that in the end Communism would be defeated and destroyed and that mankind would be rescued and saved from this grave calamity. It also appears that certain sections of the Muslim people would be involved and would suffer great hardship and misery in their struggle against Communism. But with divine help they will overcome it. Thus, while the spread of Communism is one part of the divine decree, the other part of the same decree is that it will ultimately suffer defeat and destruction.

Divine decrees are of two kinds:- (a) Those that operate and fulfil themselves entirely through heavenly means. Nothing can divert the course of such decrees. (b) Those the operation of which is governed by the operation of the ordinary divine laws. These are subject to the action and reaction of the whole body of divine laws. People fall ill or become involved in distress and trouble of various kinds. This happens in consequence of the operation of certain divine laws or divine decrees. But we are enjoined to fight sickness and combat

misfortunes and distress; and health and prosperity are regained also through the operation of divine laws or through divine decrees. On one occasion when the Caliph Omar was in Syria, plague broke out in that part of the country in epidemic form. He discontinued his tour and decided to return to Medina. Abu Ubaida, the Muslim general in command in Syria, told the Caliph that in leaving Syria, he was fleeing from a decree of God. Hazrat Omar replied that he was fleeing from one decree of God to another decree of God, meaning that if an epidemic breaks out at one place, divine decree requires that the place should be evacuated. In this way Omar brought home to Abu Ubaida the supreme truth that divine decrees act and react upon one another. So, while we have been warned that Communism will gather great strength during a period, it is incumbent upon us as Muslims to whole-heartedly support other anti-Communist powers and people in their struggle against this danger that threatens the whole of mankind.

Sometimes it is a mistake to assume that a divine prophecy must always be fulfilled in accordance with its apparent tenor. Sometimes the fulfilment of a prophecy is conditional. If those who believe in them are not fully prepared for the fulfilment, half hearted, lack the necessary spirit, and not ready for the required sacrifice then the fulfilment of the prophecy may be postponed or take a different form. Every prophecy is certainly fulfilled but the manner of its fulfilment depends upon the degree of sincerity and sacrifice of those who are to benefit from the fulfilment. For example, God had promised Moses that He would bestow the land of Canaan upon him and his people. But the Israelites became disobedient and refused to make necessary sacrifices after they had been brought out by Moses from the land of captivity. So the promise of the fulfilment of the prophecy was deferred by God. Moses and his followers continued to wander in the wilderness and were denied even the sight of Canaan during the lifetime of Moses. At the time of his demise, Moses asked that at least his face be turned towards the direction of Canaan so that he might look towards the promised land. The followers of Moses then wandered and dwelt in the desert for forty years that God's promise made to Moses was duly fulfilled."

What is Islam?

Islam literally means *Peace, surrender of one's Will*; and to be in amity and concord. The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God. The Quran — the Holy Book of the Muslims — interprets it to be the religion whose teachings are in consonance with human nature. Islam, as the Quran has stated (5:4), is the completion of the religion inaugurated by God in the beginning of the world, on His sending the Quran through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). As a child is taught his alphabet, so God taught the religion to the world gradually and little by little, by sending His prophets at different times and to different peoples.

When the world reached that stage of understanding when it was ready for the final lesson, He sent the last and complete Book through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). This Book not only corrects the errors which had found their way into various religions, but preaches the truths which have not been preached before, on account of special circumstances of the society or the early stage of its development. At the same time it gathers together in itself the truths which were contained in any Divine revelation granted to any people for the guidance of men (The Quran 98:4). Lastly, it meets all the spiritual and moral requirements of an ever advancing humanity.

This is Islam which is wrongly called Muhammadanism.

According to Islam, the object of man's life is its complete unfoldment. Islam does not support the idea that man is born in sin. It teaches that everyone has within him the seed of perfect development and it rests solely with a person himself to make or mar his fortune. *We created man in the best make* says the Holy Quran (95:5).

The cardinal doctrine of Islam is the Unity of Godhead. *There is none worthy of worship but the one and only God, and Muhammad is His Prophet.* He is free from all defects, Holy and Transcendent. He is All Good, All Mercy and All Power. He has no partner. He neither begets nor is He begotten, because these are the traits of frail and weak humanity. Furthermore, Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God and to realise Him during our earthly life as our Helper in all our affairs and undertakings. This Unity of God is the first and foremost pillar of Islam and every other belief hangs upon it.

Islam requires belief in all the prophets, including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius and Zoroaster. We regard them all (and many more not mentioned here) as heavenly teachers born to reform and regenerate man and lead him to God. Adherents of some other religions may consider it an act of piety to use disrespectful words and heap abuse on the prophets of other religions, but if a Muslim were to show the slightest disrespect towards the founder of any other faith, he does so at the cost of his own faith. He has to utter the respectful benediction *Alaihis-Salam* (peace be on him) after mentioning the name of every prophet. Thus Islam establishes peace between all religions.

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