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# Editorial

The beauty of the Holy Qur'an was captured, laconically, by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> in one of his numerous addresses:

*The Holy Qur'an is a miracle, the like of which never was and never will be. The age of its blessings and bounties is everlasting.*

*(Malfoozat Vol. 3, p. 57)*

So dynamic is the Holy Qur'an that it has always been found to keep ahead of the world and never to lag behind it. It yields new truths and fresh guidance at every age, ours being no exception. It is no hyperbole to maintain that all research into the past and every discovery, every invention, every major event of the future cannot but affirm the truth of the Holy Qur'an.

This is because the Holy Qur'an is replete with prophecies relating to the future and

most of these have found remarkable fulfilment, especially in our age. Prophecies relating to the invention of new and better means of transport, the birth of the Suez and Panama Canals, the World Wars, the discovery of the Americas, the unearthing of new minerals, archaeology, the rights of women, the invention of the modern press, proliferation of industry, ecological and environmental changes, the decline of Islam and the advent of the Promised Messiah to rejuvenate it, are all but a few examples of those witnessed by the world, as was stated in the Holy Qur'an some fourteen centuries ago.

Among Qur'anic prophecies relating to events and inventions of our age is one relating to the impending danger of a nuclear holocaust. We read in *Surah Al-Humazah*:

*Nay, he shall surely be cast into the 'Hutamah'. And what should make thee know what the 'Hutamah' is? It is Allah's kindled fire which will leap at*

*hearts. It will be enclosed against them in extended columns.*

(Ch. 104: vs. 5-10)

In explaining the word 'hotamah' which literally means the smallest insignificant particle or "atom" in other words, the Holy Qur'an speaks of a blazing fire locked up in outstretched pillars. No fire known to man can be described as such other than that of a nuclear bomb.

The splendour of this prophecy lies not only in its fulfilment but also in the way it is disguised such that to the people of earlier generations it did not seem extraordinary. They, it is fair to assume, must have relegated it to events pertaining to the life to come. But in this nuclear age, no one can regard this prophecy as vain babble for history has proven otherwise.

It is a truly glorious prophecy even if it augurs not so well for the world. But with the current tensions in the Middle East

severely threatening an already fragile international relations, this month's feature is a timely reminder of the impending catastrophe if the world does not repent and turn to Allah, the Lord of mankind, Gracious, Merciful, the Source of Peace, the Bestower of Security.

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

# Notes & Comments

## The Message of Ahmadiyyat

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded on 23rd March 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian India (1835-1908) who claimed that he had been commissioned by God Almighty as the Reformer of the Age. He said:

‘Perceiving the conditions prevailing in the present times and finding the earth filled with various types of impiety like disobedience, sinfulness and straying away from the right path, God Almighty commissioned me for preaching the truth and reforming mankind...’

‘The thirteenth century Hijrah had ended and the fourteenth century was about to begin. So in fulfilment of the command of God, I started to announce among people through

published notices and public speeches that the man who was to come at the beginning of this century for reviving the faith is myself. I have come to re-establish belief in God, a belief which is not completely extinct. I have come to draw mankind towards purity, righteousness and truthfulness and to remove their errors in their doctrine and practice. This work I will accomplish by the power and strength granted to me by God Almighty Himself.’

‘When some years had elapsed on this campaign, God Almighty revealed it to me that I am both the Messiah and Mahdi who were to come in this Ummah (followers of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>). The Mahdi was to appear at the time of the decadence of Islam and the prevalence of

irreligion in the world. He was to receive guidance directly from God Almighty and to spread afresh the heavenly table before the people. Tidings about his coming had been given to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> 1300 years ago.'

*(Tadhkiratush Shahadatin)*

On 23rd March 1889 several companions undertook the covenant of Bai'at and pledged allegiance at the Promised Messiah's hands. The object of Bai'at was explained by him in his notice issued in 1891:

'Let all of them know who have performed Bai'at on my hands and sincerely entered my fold that the object of Bai'at is to check one's love of this world and to strengthen his love of the Merciful God and the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> instead. Its purpose is to induce in the entrant a sense of belonging to God that the journey to the next world may not appear to him unpleasant. This attitude can be engen-

dered by keeping company with the virtuous and seeking the attainment of spiritual truths. In this way, if God so desires, He may let the new entrant behold some big sign of His Majesty and Power and so remove his lethargy, laziness and indifference in the quest of God. Thus equipped with certainty of faith, he may step forward in his goal of realisation of God more fervently and vigorously.'

*(Asmani Faisala)*

The Promised Messiah was also given the glad tidings that his message would spread to the corners of the world. Despite the best efforts of the opponents of Ahmadiyyat, whether individuals, groups or states, they have not been able to stop the message reaching out to all parts of the world. Ahmadis have been prevented from preaching their message. They have suffered religious persecution. Yet they remained steadfast and persevered so much so that today the

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the most dynamic community in the world. Its growth has been phenomenal, its message is potent and its achievements are unassailable.

On 23rd February 2003, the Bishop of Bradford, UK, recalled that while travelling through Pakistan, he had passed by a place called Rabwah and was told about Ahmadis and the persecution that this minority group endured. He observed that everyone has been a minority at some stage in life and he urged communities that subsequently become majorities not to forget their insignificant status when they were a minority.

Well, it can be said with confidence about the Ahmadis so far that their growth has not filled them with arrogance or pride but humility and utter gratitude to the Almighty God. They are glad that their expansion has been for the mutual benefit of mankind.

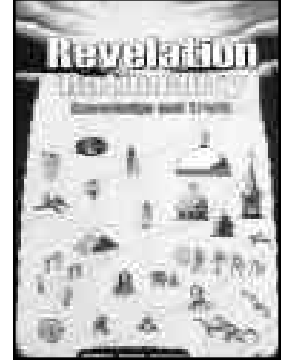
They are happier that the message conveyed to them by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has drawn them nearer to God and that they are not blinded by material pursuits. They are pleased to share this message with their fellow human beings and hope that someone somewhere would listen to them.

**Mansoor Shah**

### **Review of Religions in Urdu (Historical note)**

In response to a number of readers asking us about the history of the *Review of Religions* in Urdu, Maulana Dost Muhammad Shahid Sahib has clarified that till 1913, Maulvi Muhammad Ali served as its editor. Later editors were: Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib, Hadhrat Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad, Hadhrat Maulvi Muhammad Din Sahib, Hadhrat Qadhi Muhammad Zahuruddin Akmal, Nazir Ahmad from Africa, Nuruddin Sahib BA, Hadhrat Bhai Abdul Rahman Sahib Qadiani, Maulvi Ali Muhammad Sahib Ajmeri, Malik Muhammad Abdullah Sahib, Malik Ghulam Farid Sahib, Sufi Abdul Qadeer Sahib Niaz, Ch. Ali Muhammad Sahib BA BT, Rahmatullah Khan Shakir. The Urdu edition ceased in September 1947.

# Nuclear Holocaust



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

Among the Qur'anic philosophies relating to events and inventions of our age, there are some which are of outstanding importance and great global significance. One such prophecy relates to the impending danger of a nuclear holocaust.

This prophecy was made at a time when man could not entertain the idea of an atomic explosion by any stretch of his imagination. But as we will presently illustrate, there are certain verses of the Holy Qur'an which clearly speak of tiny insignificant particles which are described as storehouses of immense energy, as though the fire of hell was locked within them. Amazing as it may seem, this is exactly what is literally described in the following verses.

وَبَلِّغْ لِكُلِّ هُمْزٍ لَعْنَتَهُ ۖ إِلَيْهِ جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ ۚ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ  
مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ ۚ كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ۗ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا  
الْحُطَمَةُ ۚ نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْجِدَةُ ۚ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ ۚ إِنَّهَا  
عَلَيْهِمْ مُؤَصَّدَةٌ ۚ فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ

*Woe to every backbiter, slanderer,  
Who amasses wealth and counts it over and over.  
He imagines that his wealth will make him immortal.  
Nay! he shall surely be cast into the 'hotamah'.*

*And what should make thee know what the 'hotamah' is?  
Allah's fire as preserved fuel,  
Which will leap suddenly on to the hearts.  
It is locked up in outstretched pillars to be used against them.<sup>1</sup>  
(Ch.104; Vs.2-10)*

This short Qur'anic Chapter is densely packed with astounding statements which lie far beyond the reach of the people of that age. Strange is it not, to read that the sinful people of a certain description would be cast into the *hotamah*, which means the tiniest of particles, such as we see floating in a beam of light which passes through a poorly lit room.

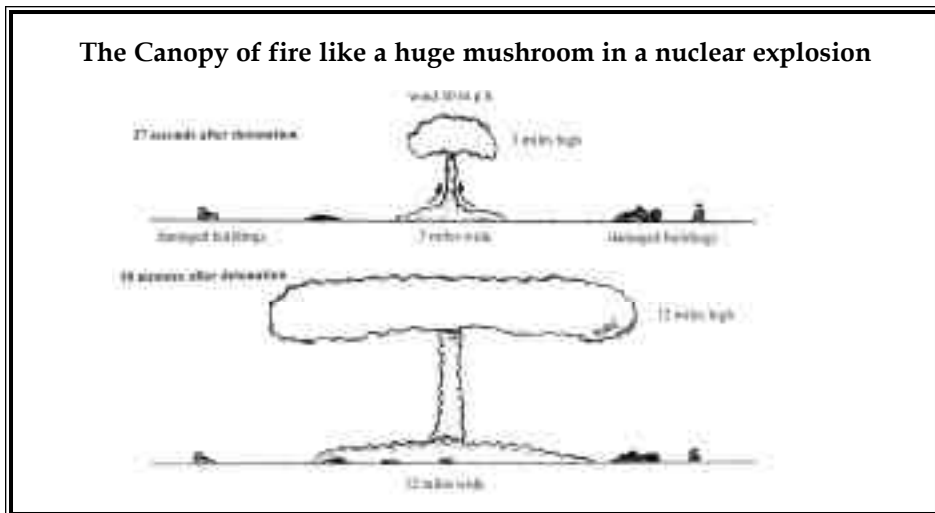
Authentic Arabic lexicons describe *hotamah* as possessing two root meanings; first *hatamah*, which means 'to pound' or 'pulverize into extremely small particles', and the second *hitmah*, which means 'the smallest insignificant particle'. Thus *hitmah* is the result obtained by breaking something down to its smallest constituents.

The two meanings just mentioned can rightfully be applied to any extremely minute particle which has reached the limits of its divisible potential. As the concept of the atom had not been born fourteen hundred years ago, the nearest substitute to it could only be *hotamah* which also sounds intriguingly close to atom. One hardly recovers from the shock of the claim that a time would come when man would be cast in the *hotamah* when another claim, even more bizarre, comes in its wake.

Explaining the word *hotamah*, the Holy Qur'an speaks of a blazing fire built within it and confined in extended columns. It goes on to declare that when man will be cast into it, this fire will directly leap upon his heart as though no intervening rib cage existed. This can only mean that this fire would be of a completely different nature which could directly kill the heart before it could scorch the



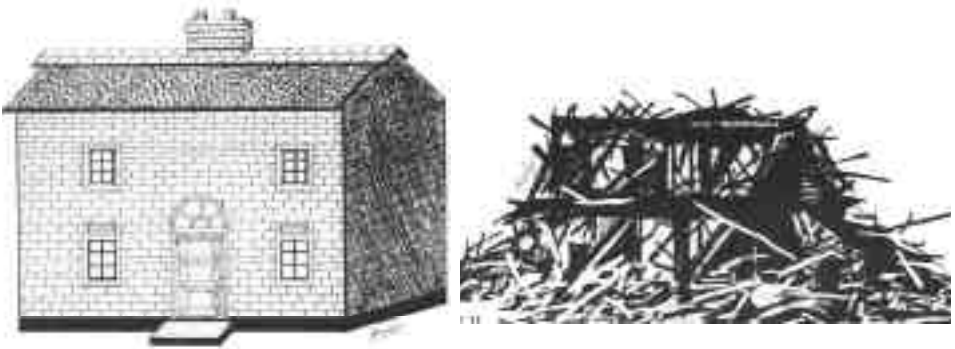
body. Certainly no fire known to man of that age could be described as such.



These however are not the only elements of surprise about this description; what follows is even more astonishing. This fire is mentioned as having been locked up in outstretched columns waiting to leap upon man till such time as it is destined to be unleashed.

Wonder upon wonder is heaped in such a short space of a few simple statements. First the declaration that the time would come when man would be cast into the smallest particle, then the description of that smallest particle and what it contains. It contains a type of fire which is kept confined in some tiny vessels which could appear like extended columns.

The casting of man into this minute particle does not mean that a single man will be cast into it. Man is mentioned as a generic name and the casting indicates his subjection to that affliction to which he will be doomed. This has only become conceivable in the contemporary age when man has discovered the secret of the



**The wreck of a concrete building in Hiroshima after the explosion**

atoms and the immense stores of energy which they contain. This is the age when the fire contained in the smallest particles leaps out, and engulfs large areas extending to thousands of square miles. Everything that lies within its range is engulfed, man and all. Hence, what seemed so unrealistic fourteen hundred years ago, has become a commonplace reality which even young children can understand.

The most hyperbolic expression of wonder fails to do justice to the greatness of this prophecy. No less wonderful is the fact that the people of that age failed to recognize the import of this short Surah *Al-Humazah*; or it would have leapt upon their beliefs and faith, rather than upon their hearts. How these amazing statements escaped their notice and went unchallenged defies logic. Perhaps they sought refuge in the belief that these verses do not apply to the events of this world, but relate to the mysterious realm of the unknown in the hereafter. Many a commentator simply avoided even an attempt to explain these verses. A few who took up the challenge, unburdened themselves by arbitrarily relegating the contents of these verses to the time of resurrection. Thus, not comprehending their meaning, they tossed them lock, stock and barrel over to the unknown.

Among the Western orientalists, Sale faced the same dilemma of how to translate the word *hotamah* literally. He simply mentioned a large number of people to be thrust into the hotamah without translating *Al-hotamah* at all. This left no danger for the English speaking people to express their incredulance at the impossibility of people being cast into a tiny particle. As they would have no idea what hotamah is, they would be free to imagine a vast ball of burning fire called the *hotamah* (the smallest particle). This strategy of Sale saved him from the embarrassment of this translation. Yet, at the same time, he failed to do justice to this amazing prophecy.

The fire described in this verse, whether it is a conflagration here upon earth or a raging fire in the hereafter, could in no way be pressed into the tiny space of the minutest of particles. But that is not the only dilemma which must have confronted Sale and other earlier commentators. What about the fire which is packed into tiny extended columns, a scenario altogether impossible to conceive until the dawn of the atomic era? Now the jigsaw puzzle appears to be finally resolved, with every piece settling into its right place.

Unless one is familiar with the scientific description of how an atomic explosion takes place and what changes are brought about within the nuclear mass, one cannot fully comprehend the meaning of the Qur'anic expression of 'extended columns'. Nuclear experts describe the state of a critical mass which is about to explode, as something elongating and pulsating with the immense pressure built within it. This pressure is caused by the elongation of the nuclei before they burst and in that process an element of high atomic weight is split into two elements of lesser atomic weight. The sum total of the atomic weight of the newly formed elements is less than the atomic weight of the original parent element, normally referred to as a heavy metal. The small portion of the atomic weight which is lost in this process is turned into energy. This is not the only model of a nuclear bomb but we

have chosen this simple one to describe the process of the extended columns.

Turning to the issue of how this fire could leap directly upon the hearts, the scientific description is given below:

At the instant of explosion, large quantities of gamma rays, neutrons and x-rays are immediately released. The x-rays raise the temperature immediately to meteoric heights creating a great ball of fire rising rapidly, riding the extremely hot atomic blast. This is the canopy of fire like a huge mushroom which is seen from far and wide.

The x-rays also travel sideways in all directions along with the neutrons, causing immense heat which burns everything in its way. The speed at which this heat front moves is many times the speed of sound which also creates shockwaves. But much faster and more penetrating than this are the gamma rays which outpace the heat front by leaping forward at the speed of light. They are so immensely vibrant that by the sheer force of their vibration they strike the hearts dead. So death is not caused by the intense heat generated by x-rays, it is the tremendous energy of the gamma rays which inflicts instantaneous death. This is exactly how the Holy Qur'an describes it.

Again in Surah *Al-Dukhan* (The Smoke), the Qur'an describes a lethal cloud which comprises a deadly radiant smoke:

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ \* يُغشى النَّاسَ هَذَا  
عَذَابَ النَّارِ

*Then watch for the day when the sky will bring forth a manifest smoke,*

*That will cast a shadow upon people. This will be a painful suffering.<sup>2</sup>*

(Ch.44: Vs.11-12)

The nature of this cloud is further qualified by the following verses:

انظفِقُوا اِلَىٰ مَا كُنتُمْ بِهٖ تُكذِبُوْنَ ۗ اِظْلِقُوا اِلَىٰ ظِلِّ دِي  
 ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ ۗ لَا ظِلِّلْ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ النَّهَبِ ۗ اِنَّهَا تَرْمِي  
 بِشَرِّرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ ۗ كَاَنَّهُ جِبَلٌ صُفْرٌ

*'Now move towards what you have been denying, '  
 Move on towards a three-pronged shadow, '  
 Neither affording shade, nor protecting from the blaze.'  
 It throws up flames like huge castles,  
 As though the castles were dusky yellow camels.<sup>3</sup>*

The words 'move towards' indicate that mankind will be gradually carried into an era where it will confront this calamity of a tormenting cloud which offers no shade or protection. Shadows provide relief and shelter. The clouds stand between us and the blazing heat of the sun. In the above verse no sun is mentioned, just a fire, from whose blaze this shadow affords no protection. Rather, the shadow of this cloud becomes a means of transmitting the torment of the fire which emits it. Nothing under its shade is safe. This clearly is the description of a radioactive cloud. The event being described will throw up huge flames of a dusky yellow appearance, flames that are likened to castles and also have the appearance of camels. Perhaps, here it is not only the likeness to the colour of the camel, but also the shape of its hump which is highlighted.

People of the seventh century would not have been able to

understand the significance of such a deadly cloud or smoke. It would have been beyond their comprehension. However, today we know of atomic explosions and can understand the images of radioactive clouds they produce.

This fateful description is also referred to in another verse of the Qur'an which reads as follows:

وَيَلَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

*Woe on that day unto those who deny.*<sup>4</sup>

'That day'

وَيَلَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ

can refer to the day of judgement, but it also refers to a time here on earth, when those who refuse to believe in the signs

لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

will be tormented by a smoke that casts a deadly shadow over whatever lies beneath. It will be a shadow which will move on, from land to land, bringing no relief, but only a shade full of agony. That will be the age when having witnessed this Divine punishment of colossal dimensions, man would at last turn to God beseeching His favour to rescue him from this unbearable chastisement. But when the wrath of Allah overtakes people, the time for forgiveness and deliverance is already over. Thus the Holy Qur'an explains:

أَتَىٰ لَهُمُ الذِّكْرَىٰ وَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ۖ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ  
وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَّحْنُونٌ

*How shall a message be effectual for them, since a messenger has already come to them, explaining things clearly?  
Yet they turn away from him, saying, 'He is tutored, a man possessed.'*<sup>5</sup> (Ch.44:Vs.14-15)

Prophetic warnings are only delivered to awaken man to the danger of calamities which are but the consequence of his own folly. The prophecies mentioned above clearly relate to our age. They speak of events which were completely unknown to the people of earlier ages. One wonders if the full implications of all such prophecies were revealed by God to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> in every detail. But the clarity with which he describes future events leaves a strong impression as if he were beholding them like a prophetic puppet show being staged in the hall of destiny. Yet mankind had to wait for more than a thousand years before these prophecies would begin to be realised. Hence, the real transfer of these events from the realm of the unseen to that of the seen, could only become possible in the nuclear age.

The enormity of the atomic catastrophe is horrendous, yet little attention is paid by man to investigate and identify the underlying roots of this evil. The sight of man seldom penetrates beyond the surfaces he scans. Few among them can introspect themselves to discover the hidden face of their evil intentions. This is a sort of blindness which is specifically related to the crookedness in man. Whenever he himself is responsible for causing suffering and spreading evil around him, he will not identify his own hand behind them.

Such is the chain of catastrophes of global impact we are examining. A scientist explains the underlying phenomenon of nuclear explosions only to the extent of material and physical causes. But when such enormously destructive devices are employed to play havoc with the peace of man, it is not the scientists who created

them who should be blamed. The root cause lies elsewhere. It is the great world powers which are invariably responsible for such cruel and senseless decisions of global magnitude. Yet despite their greatness they are no more than mere pawns in the hands of the utterly selfish collective will of the masses.

The Holy Qur'an, though speaking of scientific events with great precision, does not assume the role of a mere scientific instructor. Rather it is the immoral causes of distorted human behaviour to which it draws our attention. It explains the phenomenon of a trigger indeed, but focuses our attention not on the trigger but upon the finger that pulls it. This is the purpose of Qur'anic warnings. As such, it repeatedly pronounces that for all the ugliness done to man, it is man himself who is to blame. Thus the preventive measures, according to the Qur'an, relate to the reformation of human character. It states that if people change their conduct and reform themselves in accordance with Divine guidance, this would create the healthy climate necessary for the survival of justice and fair play.

The lighthouse of the Qur'anic prophecies clearly shows what rocks to avoid and what channels to follow. Yet how unlikely it is for those who command the ship of human affairs to heed the warning and steer the ship across the impending hazards to the safe haven of peace. It is herein that the ultimate cause of disaster lies. Without a critical and realistic analysis of human behaviour at every level of its activity, no sound workable solution can be conceived of problems which confront man today. In simplest terms, it lies in the rehabilitation of basic human values such as truth, honesty, integrity, justice, fair play, concern for others, sensibility to the sufferings of people even when they are unrelated, and an overall commitment to goodness. Remove them as factors from human relationships and wait for the catastrophe to overtake you. It is the only logical conclusion.



Surah *Al-Qamar* (Chapter 54), explains this with reference to the history of earlier peoples who did not take heed of the warnings delivered to them by the Divine messengers of their time. As a consequence they, one and all, witnessed the tragic end that was promised to them, and their belated repentance was of no avail. The only purpose served by the warning is for the future generations to take heed. The Holy Qur'an thus points its finger at their tragedy so that the generations to follow may learn the art of life from the death of those who preceded them.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْآلَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُرْدَحِرٌ \* حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ  
الذُّرُّ

*And there has already come to them the great news wherein is a warning –*

*Consummate wisdom; but the warnings profit them not.*

(Ch.54: Vs.5-6)

If a people do not draw their lesson, then it is only they who are to be blamed for the disastrous consequences which await them. The atomic holocaust to which we refer is also discussed in Surah *Ta Ha* (Chapter 20) in relation to its ultimate consequences. By implication, the verse also makes it clear that it would be the pride and arrogance of the great world powers of the time which will be broken, mankind as such will not be wiped out.

The relevant verse clearly predicts that this will not be a point of termination for mankind as such. It will be only the might of the arrogant political powers that will be shattered and laid low. From their graves will rise the new world order. The mountain-like superpowers will be pulverized and levelled as though into a vast expanse of sand. You will not detect any highs or lows, or aboves and belows in their contour.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا \* فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا  
 صَفْصَفًا \* لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا \* يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ  
 لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا \*

*And they ask thee concerning the mountains. Say, 'My Lord will break them into pieces and scatter them as dust.*

*'And He will leave them as a barren, level plain,*

*'Wherein thou wilt see no depression, or elevation.'*

*On that day they will follow the Caller straight, there being no deviation therefrom; and all voices shall be hushed before the Gracious God and thou shalt not hear but a subdued sound of footsteps.<sup>7</sup>*

(Ch.20: Vs.106-109)

It will be God, the Perfect Leveller, Whose hand will bring about this amazing transformation. The mountains are mere figures of speech, indicating powerful states, nations and people. The Qur'an predicts that once their pride is shattered and they are finally humbled and straightened, only then will they be fit to respond to the humblest of callers unto God, who has no crookedness about him. Such destruction as described could only result from a holocaust of the magnitude of hundreds of nuclear explosions, which implies that man will not learn his lesson and the head of his arrogance will have to be bent by the sheer weight of this enormity. Along with this grim message of warning there is also a glorious message of hope that mankind will ultimately survive and be ushered into a new era of light. Man will learn to mend his ways – if not before, at least after tasting some of the fruits of his follies and defiance to God.

In another Surah, the Qur'an speaks of cardinal geographic and climatic changes of such horrendous nature as would render the

face of many tracts of land, countries and continents entirely desolate. This perhaps is related to the aftermath of the holocaust we have just discussed. Before that, the same lands were counted among the most scenic and beautiful parts of the world, uniquely rich in dazzling beauty. How we wish that of all the Qur'anic prophecies, this one at least will not have to be realised. This wish is certainly not a sign of disrespect to the prophetic Qur'anic warnings. It only springs from our unshakeable faith in the all-embracing graciousness of God – the All-Merciful, the All-Beneficent. All warnings, however categorical they may sound, are conditional to the response of man. The example of the people of Jonah<sup>(as)</sup>, who were spared the destined wrath of God after they turned to Him with profound repentance, kindles the flame of hope for us today. Despite the fact that there is no genuine justification for optimism in view of the consistent decline in human moral values, it is the only hope after all to which one may cling. The rest is a fearsome night of utter despair. But the cure for their deep-seated maladies no longer lies in the hands of godless messiahs. It lies in the hands of God alone – but only if our hands are raised in prayer before Him. Perhaps we are talking a language hard for contemporary man to understand. It runs counter to what his ears are attuned to hear. Allah knows best!

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## REFERENCES

1. Translation of Ch.104: Vs.2-10 by the author.
2. Translation of Ch.44:Vs.11-12 by the author.
3. Translation of Ch.77:Vs.30-34 by the author.
4. Translation of Ch.77:V.16 by the author.
5. Translation of Ch.44:Vs.14-15 by the author.
6. Translation of Ch.54: Vs.5-6 by Maulawi Sher Ali.
7. Translation of Ch.20:Vs.106-109 by Maulawi Sher Ali.

## Reformation - III

Presented below, in translation, is the third part of the address delivered on 26 December 1903 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. The Urdu text of the speech is taken from *Malfoozat*, Volume 6, pp.245-9. *Malfoozat* is the title of the ten volumes that contain the collection of discourses, speeches and addresses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. (Part I of the translation of this address was published in the October 2002 edition of *The Review of Religions* and Part II appeared in the December 2002 issue).



The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>.

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

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

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

Translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad

*(Continuation)*

Attainment of complete satisfaction and peace requires complete and total belief in God. Hence, the first obligation of our Community is to attain a true belief in God Almighty.

Remember that for reformation of the self, mere sug-

gestions and schemes cannot by themselves achieve anything. He who relies purely on his own plan of action is unsuccessful and fails because he considers his own effort to be 'god'. Consequently, such people are deprived of the grace and blessing that kills their 'capacity' to commit sin and grants them the strength to protect themselves against evil and to fight evil. This is so because it comes from God Almighty Who is not a slave to schemes and plans. God has Himself provided an illustration of the failure of human schemes and plans. God had commanded the Jews not to interpolate or distort the Torah. They were given firm instructions to protect and safeguard the Torah yet the unfortunate Jews made changes. Against this, the Muslims were told:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ  
وَأَنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

*Verily, We Ourselves have sent*

*down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian.*

(Ch.15: v.10)

God states: 'We have made the Qur'an to descend and We shall safeguard it'. Hence, you can see how perfectly the Qur'an has been preserved and safeguarded - not a single word or a jot has been altered or even changed around and no one has been able to distort it in any way. It is evident from this that the work that is in God's Hands is greatly blessed and that which is in the hands of people alone cannot be so blessed. What is clear from this is that unless a plan of action is accompanied by God's grace, nothing can be achieved. Hence, it is a false notion to imagine that one can achieve purification of the self merely through one's own effort. This does not, however, mean that one should not make any effort at all or that one should not strive [in the path of God]. On the contrary, effort and striving is necessary and is, indeed, a duty. God's grace does not

allow hard work and true effort to go to waste. Hence, one should not abandon plans of action and effort required for reformation of the self but such plans should not be of the kind that are contrived by a person himself, rather only such schemes and plans should be adopted that have been described [in the Holy Qur'an] by God Himself and that have been adopted and practised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam. Follow in the steps of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and implore God for help through prayer. You are stuck deep in the mire of impurity but without God's grace you cannot reach the clean spring that would lead to purification – you cannot achieve this through your own efforts alone.

There are many who abandon God and rely upon their own schemes but, even though they take every care and precaution, they become entangled in the trials [they have to go through] and cannot move forward. This happens because God's bless-

ing is not with them and they do not receive guidance from God. He who abandons God yet declares that reformation of the self can be achieved through one's own ideas and plans is false.

One path of self-reformation that has been described by God [in the Holy Qur'an] is this:

وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

*Be with the truthful*  
(Ch.9:v.119)

That is to say, keep the company of those who are steadfast upon the path of truth and manifest this through their words, their actions and their deeds.

Preceding this verse comes the statement:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

*O ye who believe! Fear Allah*  
(Ch.9:v.119)

That is, believers should fear Allah and adopt the way of righteousness. Implied here is the teaching that first there should be faith and thereafter should follow the additional step of abandoning the place of evil and joining the company of the truthful. The company one keeps has a great influence that gradually affects the inner self. For example, if a person daily frequents the abode of prostitutes and [when reproached, declares his innocence by the rhetorical question] 'Do I commit adultery?' One should answer such a question by saying that, 'Yes, you will do so', and such a person, one day, will commit such an abomination because the company one keeps has an effect. Similarly, he who frequents the drinking house will one day indulge in drinking, no matter how much he protests earlier that he abstains from drink. Hence, this fact should never be ignored that the company of others is a factor of great influence. It is for this reason that God has commanded that

one should keep the company of pious and truthful people in order to achieve reformation of the self.

The company of good people will leave its mark on a person who joins them even if he does so with animosity and opposition in his heart. Regular attendance in good company will eventually lead him to abandon his opposition. It is regrettable that those who oppose me have deprived themselves of the opportunity of joining our company. Had they spent some time with me and heard my arguments, a time would have come when God may have guided them against their mistaken views and they would have found the truth. However, as they have deprived themselves of my company and lost the opportunity of hearing my arguments, they now persist in their falsehoods. At times they accuse me of (God forbid) being an atheist and at times they refer to me as a drunkard and an adulterer. They think nothing of falsely accusing me

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**'...IN THE COMPANY OF THE TRUTHFUL, NOT ONLY DOES ONE LEARN TRUTHFULNESS BUT ONE ALSO BENEFITS FROM THE INFLUENCE OF THE GOOD COMPANY THAT IS GRADUALLY INTERNALISED, LEADING TO TRUE KNOWLEDGE..... MOREOVER, COMPANY OF THE DIVINELY GUIDED PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY OF WITNESSING SIGNS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD THAT STRENGTHEN ONE'S BELIEF [IN GOD].'**

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of (God forbid) insulting the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of God. Why do they do so? They do so because they stay away from [our] company and depriving oneself of the company [of the one who has been appointed by God] is in itself being under the wrath of God.

It is stated that at the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiya, when the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> camped at Hudaibiya, one of the blessings was that it presented many people with the opportunity of observing the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> at close quarters. Having heard for themselves what he had to say, hundreds joined the fold of Islam. Until they themselves had heard the words of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, there existed

between them and the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> a barrier that was depriving these people from seeing the dazzling beauty of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Consequently, when his enemies referred to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> as (God forbid) 'Kazzab' (a liar), these people followed and repeated the abuse which, in turn, distanced them from the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, depriving them of the grace and blessings brought by the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. However, when the barrier was lifted and people were able to see him and hear him for themselves, they no longer remained deprived - they entered the fold of those who are blessed with good fortune.



The misfortune of many people at the present time is caused by the same factor. If they are asked how much they have understood our claims and arguments, they only repeat the phrases that they have heard from others – a few false objections and a few false accusations. They believe what they hear from our opponents to be true and do not try to understand. They do not as much as make an effort to investigate further by coming here and seeing for themselves. This leads to the darkening of their hearts and they are unable to attain the truth. Had they acted with righteousness, they would have known it was no sin to be in my company from time to time and to listen to what I have to say. After all they meet with Hindus and Christians and listen to their arguments – they even attend some of their meetings. What then was the reason that kept them from coming to me and on what basis did they abstain? This, in short, is a grave misfortune and a person suffers deprivation as a result.

It is for this reason that God Almighty has commanded that we should seek the company of the righteous.

This teaching contains a point of deep wisdom that the company one keeps necessarily exerts an influence. Hence, in the company of the truthful, not only does one learn truthfulness but one also benefits from the influence of the good company that is gradually internalised, leading to true knowledge with which one can attain a real understanding of God. Moreover, company of the Divinely guided provides the opportunity of witnessing signs and manifestations of God that strengthen one's belief [in God].

When a person is in the company of a truthful and divinely guided person, truth works within him. However, when he leaves the company of the truthful and adopts the company of misguided and mischievous people, evil begins to work within him.

This is the reason why the traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and the Holy Qur'an, both contain the firm guidance of abstaining from bad company. Furthermore, it is stated that one should leave a gathering where the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> is being abused. Those who do not leave such gatherings will be counted amongst those perpetrating such an offence. By the same token, he who stays in the company of the truthful is counted amongst them. One can see how important it is that one should practice this divine commandment and seek the company of the righteous.

It is stated in a tradition of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> that God Almighty sends down angels in the world to observe the gatherings of the righteous. Upon their return, God asks what they saw. They reply, 'We saw a gathering in which people were remembering You [God Almighty]. There was one person, however, who was present there even though he was not of them.' At this God

Almighty stated that he too will be counted among them. It is evident from this that there is great benefit in keeping the company of the truthful. Unfortunate, indeed, is the person who keeps himself away from good company.

One of the signs of *Nafse Mutmainnah*, the soul at rest, is that it finds peace in the company of those who are themselves at peace [with God]. On the other hand, the person whose soul is [at the lower stage] of *ammarah* will display signs of *Nafse Ammarah*, of the soul that incites to evil. However, the person who keeps the company of those who possess *Nafse Mutmainnah* will soon begin to feel a sense of contentment within.

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**To be continued**

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# The Promised Messiah's<sup>(as)</sup> Love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>

By Bockarie Tommy Kallon, London, UK.

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As Muslims, we believe in all prophets among whatever people they were raised and in whatever country they appeared. But our love and regard for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> is the utmost for he gave up the slightest comfort for our sake. He risked his own life to save us from spiritual death. He grieved for our happiness; he pined for our success. He abased himself so that we should stand high. He planned for our lasting good; he prayed for our eternal welfare. He would let his feet get swollen through standing long in prayer. Sinless though he was, he prayed for the forgiveness of our sins. To save us from the fire of Hell, he would pray till his prayer mat became wet with tears. He wept till his breast heaved like a boiling pot. He drew unto us the mercy of God; he

toiled for His pleasure, again for us. He caused us to be wrapped up in the mantle of His grace and the garment of His compassion. He strove to find for us ways by which we may also please God; means by which we may also achieve communion and union with Him. What the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> did for us to make light our journey to God, no other prophet had done for his people.

It is difficult to find a Muslim who does not claim to love the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and many have been true to this claim. From his holy companions, down through the ages there have been many who have been willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of their love and devotion to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Many have composed panegyrics in his

praise. Yet amongst all these there was a perfect love for, and devotion to, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> which sets him head and shoulders above the rest. This article looks at the truth of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> from the angle of this love and obedience to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Did it seek visible expression and show itself in sacrifice? Did it influence his daily life, his speech, his conduct, his everyday movements? If the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> can be shown to have possessed a love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> unparalleled in the entire, glorious history of Islam; if his every atom of his being, every particle of his body, every faculty of his mind and every inclination of his soul, was consecrated to the service of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, then human reason compels one to conclude that such a man could not be an impostor.

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*After God, I am inebriated with the  
love of Muhammad.*

*If this is infidelity, then by God I  
am a great infidel.<sup>1</sup>*

Nothing better encapsulates the Promised Messiah's love for his Holy Master, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, than these words from one of his couplets. In his love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, he was unparalleled through the annals of history. In his devotion, he was unrivalled. Every fibre of his being, every interest of his life and every thought which dominated his heart was immersed in the love of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. From his many writings and discourses, we will shed some light on this aspect of the Promised Messiah's life. In so doing, we shall relate some accounts narrated by those who were close to him so that, as we journey back in time to those blessed days in Qadian, we may take in our stride the veritable repositories and eye-witness accounts of his character at very close quarters.

At the time of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, there were very many Muslims yet very little

Islam. True Islamic teachings were rarely practised while innovations and encrustations had, through many centuries, adulterated the religion of Islam. Muslim divines of the time paid lip service and verbal homage to the teachings of Islam. While Islam was attacked from all corners, especially from Christians and Arya Samaj propagandists, they were busy imputing *Kufr* (Infidel) to one another. Foul attacks were being made on the life and character of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> yet the leading Muslim divines were fiddling and debating silly questions with regard to rituals. It was the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement alone who was concerned with defending Islam against its enemies. Only he thought of impressing upon Muslims the importance of good works. Only he steered clear of sectarian controversy. He made Islam pure by reforming all corrupted doctrines and investing it with fresh vigour and glory. He went on to initiate a world wide movement to present to the world the true Islamic concept of

God and to establish the truth of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and the truth of Islam. The quality of his love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> should, therefore, unlike that of Muslim divines of the time, not be judged by the loudness of its profession, but by the acts of his devotion.

It is interesting to note that the very name he gave to the Community he founded is in honour of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. His opponents misconstrued this as an act of self-aggrandisement but in truth everything the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> did was coloured in his love for, and devotion to, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. This is how he explained the rationale and wisdom behind the name of the Community:

'The name which is appropriate for this Movement and which we prefer for ourselves is Muslims of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. We have chosen this name because the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> had two names Muhammad and Ahmad. Muhammad was his name of glory and Ahmad his name

of beauty. In the name of Muhammad was implicit a prophecy that the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> would punish with the sword such enemies as would attack Islam with the sword and slaughter hundreds of Muslims. His name Ahmad indicated that he would spread peace and security in the world. God so arranged the life of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> that his Meccan life was a manifestation of his name Ahmad and the Muslims were taught patience and endurance. In his life in Medina, his name Muhammad was manifested, and God in His wisdom decided to chastise his enemies. But there was a prophecy that the name Ahmad would be manifested again in the latter days and that a person would appear through whom the qualities of beauty, which characterised Ahmad, would be manifested, and all fighting would come to an end. For this reason, it has been considered appropriate that the name of this sect should be Ahmadiyya Jama'at, so

that everyone hearing this name should realise that this Jama'at has come into being for the spread of peace and security and that it would have nothing to do with war and fighting.<sup>2</sup>

The mere mention of the name of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, it is related, would cause tears to well up in the eyes of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>. This was attested to, on oath, by none other than one of his sons, Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup>, when he wrote:

'I, the writer of these lines, was born in the home of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and am one of his sons, and this is a blessing of Allah for which I fail to find adequate words of thank. In fact it is true that even in my imagination, I can never conceive that I shall ever be able to render sufficient thanks to God for this great and priceless boon. But I know very well that one of these days I shall have to yield my soul into the Hands of God, and knowing this, and calling upon this

Heavenly Master as a witness, I state that within my knowledge it has never happened that any slight reference was made to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, or only his name mentioned without a film of tear welling up in the eyes of Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>. His whole heart and mind, in fact every fibre of his being, was inebriated with the love of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>'<sup>3</sup>.

The Promised Messiah's love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> was so great that any touching expression of love for the Holy Prophet, by whomsoever, brought a strong desire in his heart that it should have come from him. Hadhrat Maulvi Abdul Karim<sup>(ra)</sup> related that once he went to Masjid Mubarak which adjoined the Promised Messiah's house in Qadian. He found the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> in solitude, with a silent stream of tears flowing from his eyes, reciting the couplet of a poem composed, on the demise of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, by the well-known Islamic poet, Hassan bin Thabit<sup>(ra)</sup>:

*(Thou O Prophet of God),  
Thou wert indeed the pupil of my  
eye  
Now that thou hast died  
My eye hath become blind.  
I care not who dies now.  
For I feared only thy death.*<sup>4</sup>

The narrator of this incident records that he was taken aback by the state of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and in great anxiety enquired what the matter was which had caused him such profound grief. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> replied that he had been reciting this couplet to himself and thought how great would it have been if this fine verse had come from him.

Even a cursory glance at this incident leaves one breathless. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, throughout his life, had to encounter a succession of bitter experiences. He saw every kind of hardship; his life was exposed to every hazard. He bore all kinds of troubles and went through a storm of difficulties. He was condemned as an infidel and an apostate from Islam and experienced unrelenting opposition at the hands of leading

Muslim Divines. He also witnessed the death of many near and dear friends and relations, including some of his own children. But his eyes never betrayed the depth of his emotions, as they did on this occasion, when he was alone, secretly grieving over a death which took place more than thirteen hundred years before – grieving so deeply that while reciting this loving couplet his eyes bore the look of a flooded stream and his sensitive heart was wishing this beautiful poem was his.

Hadhrat Nawab Mubaraka Begum<sup>(ra)</sup>, the eldest daughter of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, related that once a discussion centred around the possibility of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> going to perform Hajj. At the very thought of visiting the sacred shrines of Mecca and Medina his eyes began to run with tears and while wiping them he observed:

‘This is indeed the wish of my heart. But I often wonder whether at all I would be able to bear the sight of the last resting place of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>.’<sup>5</sup>

A thoughtful look at this incident reveals the deep emotions of love which rolled in the heart of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>. It is true that every Muslim would long to go on a pilgrimage to the holy places in Mecca and Medina. But imagine the boundless love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of a man lost in spiritual ecstasy, a man whose soul, at the very thought of a pilgrimage, flies to the blessed tomb and from a rush of emotion his eyes begin to swim in tears.

Sincere love manifests itself naturally through sacrifice and a jealous regard for the beloved. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> possessed both of these in great abundance for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. While referring to the outrageous and false accusations levelled by Christians against the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, he wrote:

‘Christian missionaries have fabricated innumerable false charges against our Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and by means of this subtle fraud and deception they have misled a large number of people. Nothing has lacerated my heart so grievously as the



mockery and ridicule they heap on his fair name. Their cutting remarks against the holiest of men have deeply wounded my heart. I call God to witness that even if all my children, children's children, friends, colleagues and helpers were slaughtered before my eyes, my limbs were torn apart, the pupils of my eyes were plucked out, all my designs were frustrated, and I was deprived of every pleasure and comfort, the agony is more unbearable for me when such low and vile attacks are made upon the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Therefore, Thou, O Heavenly Master, I implore Thee, cast a look of mercy and compassion on me and deliver me from this great trial and tribulation.'<sup>6</sup>

This is a truly profound statement of love for the honour of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Even more profound is the fact that this was not an empty claim. On the contrary, the entire life of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> bears testimony to the truth of this claim. During his lifetime, he

received accolades from leading Muslim divines and on his demise, leading Muslim and non-Muslim newspapers and journals paid tribute, in glowing and superlative terms, to his victorious championship of Islam. To cite but one example, on the publication of his epoch-making, *Braheen Ahmadiyya*, Hadhrat Sufi Ahmad Jan<sup>(ra)</sup> of Ludhiana, himself a great saintly Sufi, wrote:

'That great personage, benefactor of mankind, source of benevolence and beneficence, personal proof of Islam, honoured above commonalty and the nobility, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, may his blessings endure, Chief of Qadian, in the district of Gurdaspur, Punjab, has written a book titled *Braheen Ahmadiyya*'.

This book establishes the truth of Islam and the Prophethood of Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, and of the Holy Qur'an, through three hundred strong proofs of various types and refutes the Christian, Arya, Hindu,

Brahmo Samaj and all other religions opposed to Islam, by means of convincing reasoning...'<sup>7</sup>

His eldest son, Hadhrat Mirza Sultan Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup>, also attested to this jealous sensitivity of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> where the name and honour of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> were in question. What makes this testimony exceptional is the fact that it was made at a time when this son had not yet entered the fold of the Community. Throughout the lifetime of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, Hadhrat Mirza Sultan Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> did not take the Bai'at (Oath of Allegiance) at his hands and remained aloof for many years after his demise. It was during the Khilafat of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II (Second Successor to the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>) that he embraced Ahmadiyyat. He was approached once, prior to his initiation into the Movement, by someone intending to apprise himself of some aspects of the early life of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>. This is what Hadhrat Mirza Sultan Ahmad<sup>(ra)</sup> had to say:

'One thing I noted very specially and very clearly in my father. He could not bear even the slightest reference to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> in derogatory words. On the slightest hint or expression to this effect, his face became red, and the look in his eyes would harden with anger; and he would immediately leave the place and the company where any such thing was said. The feeling which my father had for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> was indeed one of love – a love of which I have not seen an instance in anyone else.'<sup>8</sup>

Such was the testimony of someone who had not yet accepted the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> as the Reformer of the Latter Days.

His love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> extended also to the blessed companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and to his progeny. On one occasion, he was relating to his children the story of Muhurram and the incidents connected with the martyrdom of Imam Hussain<sup>(ra)</sup>, a grandson of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>.

According to his daughter, Hadhrat Nawab Mubaraka Begum<sup>(ra)</sup>, his tone was full of great sorrow and suffering and all the time he was wiping the tears flowing from his eyes. At the end, he said in great anguish and tender emotions:

*This was the heartless and bloody injustice which the obnoxious Yazeed perpetrated upon the grandson of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. But God soon after overtook these tyrants with His punishment.<sup>9</sup>*

He was also quick to admonish his followers to imbibe in themselves the love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. This, he explained, was the key to salvation:

‘For the sons of man there is no messenger and no mediator except Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>. So strive that you cherish the purest love for this Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of power and glory, giving no one else any kind of preference over him, so that you be put down in heaven as those who have been saved. And very clearly bear in mind that salvation is not

something you will experience in the life after death. The real and true salvation is only that which shows its light in this very life. Who is the saved? Only he who maintains a firm faith that the living God is a real-ity, and that Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> is the Mediator between Him and mankind; that under the skies there is no equal to him in rank and elevation, nor any book to rival the Holy Qur’an. That for no one else God wish that he should live forever, but for this blessed Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> He did so wish: that to keep him alive forever He laid the foundation for continuing the benefit of his Shariah (Islamic Law) and his blessings to the day of Resurrection.<sup>11</sup>

At another place, the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> announced to the whole world that the fruits of loving the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> are heavenly bounties:

O all ye who dwell upon the earth, and O all human souls that are in the East or in the West, I announce to you

emphatically that the true reality in the earth is Islam alone, and the true God is the God Who is described in the Qur'an, and the Prophet who has everlasting spiritual life and who is seated on the throne of glory and holiness, is Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, the chosen one. The proof of his spiritual life and holy majesty is that by following him and loving him we become recipients of the holy spirit and are favoured with the bounty of converse with God and witness heavenly signs'.<sup>12</sup>

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> found Islam and Muslims in a weak condition. He was moved by this state of the religion of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and for this purpose, waged a great Jihad to uphold the honour of Islam and the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. If there was an enemy of Islam anywhere the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was ready to fight. If ever anybody thought of attacking Islam, the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was ready to meet the attack. He pursued all the opponents of Islam till they withdrew from the field or met their end. He explained the

excellencies of the Holy Qur'an and effectively answered all the objections of opponents of every creed and thought, and challenged them with the superior qualities of Islam. He demonstrated the truth of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> with strong arguments, heavenly signs and luminous prophecies. His devotion to Islam and the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> was total. Service to Islam was like service to himself or his dear ones. Night after night, he would go without the usual minimum of sleep and remain at work. If he had any help in his work, he felt very grateful and thanked the person as he would for a personal favour. In spite of continual sickness and physical weakness, he wrote more than eighty books and several hundred leaflets and made hundreds of speeches on Islam, on its beauties and the subjects connected with it. Writing would not satisfy him. He would write, have his writing translated into English, print several hundred thousand copies, and circulate them in Europe and America. If ever he heard of someone who was interested in Islam, he would

write and personally invite him to accept the truth. In short, his whole life was devoted towards the establishing the supremacy of Islam over other religions in every aspect of teaching, doctrines and beliefs. From all this, one can measure the quality of his passion and the depth of his devotion to God and the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. He had but one desire and this was to make manifest to all and sundry the living might of God and the truth of His Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>.

Amazingly, in spite of all these peerless services, at every occasion, the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> would make a total negation of himself and would stress that whatever was bestowed upon him and all the services he rendered to Islam was on account of his devotion to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. This supplies a very graphic picture of the unquestionable devotion which the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> had for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Today, we can but stand in awe as we marvel at his tireless energy, his exposition of the limitless ocean of verities comprehended within the Holy

Qur'an, his devotion to duty, his strong sense of purpose and his eagerness in the service of Islam. Yet, in spite of all these unrivalled services, like a dutiful and obedient student, whatever accomplishment he made, he immediately credited to his obedience to, and the tutelage of, his revered Master, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. His writings are replete with such statements. The following are but a few examples:

'God Almighty has, through the blessings of my obedience to and love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and through my following His Holy Word, honoured this humble one with His revelation and with inner knowledge. He has enlightened me with the disclosure of many mysteries, and has filled my bosom with many verities and realities. He has informed me many times that all these gifts, bounties, exaltations, favours, kindnesses, attention, awards, supports and revelations have been bestowed upon me by virtue of the blessings

of obedience to and love for the Seal of the Prophets<sup>(sa)</sup>,<sup>12</sup>

He further states:

'By the pure grace of Allah and not by any merit of my own, I have been bestowed a perfect portion of the bounty which was bestowed before me on the Prophets and Messengers and the elect of God. It would not have been possible for me to be bestowed this bounty had I followed my lord and master, the pride of the prophets, the best of mankind, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa<sup>(sa)</sup>. Whatever has been bestowed upon me has been on account of this obedience.'<sup>13</sup>

Again he says:

'I cannot acquire any degree of honour or excellence, nor any station of exaltation or nearness to God except through sincere and perfect obedience to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Whatever is bestowed upon me is by way of reflection of, and through, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>.'<sup>14</sup>

Yet again, he writes:

'On oath, in the name of the same God, I claim that just as God spoke to Abraham, and then to Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses and Jesus the son of Mary, and finally to our own Holy Prophet Muhammad, in a manner much more clear and bright than ever before, sending down a purer Revelation, in the same way He has blessed me with the favour of this communion with Him. But in my case this is a blessing which I have derived only through the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, and through my obedience and devotion to him. If I had not followed him most implicitly in everything, this blessing would not have been extended to me even if my virtuous endeavour had piled up as high as a mountain.'<sup>15</sup>

It is disheartening to note that his opponents who accuse him of usurping the honour of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> do so in the face of such lucid pronouncements. However, there can be not even a

scintilla of doubt, or hint of equivocation in the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, about the exceptional depth of love he had for the Holy Prophet and as he loved him so he desired Allah's blessings on him. The Holy Qur'an enjoins:

*Allah sends down His blessings on the Prophet and His angels pray for him. O ye who believe, you too should invoke His blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace.*  
(Ch. 33: v.57)

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was true to this command. He writes in *Braheen Ahmadiyya*:

"One night I sent Durood (i.e., invoked special blessings) on the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> in such great abundance that I felt as if my heart and soul had become fragrant with its perfume. The same night I saw in a dream that angels of the Lord were bringing to my abode large bags full of light in the form of pure limpid water; and one among those angels said that these were the fruits of the blessings I had sent to the

Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> in the form of Durood."16

A natural consequence of this great love of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, was such that it always found expression in his poetry. He composed numerous poems in love of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. They gave beautiful expression to the thoughts and feelings of the innermost sanctuary of his heart, which in turn pierces the hearts of others. We reproduce here only one such poem to illuminate the case in point:

*There is light miraculous in the soul of Muhammad,  
There is a ruby rare in the mine of Muhammad.*

*The heart is cleared of all darkness,  
If it becomes one of the lovers of Muhammad*

*I wonder at the wisdom of those fools  
Who turn away from the feast abundant of Muhammad.*

*No man in the two worlds do I know  
Who shares the greatness and glory of Muhammad.*

*A hundred times disgusted is God  
with him  
Who harbours hostility to  
Muhammad.*

*God Himself consumes in fire the  
contemptible worm  
Who chooses to be one of the  
enemies of Muhammad.*

*If you want to shake off the  
intoxication of the baser self,  
Then come and sit among the  
devotees of Muhammad.*

*If you wish that God Himself should  
sing your praises,  
Then sing sincerely the praises of  
Muhammad.*

*Lookest thou for proof for his truth?  
Then his lover be,  
For Muhammad himself is the proof  
of Muhammad.*

*A head have I to offer at the altar of  
Ahmad,  
And a heart ready to be sacrificed  
for Muhammad.*

*By the tresses of the Messenger of  
God,  
It is true, I am infatuated by the  
resplendent face of Muhammad.*

*Whether I am killed or burnt in this  
path,  
Never will I turn away from the  
court of Muhammad.*

*In matters of faith I fear not even the  
whole world,  
For I am dyed in the faith of  
Muhammad.*

*Easy it is to be carried away from  
the world,  
In the memory of the charms and  
graces of Muhammad.*

*Every atom of mine is sacrificed in  
his path,  
For I have peeped into the hidden  
beauty of Muhammad.*

*I know not the name of another  
teacher,  
For I have been to the school of  
Muhammad.*

*I am not interested in another  
beloved,  
For I have been captivated by the  
comeliness of Muhammad.*

*Only a favour I need from the eye of  
Muhammad,  
All I seek is access to the garden of  
Muhammad.*



*Do not look for my stricken heart in  
my side,  
For I have tied it to the robe of  
Muhammad.*

*I am a sweet bird out of the sacred  
flock,  
Which has its nest in the grove of  
Muhammad.*

*Thou hast illumined my soul with  
thy love,  
May I be a sacrifice to thee, soul of  
Muhammad.*

*Even if I were to offer a hundred  
lives in this path,  
It would still fail to match the worth  
of Muhammad.*

*What terror does this young one  
[Muhammad] strike  
That no one can meet him in his  
arena!*

*Beware, O foolish and misguided  
enemy,  
Fear the sharp sword of  
Muhammad.*

*The path of God from which men  
have strayed far,  
You can still find with the followers  
and friends of Muhammad.*

*Listen, O thou who denieth the  
greatness of Muhammad,  
And the luminous light of  
Muhammad!*

*Though miracles seem a thing of the  
past,  
Come thou yet and see them with  
the servants of Muhammad.<sup>17</sup>*

At the head of the piece, a statement was made which, perhaps, may be contended. This is that in his love for, and devotion to, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was unparalleled through the annals of history. This might be questioned on the pretext that, not only the Companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, but many eminent divines through the ages cherished the purest love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Then, why do we single out the love and devotion of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>?

It is true that the Companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> completely lost themselves in their love for him and were unquestionably devoted to him. They were ever prepared to sacrifice their lives, wealth and honour for the sake

of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. But while we seek to make no comparison, unnecessarily, with anyone else, it must be pointed out that none of them through their devotion to the Holy Prophet rose to the station of prophethood. Neither did any other Muslim divine after them. On the contrary, through centuries of Islamic history, we find that it was only in the case of the Holy Founder<sup>(as)</sup> of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, that a follower of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> attained to the status of prophethood through obedience and devotion to him, in accordance with the promise given in the glorious Qur'an:

*And whoso obeys Allah and this Messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these.*

(Ch. 4: v. 70)

Furthermore, when we take due cognisance of the fact that the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> did not live at the time of the Holy

Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, that, in fact, he appeared thirteen centuries later at a time when Islam had been completely distorted; at a time when fanaticism and bigotry had become the hallmark of Muslim thinking, this great accomplishment of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> is even more laudable. While other Muslim divines were content to celebrate their love for the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> only in solitude, it was the Holy Founder<sup>(as)</sup> of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community who was to initiate a world wide movement for the manifestation of the glory of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. It would, therefore, be no hyperbole to claim that the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was unrivalled in his love for, and devotion to, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Nor would it be a fanciful assumption or a tale steeped in wishful thinking. History furnishes no better record of loyalty, love and devotion. In speech and in writing, in poetry and in prose, in eulogy and in defence, he displayed before our wondering eyes a vast and seemingly limitless ocean of this great love for the religion of Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, the person of

## Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> and the God of Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>.

One great reality that emerges from all this and that is not only did the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> possess an extraordinary and astonishing personality but that whatever view might be taken of his claim, he certainly was no impostor. His faith was neither merely an academic verbal affirmation nor was it an adventitious extra. His devotion to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and his love for him gives effulgence to his sincerity and truth.

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# The Evolution of the Islamic Empire

By Tanveer Khokhar - UK

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The story of the rise, decline and eventual renaissance of Islam and Islamic civilisation is a vital part of our history. Islam developed among an unlettered people far removed from the crossroads of civilisation and human thought to become the predominant religion of the then known world. But even this profound movement was to enter a gradual state of degeneration which only the advent of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> would reverse. This article provides a brief overview of the vicissitudes of the Islamic empire, with a particular focus on the last century which coincided with the launch of *The Review of Religions* under the auspices of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>.

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## Early Advances of Islam

At the time of the launch of this prestigious magazine, the Islamic world had come through several great periods but was starting to stagnate. Since the beginning of Islam, the Islamic empire grew extremely fast owing to the zeal of its early followers, their unity and obedience to those in authority.

In the first centuries after its inception, Islam rapidly spread through the Middle East, eastwards towards India and

China, all across North Africa, and across much of Southern Europe, and all within a hundred years or so.

Soon the Islamic empire was well established and stable, and as a result, all people were secure in that environment irrespective of their creed or colour. In Damascus, Cairo, Cordoba and elsewhere, Islamic science flourished such that huge advances were made in the fields of navigation, medicine, astronomy, mathematics and even the arts. Not

just Muslim scholars, but Jews, Christians and all others thrived in this enlightened climate. Beautiful mosques bear witness to the greatness of Islamic architecture of the period. In Cordoba, the Great Mosque was used for worship by Muslims, Christians and Jews. Such was the level of enlightenment of the early Muslims. They strove to protect the temples and churches of other faiths within their lands, and chose dialogue rather than conflict to learn more about each other.

It was in this period that great libraries were built and universities established. Great works of the Greeks, Indians, Persians, Egyptians and numerous religious texts were translated and preserved. Scholars from various religions and cultures were drawn to this enlightened empire at a time when Europe was in the midst of the 'Dark Ages'.

Gradually, one dynasty took over from another, and power shifted from the Umayyads

(661-750 CE) based in Syria to the Abbasids (750-1258 CE) based in Mesopotamia. During this time, the unity of the Muslims began to be eroded as rival Caliphates were established in Cairo and Cordoba, yet Islam and Muslim culture united people, and the religion of Islam grew in strength. The Ottoman Empire (1281-1924 CE) centred in Istanbul reunited the Muslim world under the new Turkish power, and once again the Muslims had a single voice. Again, Muslim culture thrived, with dramatic buildings such as the Blue Mosque erected across Europe and northern Africa.

Once again, at its greatest extent, the Ottoman Empire set standards for people in the empire based upon Islamic principles of absolute justice, kindness and fair play. The Empire grew in extent to cover Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Arabia to the east, the Balkans, Hungary, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and other states around the Black Sea, and most of north Africa from Egypt to

Algeria. However, the history of religious degradation repeated itself. When the ruling Sultans began to confuse religion with culture, and power became a struggle between brothers and clans, gradually Islam was forgotten and the Empire lost its unity and power.

### **Islam at the time of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>**

During the course of the last hundred years, people across the Muslim world have come into contact with the Ahmadiyya Community and have had a chance to judge for themselves the message of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>. Many tens of millions accepted him as the reformer of Islam and joined his community, but millions of others have not. Often this is due to misinformation and ignorance, but the Islamic powers have also used this as a political issue as we will see later on.

At the time of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, Islam was in decline even though Muslim

states retained much of their political dominion. Some Christian missionaries followed the European colonial expansion across the world and were spreading false propaganda about Islam. There were plenty of militants and activists within the Muslim world, but very few Muslims were willing to address the theological onslaughts made against Islam. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> was the most prominent figure to take up this challenge in the Indian sub-continent with great success. This inspired a new generation of Muslims and sparked their interest in theology once again. However his influence was limited to his growing community, whilst the rest of the Muslim world was swayed by greed and political intrigue.

This is how the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> explained his mission:

‘When God Almighty, observing the condition of the world and finding the

earth filled with every type of disobedience, sin and misguidance, appointed me for the propagation of the truth and the reform of the people, then I, in obedience to this Divine command, sent forth the call through written and oral announcements that I was the person who was to arrive at the beginning of the century for the revival of the faith. My purpose was to re-establish the faith which had disappeared from the earth and to pull mankind towards reform and righteousness and truthfulness through the magnetic power of His Hand. It was also my purpose to correct their doctrinal errors and to reform their conduct. A few years thereafter, it was made quite clear to me through Divine revelation that the Messiah, whose advent among the Muslims had been foretold from the beginning, and the Mahdi whose advent had been Divinely decreed at the time of the decline of Islam and the spread of error, and who

was to be guided directly by God, and who was to invite people to partake of the heavenly banquet, and whose coming had been foretold by the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> thirteen hundred years in advance, was myself. Divine revelation to this effect was vouchsafed to me so clearly and so continuously that it left no room for doubt. It was replete with grand prophecies that were fulfilled as clearly as bright day. Its frequency and number and miraculous power compelled me to affirm that it comprehended the words of the One God, without associate, Whose Word is the Holy Qur'an.'

*(Tadhkiratush Shahadatain,*  
*pp. 1-2)*

He further stated:

'The purpose for which God has appointed me is that I should remove the malaise that afflicts the relationship between God and His creatures and should restore

the relationship of love and sincerity between them. Through the proclamation of truth I should bring about peace by putting an end to religious wars and should manifest the verities which have become hidden from the eyes of the world. I am called upon to demonstrate that spirituality which has been overlaid by selfish darkneses. It is for me to demonstrate in practice and not only in words, the Divine attributes which penetrate into the hearts of people and are manifested through prayer and concentration. Most of all it is my purpose to plant once more in the hearts of people the pure and shining unity of God which is free from every suspicion of paganism and which has completely disappeared. All this will be accomplished not through my power, but through the Power of Him Who is the God of heaven and earth.'

*(Lecture Lahore, p.47. Quoted from Ahmadiyyat: The*

*Renaissance of Islam by Muhammad Zafrallah Khan)*

### **Decline of the last century**

So what has happened to Islam in the last hundred years? Religion, in general, has become absorbed into politics, Islam being no exception. As a result, the once great Islamic empire has now fallen into the hands of politicians devoid of spiritual enlightenment. In addition, with the exception of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, there is no unity across the Muslim world due to the conspicuous absence of the institution of Khilafat amongst them. As the Ottoman Empire crumbled around the Mediterranean, it left behind weak states such as Bosnia and Kosovo which have suffered cruelty at the hands of neighbouring states.

Elsewhere, in the Middle East, the lack of unity and power of the Muslims has been exploited for political gain in order to secure business advantages such as cheaper oil even at the



COUNTRY	MUSLIM POPULATION	%
Indonesia	169,990,000	88%
Pakistan	125,320,000	97%
India	101,050,000	11%
Bangladesh	99,280,000	85%
Iran	62,430,000	98%
Turkey	61,230,000	99%
Egypt	53,140,000	91%
Nigeria	48,760,000	51%
Morocco	27,480,000	99%
Algeria	27,230,000	99%
Uzbekistan	25,430,000	69%
Sudan	20,300,000	72%
Iraq	19,820,000	96%
Ethiopia	19,080,000	35%
Saudi Arabia	17,990,000	99%
China	17,940,000	1.5%
Afghanistan	17,520,000	99%
Syria	12,880,000	87%
Malaysia	11,220,000	60%
Yemen	10,990,000	99%
Kazakhstan	10,420,000	60%
Tanzania	8,820,000	30%
Somalia	8,710,000	99%
Senegal	7,640,000	91%

expense of hundreds of thousands of Muslim lives and again the Muslim world looks on muted. Palestine lies in ruins and is subject to the expansion of Israel; Iran and Iraq have fought each other; Libya, Syria, and others are accused of terrorism and suffer from war, often in the name of religion. Regimes such as the failed Taliban in Afghanistan tried to impose their own version of Islam with extreme practices.

The very religion for which these people purport to fight has been forgotten. True Islamic principles have been lost, Islamic science has evaporated to the history books, and the concept of worship and spiritual uplift has been corrupted and replaced by a new lexicon of corrupted concepts such as *Jihad* and *Fatwa* which are misunderstood by the so-called fundamentalists. These terms are now used by the Orientalist writers and the media to turn public opinion of the world against the teachings of Islam.

In the former Soviet Empire, all religious practice including Islam and Christianity were suppressed. The state saw these as a theological threat, and sought to impose a totalitarian regime instead. Again, over a period of many years, despite their best efforts, they could not erode religion from the hearts of the people, and eventually the Empire dissolved. Unfortunately with events such as these, sometimes religion becomes an obvious political weapon, and when society goes from one political extreme to another, so does religious thought. This has been one of the catalysts towards militant tendencies in Eastern Europe over the last 30 years.

There are now 73 sects in Islam as predicted by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>:

‘Abdullah bin Amar<sup>(ra)</sup> relates that the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> said “Surely things will happen to my people as happened earlier to Israelites, they will

resemble each other like one shoe in a pair resembles the other to the extent that if anyone among the Israelites has openly committed adultery with his mother there will be some who will do this in my Ummah as well, verily the Israelites were divided into 72 sections but my people will be divided into 73 sections, all of them will be in the fire except one." The companions asked, "Who are they O Messenger of Allah?" The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "They are those who will be like me and my companions.""  
*(Tirmidhi, Kitab-ul-Iman)*

Of these 73 sects, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the only one that has been denounced as non-Muslim in some Islamic countries and in particular, by all other 72 sects. Attempts are made to deny Ahmadis the right to practise Islam. For Ahmadis in Pakistan acts such as worship and Islamic greeting have become criminal

offences. They are denied the right to go to Mecca for Umrah or Hajj (Pilgrimage), a crime for which they can be jailed in Saudi Arabia. The beautiful religion demonstrated centuries ago by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> would appear to lie in ruins.

This is the same fate that befell the Islamic Empire in the past when politics overtook philosophy and religion. We saw the demise of the Caliphate of Al-Andalus in Spain, the fall of successive Caliphates, and finally the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Now the Islamic world is divided into separate states which spend their energies fighting each other rather than promoting peace and harmony. At the same time, there is the expectation of the arrival of the Mahdi to once again lead the Muslims to glory, although Muslims are deeply divided about how they would recognise their Mahdi, failing to accept that he has already come.

## The Future

So what does the future hold for Islam? Unfortunately, due to media propaganda, much talk nowadays wrongly links Islam to terrorism and fundamentalism. In actual fact, enlightened people around the world have more frequent contact with Muslims due to the increasing requirements for interaction and the global economy. Despite the best efforts of global media propaganda against Islam, people are becoming aware of the fact that Muslims have no support in the Qur'an or Hadith for resorting to war except in the circumstances that they are actively prevented from practising their religion or in self-defence. In the modern age, there are no circumstances in which the former is the case. Muslims are free to worship across Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia. They have been able to build mosques in all of the great cities of the world including Washington, London, Rome, Sydney and in China. Muslims from all of these countries go

annually for pilgrimage to Mecca and practise their religion without hindrance. So how would the scenario of a 'Holy War' emerge? A small number of highly visible activists get more airtime on the global media with their extreme views than the great majority of the many hundreds of millions of peace-loving Muslims. A single suicide bomber is able to alter opinion faster than the broader Muslim community. To take the views of obviously misguided fanatics and to apply them to the greater Muslim community is wrong. It is wholly unrepresentative of the views of most Muslim and bears no resemblance to the teachings of Islam.

Ironically the one Muslim sect which has been persecuted and denied its rights and could therefore have a legitimate claim to fight for its rights is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and yet they have relied upon prayers and the power of God rather than getting themselves involved in

combat, as instructed by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Equally, religious dialogue is on the increase. During the last hundred years, the science of comparative religion championed by great authors such as Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell has increased knowledge of not just the established world religions, but also of those traditional national religions of the aborigines, native Americans, Yorubas and others. In this context, Islam is seen in a much more favourable light across the world. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has actively championed the cause of education, learning and debate and the cause of the study of all world religions including through this very publication. In this regard, a 'Jihad' of the pen is being waged to defend and to unearth truth in religious matters, and to banish ignorance.

This is the bright future to which we must all look forward. In studying each other's faiths, we realise that there is far more to unite us than there ever has been to divide us. All religions originating from God have similar themes portrayed in different ways and at different levels of detail, and if studied properly will show how religions evolved towards Islam, the universal religion. This will ultimately bring all religious communities together under the banner of the One True God to promote and protect a society based upon morals and virtues rather than greed and politics.

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# Professor Abdus Salam and the Middle-East Synchrotron

By Sameen Ahmed KHAN - Atlanta, USA

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There has been a recent move to establish a Synchrotron facility (a new light source more powerful than X-rays) in Jordan in the Middle East and this presents an opportunity for scientists from across the Middle East to unite and share in technological advancement. In this article, the author traces the progress of this project, and then puts it in the context of how the Muslim World went from being at the leading edge of scientific advancement to its current sorry state of being a quiet observer, and what Muslims need to do to once again propel themselves to the forefront of science. This is one of the things the late Professor Abdus Salam, a distinguished Ahmadi Muslim, eminent scientist and Nobel laureate, desired and strove for.

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## Introduction

One would have gone through the experience of an *X-ray* in a hospital some time or other. X-rays are very well known and so widely used that they require little introduction. Apart from a very useful medical diagnostic tool, X-rays are widely used in industry and a variety of applications such as *materials science research*, which is the backbone of the electronic revolution. There is another source of light, namely *synchrotron radiation*, which is much more powerful than traditional X-rays. It was experimentally observed for the

first time in the electron synchrotron, built at the General Electric Company in Schenectady, New York and hence the name synchrotron radiation<sup>1-2</sup>. Synchrotron radiation (SR) has numerous advantages over traditional X-ray sources and lasers. Synchrotron radiation laboratories are large sources of X-rays used to study materials at the molecular and atomic level. SR is produced by accelerating electrons in through a large ring (several hundred metres in circumference) almost at the speed of light. This causes the electrons to emit X-rays with

additional special properties. This interesting physical phenomenon of the emission of light (with very special properties) by the whirling electrons, now known by the very familiar name synchrotron radiation had its theoretical beginnings even before the discovery of X-rays in the nineteenth century. The accurate and very detailed prediction of SR was a direct consequence of the unification of electricity and magnetism into electromagnetism by Faraday and Maxwell. The tradition to search for unity in basic laws of nature has led to remarkable results. Following this tradition led Professor Abdus Salam to the discovery of the unification of the electromagnetic and the weak nuclear forces into the electroweak force.

The X-rays from a synchrotron are a billion times brighter than a typical clinical X-ray source. SR is the most powerful light produced by humans. Applications of X-rays are based on their ability to pass through matter; the more energetic the deeper they penetrate. This ability

varies; for example wood and flesh are easily penetrated, but denser substances such as metals and bone are harder to penetrate. Beams of X-rays emerge from the ring in tubes called beamlines, set at intervals around the ring. Instruments at the ends of the beamlines hold samples to be studied and produce 3-D images of a variety of substances.

The applications of the SR span a wide range of domains in fundamental science (chemistry, physics, biology, molecular medicine, *etc.*) applied research (materials science, medical imaging, pharmaceutical research advanced radiology, *etc.*) and industrial technology (micro-fabrication, micro-analysis, photo-chemistry, *etc.*). SR facilities are technologically challenging, requiring a team of dozens of experts even for their day-to-day running. These facilities are prohibitively costly, about several hundred million US dollars. In contrast the X-ray machines in clinics can be run by a single person and cost just a few thousand US\$. Hence, there are few SR facilities in operation

despite their numerous applications. World wide there are about 50 SR facilities in operation, a dozen under construction and another dozen being planned<sup>3</sup>. It requires several years and government patronage to build such facilities.

In all there are 23 countries: Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, England, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine and USA. From this list it is very glaring that the continent of Africa is yet to have its first SR facility, South America has one and Australia is planning. In Asia there are 29 synchrotrons located in nine countries<sup>4</sup>. USA has 12. Synchrotrons breathe technology! Japan has seventeen, the highest figure for a single country. This is definitely interwoven with the grand industrial success of Japan. India has the experience and expertise of indigenously building two synchrotrons. Both are at the Centre of Advanced Technology,

in Indore. The region of the Middle East has been just blessed. Synchrotrons are very flexible devices<sup>5-6</sup>. By reusing most of the major components their performance can be upgraded at an incremental cost that is small compared with the cost of construction of a new synchrotron. In recent years this flexibility is being innovatively exploited to relocate the very generously donated synchrotrons to those locations, which are under-represented in the *World Synchrotron Map*<sup>7</sup>.

### **The Middle East Synchrotron**

Jordan is the first country from the Middle East to join the elite group of 23 countries with a synchrotron light source<sup>8-10</sup> thanks to the generous gift of *Berliner Elektronen-Spiecherring für Synchrotronstrahlung* (BESSY-I)<sup>11</sup>, fully functioning since 1982 in Berlin, Germany, to the region of the Middle East. It is worth about sixty million US dollars. The project is known by the acronym SESAME: *Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East*<sup>12</sup>.



The SESAME Project reached a major milestone in 2000 with the selection of a site in Jordan<sup>13-14</sup>. SESAME is the upgraded reincarnation of BESSY-I. A controlled and documented dismantling, of BESSY-I was completed by a team of experts from Armenia and Russia, with funds from the SESAME member countries and UNESCO.

On Monday the 6th January 2003, King Abdullah laid the cornerstone for the upcoming International Centre. The ceremony was attended by, the UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura. The upcoming joint SR facility, the first regional centre for co-operation in basic research in the Middle East, is also serving as a seed for an International Centre built around the facility<sup>15</sup>. SESAME is located at a site in Allaan, about 30km from the Capital Amman.

SESAME is open to scientists from any country in the region or elsewhere. Because of this openness, organisers see its potential as not only a world-class research centre, but also as

a politically important example of scientific co-operation in the region. Such a centre has been long overdue and it shall be the first of its kind in the region. The Centre is to be operated and supported by its 13 *Interim Council Members*: Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Several countries are participating as *Observer Countries*, which include, Armenia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Russia, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and USA<sup>16</sup>. Several other countries have expressed an interest to join this new fount of science and medium of international co-operation.

The founders of the SESAME Project envisage a facility similar in aim to the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) in Geneva, which brought together numerous scientists from countries that had fought each other during the two World Wars. SESAME is expected to mirror CERN in stimulating regional research

collaboration<sup>17-19</sup>. Very much like CERN, SESAME is under the very valuable political umbrella of UNESCO and is expected to promote science and foster international co-operation. A broad spectrum of research programmes is planned including, structural molecular biology, molecular environmental science, surface and interface science, micro-electro-mechanical devices, X-ray imaging, archaeological micro-analysis, materials characterisation, and medical applications.

It has taken several years for the idea of donation to be set on course to evolve from a vision to a system. A considerably significant point to this success was the *Sinai Physics Meeting*, held at the Egyptian resort of Dahab, on the Gulf of Aqaba, in November 1995<sup>20</sup>. This historic Meeting was conceived by the Italian physicist Sergio Fubini<sup>21</sup> of the University of Turin, which led directly to the formation of the Middle East Science Collaboration (MESC) in 1997. MESC constitutes a network of scientists promoting research co-

operation between Europe, the USA and the Middle East. The idea of relocating BESSY-I was further taken through the MESC in a series of meetings held under the auspices of the UNESCO, CERN, Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (Abdus Salam ICTP) to name a few<sup>22</sup>. Herwig Schopper, former Director-General of CERN and a member of MESC is the President of the SESAME Project's Interim Council. Jordan's King Abdullah II has pledged US \$1m a year for five years and the member countries are expected to contribute US\$50,000 per year during the construction phase. With the continued progress and support from the SESAME members and several other sources it is expected that the research programmes will start in 2006.

### **Abdus Salam and the Middle East Synchrotron**

Before addressing the recent attempts to build institutions in the Middle East, we need to recall the glorious period of science and technology in the Arab World a few centuries

back. So far as the sciences are concerned, the Muslim Ummah (community) has a very proud past. For about 350 years from 750-1100 CE, the Ummah had an absolute ascendancy in all the fields of knowledge then known, from Astronomy to Zoology. During this period known as the *Golden Age of Science in the Islamic World*, Muslims made numerous and multi-disciplinary contributions to humanity and the Islamic civilisation<sup>23</sup>. From 1100 CE and for another 250 years, Muslims shared this ascendancy with the emerging West. From the 15th century they progressively lost out. This period of continuous decline paradoxically coincides with the great Empires of Islam: Osmani in Turkey; Sufvi in Iran; and Mughal in India. By about 1500 this decline was complete. A detailed and historical account is available in the encyclopedic works of Sarton<sup>24</sup> and Gibb<sup>25</sup>. It is difficult to say for certain about all the causes responsible for the decline of science in Islam. However, it is very certain that the priorities (of the rulers) have been very different for too long. For example, while the

Europeans were busy making universities and numerous institutions, the Mughal Emperors were busy making palaces and tombs! The trends and tendencies of the Muslim rulers of the present period are not very different.

It is recognised that 80% of the world's population lives in the Third World; a loose depressing description of a large, diverse group of countries, which seem to be interminably involved in a futile struggle against the crushing burdens of poverty, hunger, disease, strife and war. Muslim countries constitute a large fraction of the countries in this category of the Third World. There is no question that today, out of all civilisations on this planet, science is weakest in the lands of Islam. The danger of this great weakness cannot be overemphasised since honourable survival of a society depends directly on its strength in Science and Technology. In keeping with the successful experience of the developed countries, we must remember, there are no short cuts. A nation must impart hard scientific

training to more than half of its manpower. Each country must allocate at least 1-2% of the Gross National Product (GNP) on Research and Development (R&D).

The oil rich Arab countries are allotting even less than their poor African counterparts! Region-wise figures in Table-A are a testimony to this stark reality. Besides, they should spend over 5% on education.

About half the Muslim countries are meeting the expenditure norms on education. But for R&D, they are far below the international norms. These figures are for civilian allotment. The expenditure on the defence-oriented research is in addition to this. Most of the Muslim countries are spending much less than the international norms of about 5% of their GNP on health. The reduced investment on R&D makes a significant

**TABLE-A: Statistical Data for Regions 1996/1997**

Region	Population (millions)	Scientists/Engineers in R&D (per million inhabitants)	Expenditure on R&D (% of GNP)
Africa (All)	627	211	0.3
Africa (Sub-Saharan)	464	113	0.3
Arab States (All)	234	356	0.2
Arab States in Africa	163	489	0.2
Arab States in Asia	71	52	0.2
Asia	3,332	537	1.3
Europe	714	2,476	1.7
North America	295	3,599	2.6
Oceania	29	3,071	1.6
South America	487	715	0.5
World	5,483	946	1.6

Source: State of Technology in the World 1996-97.  
UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2001)

difference. For instance, the entire Muslim world produces only 500 PhDs in all sciences every year; in contrast, the UK alone produces 3,000. In 1999 the USA produced 1,600 PhDs in physics alone. Muslim countries should create centres of excellence in science and technology; create scholarships to allow bright students to study and develop skills needed to raise their countries out of illiteracy and poverty. Will the present day rulers care to build *Palaces of Science, the Centres of Advanced Studies*? Will they ever strive to create the *Commonwealth of Science for Islamic Countries*? Unless and until steps are taken to address the above questions in a realistic manner, there can be no renaissance of science in the Islamic countries, let alone the ambitions of the creation of a *Political Commonwealth of Islamic Countries*. Without these, the Muslim countries (and their citizens) may never be able to lead a normal existence, full of dignity, in the comity of nations.

It is essential to recall the earlier attempts (though unsuccessful

and now almost and conveniently forgotten) to build institutions (including synchrotron radiation facilities) in the Middle East<sup>26-27</sup>. The originator of these attempts is none other than Professor Abdus Salam, a co-winner of the 1979 Nobel Prize in Physics, the founder and long-time director of the ICTP (in November 1997 on the occasion of the first anniversary of Professor Salam's death, it was renamed the Abdus Salam ICTP, to commemorate its founder) and a humanitarian who devoted much of his life to uplifting the status of science and technology in the third world<sup>28-31</sup>. The ICTP is located in Trieste, Italy, and was founded by Professor Abdus Salam in 1964, under the auspices of the IAEA with very generous support from the Italian Government. This generous support is responsible for the 90% of the ICTP annual budget of over US\$20m. A few years later UNESCO also joined in extending support to the new Centre.

Professor Abdus Salam had dreamed of creating 20

international centres like the ICTP, spread throughout the world<sup>32-33</sup>. ICTP attracts thousands of visitors every year, mostly from the developing countries for whom, it was created. As part of that vision, he actively promoted the idea of advancing the cause of science and technology in the Middle East, not only by having researchers from the region work with their colleagues in the developed world, but also by having the region develop its own facilities including synchrotron laboratories! In May 1983, at the Symposium on the Future Outlook of the Arabian Gulf University held in Bahrain, Professor Abdus Salam delivered a Paper entitled, *The Gulf University and Science in the Arab-Islamic Commonwealth*, in which he reminded his listeners that:

*'We forget that an accelerator like the one at CERN develops sophisticated modern technology at its furthest limit. I am not advocating that we should build a CERN for Islamic countries. However, I cannot but feel envious that a relatively poor country like*

*Greece has joined CERN, paying a subscription according to the standard GNP formula. I cannot rejoice that Turkey, or the Gulf countries, or Iran, or Pakistan seem to show no ambition to join this fount of science and get their men catapulted into the forefront of the latest technological expertise. Working with CERN Accelerators brings at the least this reward to a nation, as Greece has had the perception to realise'<sup>32</sup>*

He then went on to make the following points:

*'I have mentioned an international laboratory in materials sciences for Bahrain, with specialisation in microelectronics and modern electronic communications, including space satellite communication, to help also with the banking communications needed at Bahrain. Such a laboratory was in fact proposed for the University of Jeddah. The idea was to emphasise science transfer in addition to technology transfer and to create international laboratories in the fields of materials sciences, including surface physics and a laboratory with a synchrotron radiation light source. The facilities*

*created would have been of the highest possible international order; the laboratories would have been opened to teams of international researchers, who would congregate and work at Jeddah, just as they congregate now at the great laboratories in Hamburg, Geneva or Paris'.<sup>32</sup>*

Had the above project been followed even partly, the Arab World would have had a Super Gulf University (with laboratories in biotechnology, materials science and synchrotron radiation facilities and a lot more) and today we would be celebrating two decades of its existence with achievements.

One of the other monumental creations of Professor Abdus Salam was the Third World Academy of Science (TWAS)<sup>34</sup>. It is an autonomous international organisation, founded in Trieste, in 1983 and was officially launched by Javier Pérez de Cuellar, the then Secretary General of the United Nations in 1985. TWAS's current membership, which includes 16 Nobel Laureates, totals 586 scientists (480 Fellows from 62

developing countries and 106 Associate Fellows from 14 developed countries). In 1991 UNESCO assumed responsibility for administering TWAS funds and staff. Since its inception, TWAS has been supporting research work of scientific merit in 100 countries, through a variety of programmes<sup>35</sup>. TWAS has served as one of the most articulate and forceful voices for the promotion of excellence in scientific research and the advancement of science-based development in the developing world. TWAS spearheaded the creation of the Third World Network of Scientific Organisations (TWNISO) in 1988, by ministers of science and technology and higher education and heads of science academies and research councils in the developing countries. This has enabled the link of scientific research to public policy by bringing scientists and public officials together in efforts designed to forge sustainable science-based development strategies. TWNISO's membership now totals 155 leading policy making institutions, including 34

ministries of science and technology and 45 research councils and academies. TWAS also played a key role in the establishment of the Third World Organisation for Women in Science (TWOWS), which was officially launched in Cairo in 1993. Today TWOWS has more than 2200 members and is recognised as the leading voice for women scientists in the developing countries.

### Concluding Remarks

SESAME envisages a *road map for science, technology and co-operation* in the Middle East, but at the same time, SESAME does not totally fulfil the dreams of Professor Abdus Salam because many countries from the Middle East are *yet* to participate. The driving force is coming from outside of Middle East and not from within. The numerous novel projects suggested by Professor Abdus Salam were all consistently rejected by the Muslim countries, including his native country Pakistan. This is definitely due to the indifference which the Muslim world has towards science, education and development. Such projects should be revived for the new

Super Gulf University, thereby making it accessible to researchers internationally, and particularly to the researchers in Muslim countries.

It is very disheartening that many countries from the Middle East are *yet* to participate in the novel project of SESAME. These countries are missing an excellent opportunity in the arena of International Scientific Collaboration. The same is the sad state of affairs for countries in the rest of Asia and the continent of Africa. Many of these countries have had very old ties with the countries of the Middle East since very ancient times. In recent decades, these ties have been further strengthened by their large presence in the region, leading to active economic collaboration. *Nature* in one of its editorials aptly advised, '*... any potential funder is not to hold back, for this would be a worthwhile investment. Initiatives such as this do not come around often. When they do, they should be supported unhesitatingly*'<sup>36</sup>. Scientific co-operation across the geo-graphical and cultural borders helps stimulate not only the advancement of



ideas in the professional field, but also the building of lasting bridges and the establishment of contacts on the personal and more importantly the international level. The costs involved for participation are not much, for any country.

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# A Message of Peace and a Word of Warning

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**'The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> prophesied that a third world war of even bigger dimensions would follow the second. The two opposing camps will clash with such suddenness that everyone will be caught unawares. Death and destruction will rain from the sky and fierce flames shall engulf the earth. The colossus of modern civilisation will tumble to the ground... their might broken and their systems shattered.... A people who are seeking to wipe out the name of God from the earth and to drive Him out of the skies will realise the folly of their ways and at long last submit to Him as staunch believers in His Unity and Oneness.... You may consider this a fantasy. But those who survive the third world war will witness and bear out the truth of what I have said. These are the words of God Almighty. They shall be fulfilled. No one can avert His decree.'**

*(A Message of Peace and a Word of Warning by Hadrat Hafiz Mirza*

*Nasir Ahmad, July 1967)*

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> also wrote:

"Remember, God has informed me of many earthquakes. Rest assured, therefore, that as earthquakes have shaken America and Europe so will they shake Asia. Some of them will resemble the Day of Doom. So many people shall die that rivulets of blood shall flow. Even the birds and beasts will not be immune against this death. A havoc shall sweep the surface of the earth which shall be the greatest since the birth of man. Habitations shall be demolished as if no one had ever lived in them. This will be accompanied by many other calamities the earth and the heavens will send forth, till their extraordinary nature will become evident to every reasonable man. All the literature of science and philosophy shall fail to show their like. Then mankind will be sore distressed and wonder what is going to happen. Many

shall escape and many perish. The days are near, in fact, I can see them close at hand, when the earth shall witness a terrible sight. Not only earthquakes but also many fearsome calamities shall overtake man, some from the skies and some from the earth. This will happen because mankind has stopped worshipping its true God and has become lost in the affairs of the world with all its heart, effort and intent. Had I not come, these afflictions would have been delayed a little. But with my coming the secret purpose of an affronted God which were hidden so far, became manifest. Says God: "We never punish unless We send a Messenger." Those who repent shall find security and those who fear before calamity overtakes them shall be shown mercy. Do you think you will be immune from these calamities? Or can you save yourselves through artifice or design? Indeed not. That day all human schemes shall fail. Think not that earthquakes visited America and other continents but that your own country shall remain secure. Indeed, you may experience a greater hardship. O Europe, you are not safe and O Asia, you too, are not immune. And

O dweller of islands, no false gods shall come to your rescue. I see cities fall and settlements laid waste. The One and Only God kept silent for long. Heinous deeds were done before His eyes and He said nothing. But now He shall reveal His face in majesty and awe. Let him who has ears hear that the time is not far. I have done my best to bring all under the protection of God but it was destined that what was written should come to pass. Truly, do I say that the turn of this land too is approaching fast. The times of Noah shall reappear before our eyes and your eyes will be witnesses to the calamity that overtook the cities of Lot. But God is slow in His wrath. Repent that you may be shown mercy! He who does not fear Him is dead not alive.'

*(Haqiqatul Wahy pp.256-57)*