Our humble plea to the reader is not to let your prejudice cloud your views towards our Movement but to consider these articles in a cool and dispassionate manner.

“Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with people in the best manner.” (Holy Quran 16:125)

In the spirit of the above-cited verse, this periodical attempts to dispel misunderstandings about the religion of Islam and endeavors to facilitate inter-faith and inter-denomination dialogue based on reason and rationality.
The main objective of the A.A.I.L is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world - Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by great misconceptions and wrong popular notions. Islam seeks to attract the hearts and minds of people towards the truth, by means of reasoning and the natural beauty of its principles. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d.1908), our Founder, arose to remind the world that Islam is:

International: it recognizes prophets being raised among all nations and requires Muslims to believe in them all. Truth and goodness can be found in all religions. God treats all human beings equally, regardless of race, nationality or religion.

Peaceful: Allows use of force only in unavoidable self-defence. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

Tolerant: Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practice any creed or religion. Requires us to tolerate differences of belief and opinion.

Rational: In all matters, it argues use of human reason and knowledge. Blind following is condemned and independence of thought is granted.

Inspiring: Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a Living God, Who answers prayers and speaks to His righteous servant even today as in the past.

Non-sectarian: Every person professing Islam by the words La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur rasul-ullah (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be expelled from Islam by anyone.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad taught that no prophet, old or new, is to arise after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. However, Mujaddis will be raised by God to revive and rekindle the light of Islam.

About Ourselves
Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam Lahore has branches in many countries including:

USA
Guyana
UK
Australia
Holland
Canada
Indonesia
Germany
Suriname
India
Trinidad
South Africa
Philippines

Achievements:
The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, including French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world including the first ever in Western Europe.

History:
1889: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.
1901: Movement given name Ahmadiyya after Holy Prophet Muhammad’s other famous name Ahmad
1905: Hazrat Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.
1908: Death of Hazrat Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.
1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam founded Lahore as Continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.
1981-1996: Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent Medical Doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution
1996 -2002: Prof. Dr Asghar Hameed, a distinguished Retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, served as Head.
2002: Prof. Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha elected Head.
you may be the bearers of witness to the people"

and also to be the vicegerents of Allah on earth, 
then a believer needs to undergo hard training and 
strict discipline in order to demonstrate high moral 
and social virtues making him worthy of the high 
position.

The fact is that Islam came to eradicate all wrong 
beliefs and practices in vogue in the name of 
religion. Islam beautifies the lives of individuals by do-
ing good deeds, which should not only make him 
worthy to be called the best of Allah’s creatures, 
but he should become instrumental in promoting 
love, affection and welfare in the society. This prin-
ciple for a successful life has been explained in the 
Quran as:

“For that which does good to men, it tarries in 
the earth” (13:17).

Indeed good deeds illuminate our inner self, bright-
en our worldly life and guarantee a beautiful life in 
the hereafter. This is what the Quran says:

“And for him who fears to stand before his Lord 
are two Gardens” (55:46).

The reward of the righteous is plainly spoken of 
here as two Gardens, i.e. a garden in this life 
and a garden in the Hereafter. The garden of this life is 
the spiritual bliss which the righteous find here in 
the doing of good.

Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din, world-renowned com-
mentator of the Holy Quran and closest associate 
of the Founder of the Ahmadyya Movement in Is-
lam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, explains beauti-
fully the object of religion in these words:

“There is a way followed by prophets and there is 
a way followed by kings. The prophets do not 
resort to cruelty, oppression and compulsion to 
perpetuate a system. But kings resort to compul-
sion and tyranny. Police can take cognizance of 
an offence only when it has been committed. But 
religion prevents even intention of committing a 
sin. Thus when a person accepts the supremacy of 
religion over him, then he does not need the 
 supervision of police to lead a righteous life.”

Brothers and Sisters, fasting in the month of Ra-
madan has been prescribed with the sole purpose 
of creating this spiritual awareness in a believer, 
and the Holy Quran has used the word taqwa for
it, la- ‘allakum tattaqun, i.e. so that they may keep their duty. It conveys the meaning ‘one who guards himself against evil or one who cares for or keeps his duty’.

Thus Islam is a religion of action and not of mere faith, as we find in Christianity that mere faith in the death of Jesus on the Cross obliterates one’s commissions and omissions and one is not obliged to lead a righteous life to seek Allah’s mercy and forgiveness.

The very object of man’s creation is that he should follow a system, as Allah says in the Quran:

“And I have not created the jinn and men except that they should serve Me. I desire no sustenance from them, nor do I desire that they feed me” (51:56, 57).

It means that it is through obedience to the laws ordained by Allah that man can attain excellence by fully utilizing his capabilities. For Allah has created man with enormous capabilities for advancement as we find it mentioned elsewhere in the Quran:

“Certainly We created man in the best make” (95:4).

The biggest hurdle in the way to progress is the evil against which the Quran warns man time and again. It has often been termed man’s “open enemy” and has also been named Shaitan or devil, and that is why man has been commanded by Allah to observe various measures to guard against the evil. The Quran says:

“O men, serve your Lord Who created you and those before you, so that you may guard against evil” (2:21).

After ritual prayer, fasting is the most important measure, which not only helps man to guard against evil and makes him steady in following the path of righteousness, but brings him closer to his Creator. And this close relationship with Allah beautifies his soul. Man’s journey from an ordinary soul to the best of Allah’s creation - which is also called nafs almutma’inna, i.e. the ‘soul at rest’ in the Quran - has been beautifully elaborated in the first five verses of the surah Al-Alaq, which also happen to be the first revelation of Allah to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. These are:

“Read, in the name of thy Lord Who creates - creates man from a clot. Read! And thy Lord is the most Generous and Honourable” (96:1–3).

The word ‘alaq means a clot of blood, as well as attachment and love. The former significance is the one generally adopted because of the mention of ‘alaq in the process of creation of man. Dr. Basharat Ahmad in his wonderful commentary Anwar-ul-Qur’an has drawn a beautiful analogy between human sperm getting attachment to the womb of the mother and man’s attachment to Divine love. When a human sperm, quite an insignificant thing, finds its way to a female womb in a state of love and close contact between the two, in due course of time it gives birth to a beautiful child; similarly an ordinary man unknown to the world at large, when he is graced with close contact with Divine love, he also in due course of time attains spiritual eminence and becomes Allah’s best creation. And this close contact with the Divine love is the objective hinted at in the words idha sa’alaka ‘ibadi ‘anni fa’-inna qarib, i.e. “And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh.” This is the concluding verse in the series of verses where fasting has been prescribed.

The month of Ramadan is not only to purify us of all sorts of dross and weaknesses, and to promote good and human welfare, but also to rededicate ourselves to achieve the great ideals set by Islam. And this requires hard struggle and strict spiritual discipline. Here I would like you to consider a very significant verse of the Holy Quran in which Hazrat Abu Bakr, closest associate and first successor to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, has been censured for withholding maintenance to one of his relatives, Mistah, because he had taken a leading role in spreading false reports about his daughter Hazrat Ayesha. It says:

“And let not possessors of grace and abundance among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah’s way; and pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” (24:22).

The incident referred to in this verse took place when the Holy Prophet, accompanied by his wife Ayesha, was returning from the expedition against the Bani Mustafiq in the fifth year of Hijrah. Hazrat Ayesha had gone out to answer a call of nature, but when she returned, she perceived that she had lost her necklace, and went back to search for it. In her absence the attendants, supposing her to be in her howda, started, while it was yet dark. When she returned, finding the camel and the men gone, she sat down there and was later brought to Madinah by Safwan, who was following in the rear. Some mischievous persons from among the hypocrites
spread false reports, slandering her, and some of the Muslims also associated themselves with the slander. Hazrat Ayesha’s innocence was at last established by the revelation contained in verse 11 of chapter an-Nur (The Light).

The slander against Hazrat Ayesha was absolutely baseless and even Allah witnessed her innocence through Divine revelation. Hazrat Abu Bakr’s indignation against Misbah, his relative, was quite genuine. But Islam wants its followers to do good only for the pleasure of Allah and personal displeasures should not come in the way at all. Good works should continue in spite of it. In this case, not only Hazrat Abu Bakr has been censured for withholding the allowance, but the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his companions have also been enjoined to forgive the wrongdoers. This is the religion which tends to create real peace and harmony in human attitudes and relationships at all levels. This is how a true believer submits completely to the will of Allah. This is the spirit of submission which Islam expects that we should show in each act and every moment of our lives. This is the standard of morality Islam requires from its adherents. And, Brothers and Sisters, fasting is that spiritual discipline through which a believer’s soul is enlightened and enlivened.

The month of Ramadan is also the anniversary of the revelation of the Holy Quran. It was on the 25th or 27th of this month that the first five verses of the Quran, now part of Surah Al-Alaq were revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad in that lonely cave of Hira where he was in a state of deep worship of Allah. That night is called Lailat-ul-Qadr or the Night of Majesty because it was on that night that the majestic and everlasting Divine guidance in the form of the Quran was granted to humanity. As the Quran says:

“The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Divine spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord - for every affair - peace, it is till the rising of the morning.”

This Divine gift, the Holy Quran, which is unique as a literary piece of literature, unique in its spiritual influence, unique in its style, unique in its comprehensive meanings, elegant and superb among the revealed books, has even suffered at the hands of its own followers. I will explain it briefly and will also tell you briefly what is the Ahmadiyya contribution in defending the integrity of the Quran.

It is a pity that inauthentic stories, mostly from Biblical sources, have found their way into most of the well-known commentaries of the Quran. These stories relate that Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham) lied three times; Hazrat Yusuf (Joseph) had illicit relations with Zulaikha; Hazrat Lut’s (Lot’s) daughters made him drunk and had sex with him; Hazrat Sulaiman (Solomon) worked magic and the Holy Prophet Muhammad was under the magic spell worked by a Jewish woman which made him forgetful. I am leaving these aside and would like to deal with some more fundamental issues which undermine the authenticity and integrity of the Holy Quran, namely its compilation, the theory of abrogation, and the meanings of the abbreviations given at the beginning of several chapters. You will be surprised to know that some of the leading modern Muslim scholars still entertain the idea that the Holy Quran was collected and compiled in the form of a complete Quran in the time of Hazrat Usman. This view has provided Western scholars with an occasion to raise objections about the authenticity of the Quran. Let us see how far this wrong notion has found its way into the writings of modern Muslim scholars. In his book A Young Muslim’s Guide to the Modern World Mr. Seyed Hossein Nasr, an Iranian-born scholar presently Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University, USA, and author of over twenty books, under the heading ‘The Noble Quran’ says:

“Gradually the verses were assembled, sometimes written on the bones of camels, sometimes on papyri but most of all upon the tablets of the hearts and breasts of the companions who heard the utterances from the mouth of the Prophet... And so, what had been written by the early kutub or people who had recorded the Quran, especially Ali and Zayd from the period of the life of the Prophet and the caliphate of Abu Bakr on, was assembled finally at the time of the caliphate of Uthman. The complete text of the Quran was put together and systemized according to the instructions of the Prophet himself resulting in the order of the 114 chapters, which we have today. Copies were then made of the definitive versions and sent to the four corners of the newly established Islamic world” (pp. 9, 10).

Before I quote what Maulana Muhammad Ali wrc. in this regard, I would like to read out to you some remarks made by the publishers about the book from which I have just quoted. It runs like this:

“The book is written by one of Islam’s greatest contemporary scholars. It was written specifically for Muslims, and in particular young Muslims - urging them to become familiar with their religion and to gain an understanding of the modern world from the Islamic point of view in order to respond positively to its challenges.”
And now I quote some of Maulana Muhammad Ali's observations and conclusions based on the Quran and authentic Hadith. He established that the Holy Quran was preserved both in writing and in memory under the direction of the Holy Prophet in his own lifetime. He says:

"Among those whom the Holy Prophet used to summon to write down portions of the Quran immediately after their revelation are mentioned names of Zaid ibn Thabit, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali etc... At Madinah, Zaid ibn Thabit was chiefly called upon to do this work...The Holy Prophet took the greatest care to have a writer and writing material with him under all conditions, and even when he had to fly for his life to Madinah, he still had writing material with him" (Bukhari 63:45).

So Seyyed Nasr's view that "most of all [it] was on the tablets of the hearts" is not correct and is against the facts of history. At Makkah in the earliest days, there were Abu Bakr, Ali, Khadija, wife of the Prophet, and others who wrote down the portions revealed. The Prophet took the greatest care to have a writer and writing material with him under all circumstances.

Now I come to the theory of abrogation. It means that a verse is considered to be abrogated or cancelled by another when the two cannot be reconciled with each other. This theory of abrogation has even been dragged to the extent that there are verses that do not exist now in the Quran but are in force, such as stoning to death of an adulterer. This wrong notion has led some to believe that the punishment of flogging in the Quran is meant for unmarried people and stoning to death is for the married ones. Anyhow, according to later commentators the figure of abrogated verses has been as high as five hundred. In this connection, Imam Jalaluddin Sayuti, one of the well-known classical commentators, brings the number of verses which he thinks to be abrogated down to twenty-one. Then the later writer and Mujaddid of the twelfth century Hijrah, the famous Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi, commenting on this in his Fauz al-Kabir, says that the abrogation cannot be proved in the case of sixteen out of Sayuti's twentyone verses, but in the case of the remaining five he is of the opinion that the verdict of abrogation is final.

Maulana Muhammad Ali, under the inspiration of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and the scholarly guidance of Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din, declared that the principle on which the theory of abrogation is based is unacceptable, being contrary to the clear teachings of the Quran. The Quran destroys this foundation when it declares that no part of it is at variance with another, when it says:

"Will they not then meditate on the Quran? And if it were from any other than Allah, they would have found in it many a discrepancy" (4:82).

The Maulana has established that even those five verses believed to stand abrogated by Shah Wali Ullah are perfectly correct in their sequence and context and thus the theory of abrogation falls to the ground on all considerations.

The third point with regard to the integrity of the Quran, which Ahmadi commentators have elucidated, is the abbreviations or muqatt'at as they are called in Arabic, such as alif lam mim, etc. These combinations of letters or single letters occur at the beginning of 29 chapters of the Quran. Almost all the Muslim and non-Muslim translators have left them untranslated. Their view is that the meanings of these abbreviations are only known to Allah or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and they carry no significance as far as the subject matter of their respective chapters is concerned. Several verses of the Quran show that everything mentioned in the Quran is "made easy", is "without any crookedness", is clear and is "in plain Arabic language". Arabs used similar letters in their poetry. Abbreviations are known to all languages. They are frequently used in English these days. Thus to consider abbreviations given in the Quran as meaningless is something very much against the integrity of the Quran as a Divine revelation. Maulana Muhammad Ali was the first Muslim translator who, as early as 1917, not only gave a translation of these abbreviations but also explained their significance and connection with their respective chapters. And that is why a monthly called the Islamic Digest in its issue of March 1996, published from Karachi, Pakistan, praised Maulana Muhammad Ali's contribution in this regard in these words:

"Maulvi Sahib's style is that he gives a summary of the subject at the beginning of each chapter. Then he explains how it relates to other chapters and verses. In depicting the relationship of one chapter with another, he puts emphasis on three points: firstly, the mutual relationship of the verses; secondly, the mutual relationship of the sections; and thirdly, the mutual relationship of the chapters."

On a previous occasion I told you that the author of a book called Quran aur Insan, published by Ferozsons, a well-known publisher of Lahore, Pakistan in
1995, commended Maulana Muhammad Ali’s Urdu translation in these words:

“Translation of the Holy Quran by the late Maulana Muhammad Ali...is to a large extent, literal and not an interpretation. For this reason, it expresses the Divine will in a far better way in the Urdu language” (p. 41).

Please remember that when Muhammad Asad’s translation was first published by Rabibah Alam Islamia, Makkah, its copies were later burnt as it was mostly in accord with the Ahmadiyya views.

Now listen to the review, and also the interesting remarks of the author of the recent commentary about the review:

“Muhammad Asad has very ably explained the message of the Quran in English. He has removed all doubts and wrong notions, which disturbed Western minds in the understanding of the Quran. His effort is also commendable because he has freed us completely in this respect from depending on the translation of the Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore.” (Our italics)

Now the remarks of the author about the review are:

"Here the reviewer, in spite of his hatred for Maulana Muhammad Ali, has confessed that before the publication of Muhammad Asad’s translation, the importance of the Maulana’s translation was quite evident, and that they could not dispense with this translation."

Brothers and Sisters, the person who reviewed Asad’s translation is a well-known Ahl-i Hadith speaker and scholar, Maulana Hanif Nadvi. The review was written in a preface to the third volume of Maulana Abul A’la Maududi’s Urdu translation and commentary of the Quran called Tafhimul Quran and the remarks about the review are made by an Ahl-i Quran scholar. In short, they all admit the Maulana’s English translation as an indispensable work. Undoubtedly the Maulana has defended and explained the Quran in a manner such that its integrity and glory has been thoroughly established.

This firm faith and deep commitment to uphold the dignity and integrity of the Quran was inspired by the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad into the hearts of his followers. They not only defended the Quran against all sorts of criticism of the opponents but even wrong notions of its own adherents. The Holy Founder also urged them to put their heart and soul to spread the Quran to the four corners of the world. The publication of its translation in Russian is the latest Lahore Ahmadiyya landmark in this field. A delegation of the U.S.A. Jamaat recently visited important Islamic centres in the former U.S.S.R., and has subsequently made arrangements for the free distribution of three thousand copies of this Russian translation of the Quran.

_The following couplet of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement expresses his deep love and devotion for the Quran:_

_The elegance and beauty of the Quran is the life-light of every Muslim_

_Qamar (the moon in the sky) may be the moon for others but truly our moon is the Quran_

_My heart yearns always to kiss, O Lord, Your revealed Book_

_And to go round the Quran as if it were my Ka’bah._

I am sure you will find these ideas expressed today a bit different from what are usually said from Muslim pulpits. But believe me, it was some of these, and much more valuable ideas expressed, which attracted The Times of London and BBC Television to cover ‘Id festivals at the Shah Jahan Mosque at Woking. The Mosque is still very much there. It has even been beautifully renovated now, but it has lost its international stature. Why? Because its sermons miss that rational, universal and liberal approach which is the hallmark of Islam. And nobody can deny the fact that ‘Id congregations at Woking attracted people from all over the UK and from all walks of life. If Islam is to bring light to the West, as is prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, then it has to be the way the Ahmadiyya Movement presents it. Today we are small in number, encased within the four walls of Wembley House, but a time will come when Ahmadiyya views will receive wide acceptance.

Brothers and Sisters, all this requires strong faith, deep commitment and concerted effort. On 27th December, ITV showed a programme about the humble origin of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) at Bethlehem where this uncrowned king of the Christian world was born. Its title was ‘Back to Bethlehem’. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, vigorously expounded that all that the
Church has ascribed to Jesus has no Biblical and historical support. There is another on-going TV programme on Channel 5, 'From Jesus to Christ.' These are clear signs that a serious thinking is going on in the Christian world to find out the original Jesus, and that will be the Jesus of the Quran. The Holy Founder also raised a slogan, "Back to the Quran", an aspect of which I have just now explained to you briefly. The Ahmadiyya drive about Islam was made towards the end of the last century. It is now steadily being recognised by enlightened Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. Being an Ahmadi I have a firm belief that a time is destined to come when researchers from the West would go down to Qadian, that remote village in Punjab, to see for themselves the place from where that clarion call for spreading the light of Islam to the West had its humble beginning.

ISLAM, PEACE AND TOLERANCE

By Zahid Aziz - Part 1

PREFACE

This booklet has been compiled to refute the widely prevailing but misconceived notion that Islam is a violent, ferocious and intolerant religion, which calls upon its followers to wage unceasing war, called jihad, against those who do not accept it. It is alleged that Islam prohibits all freedom of religion, propagates its message by force, and coerces its followers by threat of death penalty to remain within its fold. Another charge of the same kind is that Islam does not tolerate any criticisms of its teachings and urges the faithful to kill anyone who speaks against it.

These misconceptions have aroused a great deal of hostility against Islam in the West as well as alarm and fear, so much so that the Muslim religion is considered by many of its Western critics to be the gravest threat to civilisation which, they believe, they must counter and oppose by all available means. Unfortunately, some sections of Muslims, by their own intemperate words and actions, are reinforcing exactly this alarming image of Islam. The vast majorities of Muslims do not, of course, accept these extreme doctrines but have generally not realised the urgent and vital necessity of making strong, sustained efforts to remove these grave slurs from the good name of Islam and its Prophet Muhammad.

This book clarifies the teachings of Islam on the main issues that are raised in this connection. Its arguments and conclusions are based, firstly, on the Holy Quran and, secondly, on the leading books of Hadith, these being collections of verified reports of statements and actions of the Prophet Muhammad by his contemporary followers. I have provided full references to the sources and have checked all the quotations given here directly in the original books. Existing translations of the quoted Arabic sources, when available, have been indispensable to me, but I have on occasion varied some of their wording for greater clarity or accuracy. Some material in this booklet has been revised from articles by myself that have been published during 2006.

I have attempted to confront, directly and honestly, the issues and objections involved, without trying to avoid any difficult questions or indulging in superficial propaganda.

The perspective of Islam presented in this booklet is based on the writings of two most distinguished Islamic scholars and writers of the first half of the 20th century. They are Mualana Muhammad Ali of Lahore (d.1951), well known as the author of an English translation and commentary of the Quran and several other renowned books on Islam, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (d. 1932), the pioneer Muslim missionary to the West who founded the former Woking Muslim Mission at Woking in England. These luminaries of the Muslim faith had themselves been inspired by that great defender of Islam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908). Nonetheless, the case argued in this booklet must be judged on its own merits by its compliance with the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muahammad.

In the final Section I have compiled extracts from the writings of nine scholars of Islam, including two non-Muslim Europeans, who have drawn very similar conclusions about Islamic teachings on these issues to those that are argued in the body of this booklet.

Zahid Aziz, Dr.
October, 2006
1. Prophet Muhammad's life - offering friendship and peace to the world

To understand properly the treatment of the issues that this booklet address, it is necessary to know the main points of the life and mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This section aims to provide that information in brief.

The Prophet Muhammad (c. 571-632 C.E) was born among a people of no established religion, consisting of different tribes who worshipped tribal idols and other objects, although they believed in a supreme God above their gods. Knowledge and learning were very limited, and no system of justice, rights or law existed in the land, although there were tribal customs and codes. Might was right and moral values in all walks of life were at a low. Exploitation of the weak, slaves and women prevailed. Arabia had largely been untouched by the great civilizations and cultures that passed onto its north.

There were a few Jewish tribes and some Christians living in Arabia with claims to civilization, culture and high morals, but by the time of the Prophet Muhammad's advent their condition had also deteriorated and they had little reforming effect upon the Arabs.

The Prophet Muhammad, born in Makka [Often spelt as Mecca] in the leading Arab tribe of Qurais, had largely an uneventful life till the age of forty, going about his own business. He was, however, renowned for his honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and service to the poor. He felt more and more grieved at the fallen state of society around him. He began to retreat to a cave a few miles outside Makka for prayer, contemplation and fasting in isolation. He pondered on the meaning of life and how people could be reformed. During his exhortations he suddenly received his first revelation and with that his mind was illuminated and he was given a commission from God to be His Prophet. This happened in the year 609 C.E. Great founders of religions before him, Moses, Jesus and Buddha in particular, had subjected themselves to similar rigours before receiving law or teachings or enlightenment from God.

The Holy Prophet's revelations came to him over the next 23 years during the most varied circumstances of his life. It was revealed to him that God is One and He has ever been sending His messengers to the various nations of the world to deliver His guidance, and now God was raising Muhammad as a messenger and prophet just like they were raised. His mission was to present the same basic teachings as they had done, but in a broad, universal sense for the whole of humanity. So God is described at the very beginning of the Quran as "Lord of all the worlds", and is not the Lord exclusively of some particular nation. As Lord of all the worlds He sent His guidance to all nations, and Muslims are required to accept, as an article of faith, that the prophets and the Divine books of the earlier religions were sent by that same God. A Muslim accepts Abraham, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon and Jesus as true prophets of God, and as constituting a brotherhood to which the Prophet Muhammad also belongs. Whatever may be the views of a Muslim about the modern state of Isreal, still he respects and honors the man after whom Isreal is named, that is, the prophet Jacob. Muslims also accept the kingdoms of David and Solomon as the kingdoms of the prophets of God.

The second way in which the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad gave universal teachings was by declaring, in these words, that "mankind is a single nation" (2:213). All its races, peoples and religions are treated fairly and justly in God's ordinance. The Quran clearly states:

"O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female, and make you tribes and families that you may have knowledge of one another. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you." – 49:13

Excellence is not based on race, heredity, colour, language or even religious label, but on integrity and regard for duty. Salvation is also not based on belonging to a chosen nation, or holding some dogmatic belief, or applying some religious label to yourself. The Quran refers to the claims of Jews and of Christians that "None shall enter the Garden except he who is a Jew, or the Christians". It rejects such claims as "vain desires". It then does not go on to say: Not you, but Muslims will enter the Garden. Instead, it says:

"Nay, whoever submits himself whole-heartedly to Allah and he is the doer of good to others, he is the one who has is reward from the Lord." – 2:112

It means that whatever extent a person can do this, he receives his salvation accordingly. In another place the Quran tells mankind that:

"...for everyone of you We appointed a law and
a way. And if Allah had pleased He would have made you one religious community, but He wishes to try you in what He has given you. So vie with one another in virtuous deeds. To Allah you will all return, and He will then tell you about your differences." - 5:48

What different religions should compete in, is in the doing of virtuous deed, not fighting each other.

His revelation taught that everything should be based on principles of right and wrong, and not on favoritism towards the people of your own religion and injustice against others. Muslims are told:

"Help one another in works of righteousness and goodness, and help not one another in sin and aggression." - 5:2

So Muslims must join their fellow Muslims in the doing of good works, but not in committing wrongdoing and injustice out of misguided support for one's co-religionists. This verse also upholds the noble principle of correcting the people of your nation when they are on the wrong path. Muslims are also required to side with those who are truthful and not support those who act dishonestly, regardless of their religion:

"be with the truthful." - 9:119

"do not plead the cause of the dishonest." - 4:105

The Prophet Muhammad began his mission by preaching to his kinsfolk at Makka and round about. A few people accepted him. Opposition to him by his own tribesmen also began to grow, and he and his followers began to be persecuted. The persecution grew more bitter. Muslims were tortured and butchered. In some places the Prophet was attacked and injured by stoning. At Makka the Prophet's mission was rather like that of Jesus - a persecuted teacher. Some Muslims even had to seek refuge in Abyssinia, East Africa.

Later, people in the city of Madina, just over 200 miles to the north of Makka, started accepting Islam, and the persecuted Muslims of Makka began to emigrate to Madina. The Prophet Muhammad, with two closest followers, waited till gradually almost all other Muslims had left Makka. Then, while his opponents had finalised plans to murder the Prophet in his house, he and his senior-most follower, Abu Bakr, managed to leave Makka and hid in a cave a few miles outside while being pursued by their enemy. The lowest point in the history of Islam was reached when their pursuers reached the entrance to that cave. But they turned away, believing that cobwebs at the mouth of the cave indicated that no one could have gone inside. The Prophet Muhammad's escape from the jaws of the death represents his "resurrection", and this event was akin to the "sign of Jonah" prophesied by Jesus, of being in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights (Mathew 12:39-40).

At Madina, a completely new phase of the Prophet's life began in 622 C.E., after 13 years of his mission at Makka. He was now the head of a community as well as a city-state. It was here, over the next ten years, that the teachings of Islam relating to practice, as distinct from faith and doctrine, were revealed. These related both to purely religious functions, such as prayer and fasting, and to all material aspects of human life, such as social institutions, financial dealings, war and peace, state organisation. Like Moses, the Prophet Muhammad became a law-giver.

It was also in this period that the Muslims had to take up arms for the first time. Their enemies from Makka, of course kinsmen of the Prophet Muhammad raised an army to attack Madina. It was then that the Prophet Muhammad received revelation allowing Muslims to fight, but fight only in self-defense against only those who attacked them. And in this case fighting was allowed specifically to establish freedom of religion. That first revelation stated:

"Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made ... Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah. And if Allah did not repel some people by others, then cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered, would have been pulled down" - 22:39-40

So the Muslims were fighting for the right of every religion to be practised freely and openly.

Each of the three major battles fought was close to Madina, the last being a siege of Madina, the Muslims being vastly outnumbered in all cases, which shows that Muslims were fighting in sheer self-defense. But their enemy failed every time and gave up in the end. Like David, the Prophet Muhammad fought in battle in person. Eventually, a peace was agreed, and during the time of peace Islam spread very rapidly in Arabia. Two years later, when the people of Makka violated the peace treaty
the Prophet Muhammad marched on Makka and they had no option but to surrender. He conquered Makka almost bloodlessly, eight years after he was forced to leave it.

Upon his victorious entry into Makka, he addressed the leaders of that city, who had been his enemies, tortures and persecutors, asking:

“What treatment do you expect from me?”

Knowing that he was not vengeful but forgiving, they replied: “You are a noble brother, son of a noble brother”.

He then announced:

“There will be no reproof against you this day”
- no charges, trials or punishments. He forgave all his former persecutors. They were free to accept Islam or not.

The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad raised his people morally, spiritually, intellectually, and in terms of culture and civilisation, to a height which greatly exceeded anything existing at that time. This was why, after his death, within a century Islam spread over a large part of the world, establishing a great civilisation of learning and enlightenment. That civilisation prospered for a thousand years, until the rise of modern Western civilisation.

In the Quran, God describes the role of the Prophet Muhammad in the following words in ch.21, verse 107:

“We have not sent you but as a mercy to the nations.”

To all nations, races, peoples and religions of the worlds, the Prophet Muhammad is destined to be a mercy. [..To be continued in our next issue]

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS – Part I

By Maulana Muhammad Ali (written- 23 March 1928)

[Insha Allah (if God willing), it is intended to serialize Maulana Muhammad Ali’s book SECOND COMING OF Jesus, in every issues of our magazine].

INTRODUCTION

Is there any Muslim who is unaware of the fact that this age of Islam is the age of great misfortunes? The greatest of them all, the real cause of their decline and decay is their utter neglect of carrying the message and the knowledge of the truth of Islam to the world. On the one hand, there is the Qur’an, the fountainhead of spiritual knowledge, and on the other, the dry and parched world thirsting for this knowledge, but unable to find the water which all quench its thirst. In most parts of the world, illumined by the new scientific learning, the old religion has been relegated to the background and people are in search of the new one. Europe, in particular, the centre of material civilization at present, is in search of religion and is unknowingly moving towards accepting the principle teachings of the Qur’an. The need of the hour is that Muslims should pool their resources to make Europe and the rest of the Western world understand and admire the true teachings of Islam and spiritual treasures of the Qur’an. But when the negligence of a people towards these matters goes beyond its limit, the practice of God is that He sends a person to wake them up. Accordingly, he raised among the Muslims Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, as a mujaddid (renovator) at the head of the fourteenth century Hijrah so that he might show the light of Islam to a world groping in darkness, especially the Christians who had politically dominated the world. As he himself had said in a Persian couplet:

“As I have been given light for the Christian people, therefore, the name Ibn Maryam (son of Mary) has been bestowed on me.”

As the great mujaddid of this age was commissioned to re-form and rectify the errors of present-day Christianity, and to save Muslims and mankind in general from the false doctrines of Christianity, he was therefore also appointed as a messiah for this nation. In his heart was engraved such a deep passion for the service and propagation of Islam—the religion of unity and peace, the religion of light and guidance—that not only did he devote himself entirely to this noble task which Muslims had completely forgotten, but he also gathered around himself an enthusiastic band of followers who joined hands with him in his work, but as there are thorns where flowers grow, so, too, there are people who rise in opposition against those who are appointed by God to help the world. This happened in the case of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also. A group of people stood in his way and tried to wipe out his mission from the face of the earth.
But the tree which was planted by Allah cannot be uprooted and by the grace of Allah it is growing well in spite of all efforts to destroy it. In this small book, I have gathered all the points which relate to the claims of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement so that our Muslim brethren should reflect on them in a cool and dispassionate manner, and see that path towards which he wants to direct the attention of the Muslim ummah is the path of righteousness and is not in any way a deviation from the religion of Islam, even by a hair's breadth. On the other hand, all these matters which were made a source of serious objections by the opponents of Islam have been clarified in the light of the Qur'an and the Hadith. Similarly, the fulfilment of many of the prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad helped to increase our faith in the truth and dignity of Holy Prophet and that of Islam. A Muslim gains practically in every way by accepting and joining this Movement. In some way or other, he gets engaged in the service and progation of Islam and joins a party about which it has been mentioned in the Qur'an:

"And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong.
And these are they who are successful (3:103)

This Movement is distinguished from others in this age. Its main objective is to lead its followers exactly in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad. For self-purification, there are also mujahidat (spiritual exertions) in it, but only those mujahidat which were taught by the holy Prophet to his companions, that is, to exert oneself with one's life and property for the propagation and service of Islam. Thus this Movement is not devoid of mujahidat, but these spiritual exertions not only help in the upliftment of one's soul but also in the upliftment of the cause of Islam. In this way, this Movement has combined together spirituality, (ruhaniyyat) and jihad or tasawwuf (mysticism) and acquiring external knowledge ('ilm-i zahir) for the defence of Islam, for the greatest of jihad belongs to the realm of knowledge.
I have a request to make to Muslims in general, that they should study the history of the Movement themselves and do not pay any attention to hearsay. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has not claimed to be a prophet, he is a mujaddid and a servant of Islam. Any fair thinking person can easily decide about the teachings of this Movement after going through the ten conditions of ba'at (pledge of fealty) which are quoted below:

1. That until he is laid in his grave, he will shun all forms and shades of shirk (polytheism)
2. That he will guard against falsehood, fornication, evil sight and every form of sin, evil, cruelty, dishonesty, disorder and rebellion; that in moments of passion, he will on no account give in, however, boisterous that passion may be.
3. That without fail, he will say his prayers five times a day as enjoined by God and His Messenger and that, to the best of his power, he will say his midnight prayer, will invoke Divine blessings on the Holy Prophet, will ask forgiveness for his sins and will, with a truly loving heart, recall God's favors and glorify Him.
4. That he will do nothing in any ways to injure his fellow human beings in general and the Muslims in particular neither with the tongue nor with the hand in any other way.
5. That he will show fidelity to Allah under all circumstances alike in prosperity and adversity, in pleasure and pain, in time of bliss and affliction; that he will resign himself to God under all conditions and will cheerfully bare all hardships and humiliations in His way; that in the hour of the calamity he will not turn His back but will step yet onward.
6. That he will eschew observance of evil customs or following the prompting of his lower nature; that he will thoroughly submit to the guidance of the Holy Qur'an; and that in every walk of life he will hold the Word of God of his Messenger as his guiding principle.
7. That he will totally abstain from haughtiness and will live in humility, meekness and mildness.
8. That he will hold the honour of religion and sympathy for Islam dearer than everything else-dearer than his life, his wealth, his honour, his children, his kith and kin.
9. That he will make it a rule of his life to show sympathy towards all human beings out of love for God and that, to the best of his power, he will use all his God-given faculties and blessings for the benefit of humanity.
10. That, binding himself with me (i.e. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam), in a fraternal bond in the way of Allah, he will obey me in everything good, and will live up to his pledge till his death; that in this fraternal bond he will show such sincerity as is not met with in cases of blood relations or other worldly connections.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

As regards the publication of second edition of the book, The Promised Messiah, I could not find time to revise it and make the necessary changes, particularly because I was extremely busy with the translation of the shorter edition of the Qur'an. The book is, therefore, a reprint of the first edition. It will suffice here to mention a few points which I think must be put before my Muslim brethren.

1. Assessing the truth of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s mission

There are many people who are bent on opposing Mirza Ghulam Ahmad without thinking of, or understanding the true nature of his mission. They never take the time to ponder whether he was beneficial or not to the cause of Islam and Muslims in general. Remember well, that the question of good and bad is the question of actual facts and not one of religious beliefs and opinions. At the moment, I do not want to discuss what the claims of Hazrat Mirza are and whether they are in any way opposed to the beliefs of the Ahl-I Sunnah al-Jama’ah. This question can only be raised when there exists a doubt about it. When he has declared not only once, but scores of times that his beliefs of the Ahl-I Sunnah, the question of discussing these beliefs does not arise. Thus the point at issue is only whether Hazrat Mirza has been harmful or beneficial to the cause of Islam and Muslim in the world.

2. He did not create dissension among Muslims

In what ways has he been harmful? The greatest charge attributed to him is that he has damaged the solidarity of Islam by creating a new sect. He is even asserted by intelligent Muslims, but they never take the trouble to look into the facts. Did unity among Muslims exist before him? The fact is that Muslims were fighting against one another over things of minor importance, thus sundering and disrupting the unity of Islam.

The condition in India was such that cases of quarrels over the saying of Amin in a loud or low voice were brought before the High Court. Pronouncing one another as unbelievers (kafir) was the main occupation of the Muslim ‘ulama.

Where was the unity of Islam which was damaged by Hazrat Mirza? Perhaps somebody can lay the charge that with the appearance of Hazrat Mirza on the scene, the differences among Muslims were further augmented. If he had, in fact, drawn the attention to the trivial matters over which Muslims were already fighting, then, this new sect or new Movement should undoubtedly be blamed for expanding the dissension among Muslims. But in spite of this, a storm of opposition was raised among the claims of Hazrat Mirza and pronouncements of heresy were issued against him and a lot of his time was wasted in clarifying his position. Still, he turned the greater part of the activities of his followers towards defending and propagating the message of Islam in India and abroad. He wished the ulama were patient with him for some time and see whether his mission was for the good of Islam or not, and if it damaged the interest of Islam, they would have been justified in their campaign against him, but no one really listened to him. In spite of all that, he produced valuable literature about Christianity and the Arya Samaj and this was extensively used even by his opponents for the defence of Islam against the powerful onslaughts of the Christians and the Arya Samajists. Another contemporary movement among Muslims which came into existence at the same time was that of the Ahl-i Qur’an (People of the Qur’an). As this movement was not based on the Qur’anic verse, He sends down angels with revelation by His command on whom He pleases of His servants (16:2), therefore all its energy was spent on the minor internal problems in which Muslims were already deeply engrossed. If it is said that this movement of the Ahl-i Qur’an, in fact, increased the existing dissension among Muslims, it would be nearer to the truth. But a movement which was particularly made the target of attacks by the ulama of Islam and did their best to destroy it completely, was a movement which, in fact, became the source of strengthening the cause of Islam. Instead of entangling itself in internal skirmishes, it stood in defence of Islam against its external foes. To say that this Movement has enlarged the gulf or dissension among Muslims is to close one’s eye to relevant facts. The day all Muslims sects unite against the foes of Islam will disappear. Hazrat Mirza revived the principle that if there are ninety-nine signs of dis-belief (kufr) in a person and only one indication of Islam, that person should still be considered a Muslim. This has laid down a solid foundation for the unity of Islam. If this principle is accepted by Muslims, it will have far reaching effects on them and will give back to them their lost power and glory.

Some people, by neglecting the distinction between sectarianism and difference of opinion, regard all differences of opinion as an attempt at creating disharmony and discord in Islam. The Qur’an says:

As for those who split up their religion and became sects, thou hast no concern with them (6:160)

The meaning of splitting up the unity of religion and becoming divided into sects is obvious, but some people have a wrong understanding of this verse. It does not and could not mean that Muslims should not differ with one another in any respect. It was, however, not surprising to find differences of opinion in a nation that was spread all over the world. The Holy Prophet had declared difference of opinion to be a mercy for his ummah. Difference only comes into existence by the expression of an opinion which in turn helps to clarify and improve the intellectual and mental faculties of a person. Islam advocates
unity, but unity in the principles of religion. In other matters in Islam, there is wide scope for differences. Becoming divided into sects and having differences of opinion are not one and the same thing. Sectarianism is a curse but difference of opinion is a blessing. The companions of the Holy Prophet themselves differed on certain questions although the Qur'an was revealed in their presence, and the words of the Holy Prophet reached their ears and they were direct recipients of spiritual blessings from them.

3. What is Sectarianism?
The Kharijites [Literally means "those who went out." Kharijites were members of the earliest of the religious of sects of Islam which rose during the time of Hazrat 'Ali, the fourth Khalifah. They were known for their fanaticism, extremist proclamations and terrorist actions. They branded everyone who disagreed with their point of view and infidel and outside the pale of Islam. (SMT)] were the first who were responsible for the creation of sects in Islam. There have been reports in which it has clearly been mentioned about them that they shattered the solidarity of Muslims, not because they differed with the companions of the Holy Prophet on some matters, for difference existed among the companion also, but because it was they who started takfir (pronouncement of unbelief) among Muslims. At the same time, Hazrat 'Ali and Hazrat Mu'awiyah were engaged in a battle. The Kharijites sided with 'Ali but they demanded that Ali should declare Mu'awiyah and his collaborators kafirs (unbelievers) and outside the pale of Islam. Hazrat 'Ali refused to do so and clearly said:

"They are also our brothers who have revolted against us; we do not declare them unbelievers or transgressors (fasiqs).

If some thought is given to the verses of the Qur'an on this point, it would be clear that Muslims have been forbidden from two things; these are, from becoming divided into sects and from splitting up the religion. Both of these are the result of takfir. Any group that declares the other to be kafir (perhaps that group is greater in number and calls itself the greatest group among Muslims), when it indulges in the takfir of the professors in the Kalimah (there is but One God and Muhammad is his Messenger), has indeed created divisions in the ranks of Islam and has destroyed the basis on which Muslims could unite. When the essence of religion is confined to a few problems in which one group differs with the other, and the principles of faith are completely neglected, this is how the religion is split. The result is that all one's energy is wasted on the matters of peripheral importance. The parties are so engaged in such trivial differences that nobody cares whether the foundation of faith is been destroyed. The basis of sectarianism is, therefore, the pronouncement of unbelief (takfir) against Muslims. The sad aspect of the story is that when people start condemning one another over minor differences, the strength of the nation becomes weak. Power which ought to have been used for progress of Islam is frittered away in trying to decry one another.

When the Qur'an laid the great foundation of Islamic brother-hood and stated: Innamal mu'minuna ikhwatun (Verily the believers are brethren-49:10), it did not overlook the possibility of the rise of honest differences among Muslims. At the same place it was pointed out that if two parties of the believers quarrel make peace between them (49:9). Now, both the contending parties have been considered believers here. This is the lesson, which Muslims have forgotten today. The tolerance which Muslims were expected to show towards the followers of other religions should have been observed to a greater extent among themselves. They ought to have learnt to respect the ideas of others and to tolerate differences of opinion among themselves. But their present condition is such that the moment a person differs from them on any point he is immediately declared to be an unbeliever and a heretic. To torture and molest him in all possible way is regarded as a deed of great virtue. The main problem is that among Muslims there are people who differ in their opinions, which is, however, one of the essential requisites for the progress of Islam, but that Muslims cannot tolerate honest difference of opinion. On the other hand, the companions of the Holy Prophet showed great broadmindedness regarding the diversity of views among themselves.

If, however, a people differ with other people on same matters and they prefer a different opinion, this cannot be called sectarianism. When on one account of this difference, one brother Muslim is declared an unbeliever and is subjected to persecution, which is mistakenly thought to be meritorious deed and a source of great reward (thawab), it is then that the evils of sectarianism take root in a society. A person is not guilty of sectarianism when, having complete faith in the Kalimah and the Qur'an as the word of God, he considers some of the ideas or customs and habits of Muslims as being against the Qur'an and Hadith. If this is sectarianism, then the scope for the reformation of Muslims will be closed. The day when Muslims are divided from the curse of takfir, the day when they cease making plans for destroying one another, their differences will indeed be a blessing in disguise.

4. The importance of little things
Perhaps it can be said that the Founder of the
Ahmadiyya Movement is himself responsible for disputes on many matters of minor importance. It should be remembered that he has only drawn attention to problems which in their existing forms were detrimental to the cause of Islam on the one hand, and were becoming a source of strength to the enemies of Islam on the other. For instance, he has indeed laid emphasis on the question of the death of Jesus Christ, the main reason being that Muslims, though they denied the godhead of Jesus Christ, had inadvertently made him an associate in some of the attributes of God. In the struggle between Islam and Christianity, the Christian missionaries used the unfounded beliefs of the Muslims, as a weapon against Islam. They led many Muslims astray by arguing that according to Muslims, Jesus Christ was alive with his temporal body, without eating and drinking, in the fourth heaven, and that his body had not undergone any change, as if it were completely different from the bodies of all other prophets. They would often compare the Prophet Muhammad with Jesus Christ by saying that one lay in the ground and the other was alive in heaven and that God had made a general rule for the Prophets that He did not give them bodies not eating food, nor did they abide (21:8) but that Jesus was an exception to this rule and therefore he was a superior being to other messengers. It was also argued that he shared the divine attribute of being now as he ever was, because of the last two thousand years no change had taken place in his body. It was to eradicate this false belief from the minds of Muslims that the founder had to devote his attention to this problem.

Similarly, the preposterous thought that the Mahdi would spread Islam at the point of the sword was another weapon which was extensively used against Muslims. Such a belief in a way lent credence to the allegations against Islam that it was indeed spread by the sword. By his claims that he was the Messiah and the Mahdi promised in the Traditions, the Founder removed completely from the way of Islam two serious obstacles and by so doing opened new vistas for the propagation of Islam. He did not engage himself in the disputes in which the Muslim ulama at that time were completely engrossed. On the other hand, he guided his followers towards the liberal view that, in spite of these differences, Muslims could still become a united body. This was the secret of his success. He delivered Muslims from a meaningless occupation and directed their attention to a work of real value.

5. The advantage of his claims
A little consideration will show that the points on which the Ahmadiyya Movement has been considered harmful have, in fact, been the source of great benefit to Muslims. The objection that a useless discussion has sprung up about the Founder's claims of being the Promised Messiah and the Mahdi, is the result of the lack of serious reflection. The two so-called beliefs, one in the temporal life of Jesus Christ and the other a warrior mahdi, were extremely damaging to Islam. Their extirpation was not possible in any other way except that God, by giving a person the names of Messiah and mahdi, should demonstrate to the world that Islam was neither in need of an Israelite prophet from heaven, nor the sword of the so-called warrior mahdi. Islam was going to dominate the world by its sublime principles and by its inherent spiritual powers. This was the great task for which the Mujaddid of the fourteenth century was raised, so that it might clear the way for the progress of Islam in the world. The claims of the Founder, over which Muslims are stumbling by shutting their eyes to the pertinent facts, are, in reality, the source of real benefit to Muslims on the one hand, and the source of protecting Islam against the attacks of its enemies on the other. God alone knows when the eyes of our people will open and they will respond to the call of the person who suffered every kind of persecution but could not bear to see the cause of Islam should suffer. He was considered the only champion prior to his claims and had earned great respect in the hearts of Muslims, something for which a worldly-minded person would have had a great yearning. However, for the ultimate good of Islam and Muslims, he turned his back on this worldly honour and esteem. He did not care that he should be respected. The only passion he had was that Islam should be respected—that Islam and Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, should become dear to the world. In the love of the Messenger of God he did not care if anyone called him a kafir.

"After the love of God I am intoxicated in the love of Muhammad. If this is unbelief, by God, I am the greatest of unbelievers."

6. The beneficial aspects of Ahmadiyya Movement
As compared to the supposedly detrimental aspect of the Ahmadiyya Movement, let us now consider what actual benefits Muslims and Islam received at the hands of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Had he not appeared, all the Islamic literature which his followers have produced would not have come into existence. Neither would there have been translations of the Qur'an nor other literature in English and German and other languages. The lost teachings and the true principles of Islam would not have been received nor would have been any missions in England, Germany and America. Europeans would not have become Muslims, nor would the voice of Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest) be raised in places where unbelief once reigned. The yeoman service which Ahmadis have rendered in defending and strengthening Islam in India cannot
be ignored by any fair-minded historian of Islam. Let every Muslim think for himself whether or not the Ahmadiyya Movement has been beneficial to the cause of Islam.

As to our opponents, I will ask them a few questions. Why are they provoked at the name of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the Ahmadiyya Movement, and why are they not disturbed at the attacks of Christian missionaries and Arya Samajists against Islam? Why do they not take note of the hostile forces working against Islam, and why are they bent on annihilating a Movement that exists only for the service of Islam? How painful is it that a thing which is of real value is considered to be worthless, a Movement which stands for Islam is considered to be a thorn in the side of Islam, and Ahmadis who have pledged themselves to live and die for Islam are being hated by their fellow-Muslims! This is indeed very sad but remember well that it has been said in the Qur'an:

As for that which does good to men, it tarry in the earth (13:17)

Anything which works for the good of men is never destroyed. Ahmadiyyat stands for the good of mankind, and therefore it cannot be destroyed. Hence, do not fight against the laws of God. Do not close your eyes to plain facts. Remove the feelings of rancour and hatred from your hearts about this Movement. Try to understand things and learn to love the cause for which this Movement stands. Your hatred now is not hatred against Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, because he is dead; it is hatred against the service of Islam. If you love this Movement, this will prove your love only for Islam and nothing else.

7. The revival of the defence and propagation of Islam

I again declare that if any person looks at the events of the last thirty years he will realise that it is Ahmadiyyat which has created the passion for the propagation of Islam among Muslims. Muslims were, on the whole, embroiled in their petty disputes and had practically no organization for the propagation of Islam. It was Ahmadiyyat which revived the work of the defence and extension of Islam in the world. It was Ahmadiyyat which carried the torch of Islam to Europe in this age. It was Ahmadiyyat which defended Islam against attacks of Christian and Arya Samajists preachers. In short, towards the preaching and propagation of Islam, on which depend the secret of the life and success of Muslims, there were only one community which drew the attention of Muslims, and the community was linked with the Mujaddid (Renovator) of this century. If the Ahmadiyya Movement had done nothing else except arouse the passion for this protection and propagation of Islam in the hearts of Muslims, this was a great achievement on the part of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, to whom Muslims ought really to have paid homage for his services. They should have joined hands with him in this noble work. If the followers of this small organization, momentarily quite insignificant when compared with the vast number of Muslims in the world, could achieve what they have with their limited means, what a great revolution might have been created had Muslims unanimously supported them in their activities. Thousands in India, Europe and other parts of the world would have seen the light of the Qur'an. Now, consider for a moment on whose shoulders lies the sin of their not seeing the light of Islam. Of course, on the shoulders of those who look with their own eyes at the work which serves the interests of Islam and Muslims, but refuse to lend a hand of co-operation. It is not criminal disregard and neglect as far as the service of Islam is connected? Alas, the plant of Islam is becoming dry before our eyes and there is none to water it. Perhaps it sometimes brings tears to our eyes but we lack the resolution to join those who are trying to nourish it with their own blood.

"Oh Allah, have mercy on the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him)."

[To be continued in our next issue.]

YUSUF ALI AND DARYABADI'S QURAN TRANSLATIONS - AN EVALUATION NEARER THEIR TIME OF PUBLICATION

[We reproduce below the editorial which appeared in 'The Light' in its issue of July 1, 1943.]

The late Allama Iqbal had a wonderful knack for exposing things by turning his flashes of wit on them. One of such wit-flashes about a Punjab Knight and his appearance at a party in dinner suit is already public property. Another of his flashes which is not so commonly known illustrates the point which forms the theme of these reflections. A Shia friend once called upon the Poet as he was lying on his charpai, enjoying the soothing puffs of his faithful huqqa, and during the conversation put to him the question: "Who in your opinion has been the greatest mazloom, i.e., most wronged against", expecting, of course, the reply that it was the great martyr of Karbala, Hazrat Imam Husain. To his utter bewilderment, however, came the reply, as if with a flash, that the greatest mazloom (aggrieved) was the Quran. Disappointed, the visitor asked how the Quran was the greatest mazloom. "Why," rejoined the Poet, "it has fallen into the hands of Abdullah Yusuf Ali." Mr. A. Yusuf Ali was at the time writing a
translation of the Quran into English.

Mr. Yusaf Ali, better known as Allama Yusaf Ali, is no doubt a great scholar of English and possesses a great command over the language. But to Arabic, the language of the Quran which he had undertaken to render into English, he is a perfect stranger. To enter upon a holy undertaking like giving the world the Quranic message in English with such poor credentials was an outrage that could hardly escape the vigilant eye of Iqbal. The rebuke was richly deserved.

It was a purely business venture. Neither the author nor the publisher had any interest in it except the sale that it would command. As it happened, Maulana Muhammad Ali’s English Translation had by the time won universal popularity and esteem throughout the world. It was, however, not difficult to smooth the way for the new venture. In India any mountebank who panders to sectarian passions is sure of a hearing. The new Translation was advertised as an “orthodox” translation and when people took exception to certain texts rendered in an unorthodox way, the translation was changed in a revised edition just to suit popular notions. For a time the trick paid. The slogan of orthodoxy was exploited. But it was soon discovered that excellent as it was as a piece of English composition, as a translation of the Quran and a commentary to get at the underlying message of the Word of God, Yusaf Ali’s Translation was positively misleading.

In the present issue we reproduce reviews on another translation of the Quran into English, one from the Eastern Times of Lahore, the other from the Dawn of Delhi. As a perusal of these would show, this new venture has also failed to justify itself. The author, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, certainly knows more of Arabic than Abdullah Yusaf Ali. He has certainly spent devout pains and thought on it too. Nevertheless, we are pained to see that the result of all his labours that has appeared in the form of Part 1 has looked very severe criticism. The Eastern Times reviewer thinks it is full of grammatical mistakes and clumsy constructions. The Dawn reviewer is equally merciless. He says:

“No long ago Mr. A. Yusaf Ali translated the Holy Quran with the palpable disadvantage of not at all knowing the Arabic language, but his translation was at least readable in that it was couched in chaste English. Any new effort called for a distinct improvement. The Maulana (Abdul Majid) who has a passing acquaintance with Ara-

bic’ is not possessed of the gift of rendering his thoughts into good English.” [Z. A. Suleri, The Dawn, Delhi]

Herein lies the greatest weakness of this new attempt at translating the Quran into English. The least recommendation that a translation must possess is that it must be free from palpable mistakes and it must be readable enough. According to the reviews both in the Eastern Times and the Dawn, neither of these merits can be claimed for this new translation and it is painful to see that all this labour and expense should have been undertaken without any corresponding advantage, so far as the dissemination of the Quranic message is concerned.

There will always be room for a re-interpretation of the Quranic message. The Quran is a message for all time to come. It is a fathomless ocean of wisdom and truth, containing light and healing for the changing needs and ills of all the infinite generations yet unborn. Someone shall always be needed to delve deep into this ocean and bring out its priceless pearls of wisdom for the good of mankind. But such a man must be gifted with a qualification which is so commonly and conveniently ignored. This qualification has been laid down by the Quran itself when it says:

“No one but the pure shall have a grasp of it.”

(56:79)

Purity of soul, Godliness, spiritual elevation - this must be the first and foremost equipment of a would-be translator of the Quran. The Quran is a spiritual wave from God and only those with mental receivers well-attuned to those waves are capable of catching them. With all respect to Allama Yusaf Ali and his scholarship in English, not the best of his friends would suspect him of the least weakness for things spiritual. A typical product of the Western civilization, he is simply incapable of bringing anything but that gross coarse mental outlook to bear upon that fine message from God. His beautiful English cannot make up for this temperamentally incapacity for the great task.

It is wrong to suppose that in order to get at the essence of the Quranic message and render it into another language, one need only be a scholar in Arabic or the language of the translation. Abu Jahl was certainly well-versed in the niceties of the Arabic literature but he failed to see the light of the Quran. What is needed, above all else, is the spiritually attuned mind. That is the first pre-requisite but for which no other qualification can carry a transla-
tion very far. Given that, one must have command both of Arabic and the language of the translation. The best results can be expected only when all of these three factors combine.

Abdullah Yusaf Ali was utterly bankrupt, so far as the two main of these factors were concerned and small wonder that a lover of Islam like Iqbal lost patience at his presumptuousness to translate the Quran. Maulana Abdul Majid is decidedly a much superior man, so far as an Islamic heart and Arabic knowledge are concerned. His poor English, however, has greatly crippled his attempt.

If Maulana Muhammad Ali’s translation still holds the field, in the face of so many subsequent attempts, if it still remains to be the best dependable means to get at the spirit of the Quranic message, the reason is that in him all the three factors are found combined in a decidedly much higher degree. So far as attunement of soul to things spiritual is concerned, he stands perhaps all alone as a solitary figure in the world of religion. His life has been a dedication to the dissemination of the light of Islam ever since he stepped out of the portals of the University laden with academic degrees. As the late Mr. Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall says of him, while reviewing one of his many books on Islam, The Religion of Islam:

“Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore.”

Maulana Abdul Majid himself, while announcing in his paper Sach his idea to bring out an English translation of the Quran, observes:

“To deny the good qualities of Maulana Muhammad Ali’s translation, to deny its impression on the mind, to deny its success as a missionary weapon, is to deny the light of the sun. It has been decidedly helpful in making thousands of strangers into friends, in bringing thousands of sceptics nearer to Islam. From my personal experience I must confess with pleasure that some 15 or 16 years ago when I was wandering about in the dark wilderness of doubt and unfaith, this English translation was one of the very few books which helped me come nearer Islam. The namesake of the translator, Maulana Muhammad Ali of the Comrade, was similarly impressed and always praised it.”

Now here is some food for thought for Maulana Abdul Majid and everyone else who cares to approach the question with the seriousness and openness of mind it deserves. What is it, after all, that has lent Maulana Muhammad Ali’s Translation the magic of infusing faith into sceptical hearts and winning them over to Islam? How is it that although so many attempts were made after that not one can claim a fraction of that wonderful alchemy which sinks into the heart of man and transmutes it?

The answer is not far to seek. As we said, it is not mere book knowledge that is needed for an insight into the deepest beauties of Islam. There is a sixth sense that is needed - the soul-sense that is born of purity and devotion to God.

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**DR ZAKIR NAIK AND THE LAHORE AHMADIYYA BOOK MUHAMMAD IN WORLD SCRIPTURES**

*His article is a summary of our book.*

Compiled by Zahid Aziz

Our active friend Dr Rashid Jahangiri from the USA has found a remarkable similarity between talks presented on television by Dr Zakir Naik, the famous Indian lecturer on Islam, on the subject of prophecies about the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in Hindu scriptures and the coverage of the same subject in the well-known book Muhammad in World Scriptures by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, the great scholar of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement.

To carry out a more detailed comparison, I have checked Dr Naik’s article Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Hindu Scriptures against the first edition of Muhammad in World Scriptures, chapter III: ‘The Prophet in the Hindu Scriptures’.

The version of his article I refer to here is on the website of his own organisation IRF (Islamic Research Foundation) at the following link:

[www.irf.net/irf/comparativereligion/middle/hinduism/muhammad.htm](http://www.irf.net/irf/comparativereligion/middle/hinduism/muhammad.htm)
The edition of Muhammad in World Scriptures I refer to below is on the website www.aail.org and is reached by going to the Books link and looking under the name of the author Abdul Haq Vidyarthi. This book was first published in 1940 (which, to put it into perspective, is 25 years before Dr Zakir Naik was born).

A comparison
Zakir Naik’s article gives various prophecies under four headings. Under the first heading (I) are three prophecies from the book Bhavishya Purana. The first of these is given as follows:

“A malecha (belonging to a foreign country and speaking a foreign language) spiritual teacher will appear with his companions. His name will be Mohammad. Raja (Bhoj), after giving this Maha Dev Arab (of angelic disposition) a bath in the Panchgavya and the Ganga water (i.e. purifying him of all sins), offered him the present of his sincere devotion and showing him all reverence said, I make obeisance to thee. O Ye! The pride of mankind, the dweller in Arabia, Ye have collected a great force to kill the Devil and you yourself have been protected from the malecha opponents.”

This is also the first prophecy in Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi’s book, and its translation appears on pages 61–62. It is identical with the quotation in Zakir Naik’s article.1

After quoting the prophecy, Zakir Naik’s article draws out six points from it. The Maulana, after quoting the prophecy, lists ten points. We find that Zakir Naik’s first three points are the same as the Maulana’s first three points, and his points (4), (5) and (6) are the same as numbers (10), (7) and (6) respectively of the Maulana. The wording is also very similar. For example, point (3) in both begins with the words: “Special mention is made of the companions of the Prophet”.

Following these six points, there are two further comments in Zakir Naik’s article. The first is in an- swer to the objection that Raja Bhoj lived in the 11th century C.E. The objection and its answer as given in this article are exactly as in the Maulana’s book, namely, that there was not just one Raja Bhoj. The article says:

“The Egyptian Monarchs were called as Pharaoh and the Roman Kings were known as Caesar, similarly the Indian Rajas were given the title of Bhoj.”

while the Maulana’s book has:

“Just as the Egyptian monarchs were known as Pharaohs and the Roman kings were called Kaisers, similarly, the Indian rajas were given the epithet of Bhoj.” (p. 62)

The second comment relates to the part of the prophecy about giving the promised one a bath in the Ganges, and the article says:

“The Prophet did not physically take a bath in the Panchgavya and the water of Ganges. Since the water of Ganges is considered holy, taking bath in the Ganges is an idiom, which means washing away sins or immunity from all sorts of sins. Here the prophecy implies that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sinless, i.e. Maasoom.”

The same comment is found in the Maulana’s book in the following words:

“Another point which requires elucidation is the Prophet’s taking bath in ‘Panchgavya’ and the water of the Ganges. This did not, of course, actually happen as it was only a vision; so we give it the interpretation that the Prophet will be purged of and made immune from all sorts of sins.”

The second prophecy from the book Bhavishya Purana in Zakir Naik’s article is also the second prophecy in the Maulana’s chapter (p. 64). It begins with the words:

“The Malecha have spoiled the well-known land of the Arabs. Arya Dharma is not to be found in the country. …”

1 Except that in the Maulana’s book the word malecha is spelt as malechha, and his quotation has the following extra words at the end: “O Ye! The image of the Most Pious God, the biggest Lord, I am a slave to thee, take me as one lying on thy feet.”
The wording of the entire prophecy (of which about one-tenth is given above) is identical in the article and the book. Following the prophecy, Zakir Naik’s article makes ten points about it, while the Maulana’s book makes twelve points. Naik’s first two points are the same as the Maulana’s first two points. His 3rd to his 10th point are the same as the Maulana’s points (5) to (12), in the same order.

The third and final prophecy from the book Bhavishya Purana in Zakir Naik’s article begins as follows:

“Corruption and persecution are found in seven sacred cities of Kashi, etc....”

In the Maulana’s book also, this is the next prophecy, and is given in almost the same words (pages 65–66).

We now reach the second heading (II) in Zakir Naik’s article. Under this are given three prophecies from the Atharva Veda. In the Maulana’s book also, these are the prophecies that occur next. Each and every point noted in the article about these prophecies is to be found in the Maulana’s book, in the same order, from pages 67 to 115. Below I list the chief aspects of these prophecies as mentioned in Zakir Naik’s article and place in parenthesis the page number in Muhammad in World Scriptures where the same is mentioned:

- Kuntap, which is the name of some chapters of the Atharva Veda, stands for Bakkah, a name of Makkah (p. 68–69).
- The word Narashansah means ‘the praised one’ and refers to the Holy Prophet (p. 71).
- The Holy Prophet is prophesied as the camel-riding rishi (p. 73–74).
- He is called Mamah Rishi and given certain signs such as a hundred gold coins, ten chaplets, etc. (p. 76–82).
- He is called Rebh, which means the same as the name ‘Ahmad’ (p. 83).
- The battle of the Allies of the Holy Prophet’s time is described and the word karoh refers to the Holy Prophet (p. 106–108).
- The conquest of Makka is prophesied and the Holy Prophet is termed as an abandhu, meaning a helpless man (p. 114–115).

Coming now to the third heading (III) in Zakir Naik’s article, under it one prophecy is briefly mentioned, to the effect that the Sanskrit word sushrava in the Rig Veda applies to the Holy Prophet. The same is in the Maulana’s book on page 115.

The fourth and final heading in Zakir Naik’s article gives one prophecy, which is from the Sama Veda, and it is translated as follows:

“Ahmed acquired from his Lord the knowledge of eternal law. I received light from him just as from the sun.”

This prophecy is found in similar words in the Maulana’s book on page 129. Zakir Naik’s article then makes three points about this prophecy. The first of these is that the word ‘Ahmad’ here has been read by previous translators not as a name but as Ahm at hi and therefore they translated the mantra as: “I alone have acquired the real wisdom of my father”. These three points under this prophecy are found in the Maulana’s discussion on page 129.

At this point Zakir Naik’s article comes to an end and so does the chapter ‘The Prophet in the Hindu Scriptures’ in Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi’s book come to a close on page 130.

It can be seen that the article by Zakir Naik is nothing at all more than a greatly compressed version of certain parts of the Maulana’s treatment of the subject, following exactly the same order as in the Maulana’s book. No doubt a later author can make use of the work of an earlier one, but if he benefits substantially from it then integrity requires that he must acknowledge the source. In this case, the later author has merely repeated the results of the earlier work without any contribution at all by himself, and with no mention of the earlier work.

We may add here that the Maulana’s book was the result of his own deep study and research, after he had mastered the Sanskrit language around the years 1915–16. His knowledge of Sanskrit and the Hindu scriptures is demonstrated by his translation of Yajur Veda from Sanskrit to Urdu, and moreover by his public debates in pre-partition India with the Arya Samaj pandits in the presence of tens of thousands of people.
A famous debate
A debate on this topic took place in Diwan Hall, Delhi, on 5th February 1944, at which the prophecy about “A Praised One, Camel Rider” mentioned in the Atharvaa Veda was exhaustively debated between the Maulana and opposing pandits. (This is the prophecy in Zakir Naik’s article under the second heading.) As the annual conference of the Arya Samaj was taking place at the time in Delhi, their leading scholars were present. The Arya Samaj had challenged other religions to debates, and the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam of Delhi had accepted the challenge for Muslims. The topic of the debate was: “The truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is established from the prophecies contained in the Vedas”. There were some 25 Arya Pandits on the stage. Reports tell us that, in response to the arguments put forward by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, the scholarly Arya representative, Pandit Diyas Dev Ji Shastri, was unable to give any other interpretation to these words than as a prophecy. A report says:

“In response to the arguments of Maulana Abdul Haq, Pandit Diyas Dev Ji tried to create many complications but the Maulana cleared them all and issued the challenge that in the whole history of India there has not been any Mamah Rishi. If there has been, he should be put forward.

Maulana Abdul Haq read out the prophecy again and again, but Pandit Diyas Dev Ji was unable to give any explanation, despite his scholarship and learning. Muslims were ecstatic and were sending blessings on the Holy Prophet. It seemed as if what Allah has described as the descent of angels, which was witnessed by Muslims in the battle of the time of the Holy Prophet, was taking place. The Promised Messiah has called debates with the opponents of Islam as being the ‘holy wars’ of this age. In this ‘holy war’ at Delhi, Muslims witnessed the coming of angels, when on the one side was the solitary figure of Maulana Abdul Haq and on the other was a large number of Arya scholars of Sanskrit, but the call that was sounded from heaven was: Al-Haq fi Al-i Muhammad (the truth is with the followers of Muhammad).

Before the conclusion of the debate, Maulana Sayyid Akhtar Husain Gilani [co-chairman of the proceedings on behalf of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman] made a strong appeal to Muslims to refrain from raising any slogans of victory as this would offend the Hindus, but to leave the hall in a calm and orderly manner. Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi’s rational style of argumentation, his virtuous behaviour, courtesy and polite manners, and the friendly attitude of the Ahmadiyya organisers, made a deep impression on the Hindus, while the hearts of the Muslims were filled with faith and knowledge. In religious history, this was the first debate of its kind to be seen in the capital city of India.”

Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi did not merely write a book. He established his arguments in front of leading Hindu pandits. The Muslim audience too became convinced that he was serving the cause of Islam. As he was an Ahmadi, he could not automatically have the support of the general Muslims behind him. There were no blind devotees on his side, cheering him on regardless, as is the case with Muslim religious leaders generally. He earned accolades from Muslims by his work.

Do Hindu scriptures contain any Divine revelations?
The research by the Maulana was based on the teaching of Islam that prophets from God had appeared among all nations before the Prophet Muhammad. Muslim scholars had generally limited this to the Israelite prophets and a few others. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad revived and laid stress on this unique teaching and concluded from it that the great sacred persons of the Hindu religion must have been true prophets and its scriptures must have been Divine revelations originally. It was on the basis of this belief that the Maulana found prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muhammad in Hindu scriptures. This is why, in explaining the second prophecy given above, the Maulana writes:

“The coming prophet will attest the truth of the Aryan faith” (p. 65).

However, Dr Zakir Naik has stated, in a different place, that the Vedas may not be revealed scrip-
tasures. Answering the question "whether we can consider the Vedas and the other Hindu Scriptures to be the revelations of God?", he replies:

"There is no text in the Quran or Sahih Hadith mentioning the name of the revela-tion that was sent to India. Since the names of the Vedas or other Hindu scriptures are no where to be found in Quran and Sahih Hadith, one cannot say for sure that they were the revelations of God. They may be the revelation of God or may not be the revelation of God." 2

If nothing at all in them was revealed by God, then how did prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet come to be in these books? If they "may not be" revelations at all, then it is also possible that the quotations from them given by Dr Zakir Naik "may not be" prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muhammad revealed by God.

Interestingly, in his article Dr Naik has actually copied the Maulana’s statement above: "The coming prophet will attest the truth of the Aryan faith", which means that the Holy Prophet con-firmed that those scriptures were originally revealed by God. Perhaps Dr Naik did not realise that this contradicts his own belief expressed elsewhere.

Finally, our belief that the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is prophesied in previous scriptures is not meant as a mere gimmick to please the Muslim public and to sneer at followers of other religions. Quite the contrary, it is meant to show the common Divine origin of all religions and to present Islam as the completion and culmination of earlier religions. It also increases respect for the sacred leaders of other religions in the hearts of the Muslims.

CLARION FUND AND PASTOR PARSLEY

From politics to religion, the threat of Islam to the West remains at the forefront of public discourse.

By Fazeel S. Khan, Esq.

After a long and intense presidential election sea-son, the American people elected Barack Obama as their next president. The historic significance of this election was profound. It was a first in terms of an African America being elected to lead the country’s highest public office. It was exceptional in terms of the role women played: Hillary Clinton very nearly became the Democratic Presidential candi-date and Sarah Palin almost became the country’s Vice-President. It was also outstanding in terms of the tremendous active participation by youth and the impact the internet had on raising campaign do-nations.

In addition to the momentous events of this past presidential election campaign season, there was another unprecedented campaign that took place over the past several months. This campaign was not tied to any particular presidential hopeful, but was quite clearly aimed at affecting the outcome of the election. This campaign comprised sending twenty-eight million free DVDs of a 2006 propa-ganda film titled Obsession: Radical Islam’s War against the West to Americans in various swing states via seventy daily newspapers. Conservative estimates place the cost of this campaign at about ten million dollars.

The distributor of the film, the Clarion Fund, is a registered non-profit organization that claims "to educate the public about national security issues". It does this "by funding documentaries and websites dealing with topical issues". The Obsession DVD in particular aims at exposing the threat of "radical Islam" to the West. It includes many clips from tele-vision programs throughout the Middle East, from Lebanon to UAE, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in sup-port of its premise.

The objections to the Obsession DVD campaign were numerous. Along with legal arguments that such a campaign violates election laws and breach-es the organization’s tax exempt status, there was a widespread moral view that the Obsession DVD was simply a concerted effort to further an agenda to instill hate in the hearts and minds of Americans...

2 See on his website www.irf.net the article ‘Common Questions asked by Hindus about Islam’.
against a particular group of people (i.e. Muslims). In all fairness, the Obsession DVD does begin with a disclaimer that states: "It is important to remember that most Muslims are peaceful and do not support terror". Moreover, while describing the Obsession DVD on the Clarion Fund’s website, it is stated: "A peaceful religion is being hijacked by a dangerous foe, who seeks to destroy the shared values we stand for”.

So why all the fuss? If the Obsession DVD targets "radical" Muslims only, why should "moderate" Muslims be offended? Isn’t objecting to the campaign inter alia aligning one’s self with radicals? Not quite. As Hate Hurts America, a non-profit interfaith coalition that was formed to address the rising problem of hatred against American minorities, very aptly explains, the Obsession DVD “cast[s] a wide net of suspicion against Muslims by blurring the line between violent radicalism and mainstream Islam”.

But is there any merit to the assertion that Americans will be fooled into believing the violent acts and vile propaganda of some is representative of an entire group of people? Are we to believe that Americans will not be able to make the distinction between “radical Islam” and “true Islam”? The answer to both questions, for the most part, is “Yes”. Case in point: the infamous lady at the John McCain rally who stated before the world that she does not trust Barack Obama because he is an “Arab”. Although she didn’t refer to him as a “Muslim”, it was quite apparent she meant the same thing. Because he was an Arab/Muslim, her logic flowed, he could not be trusted, as, presumably, Arabs/Muslims are inherently anti-American and a threat to the West. Clearly, the threat of “radical Islam” is very much understood by at least some Americans as a danger posed by anyone who is Arab or Muslim.

One may suggest this was simply an isolated case. Perhaps this lady was unusually uninformed and impressionable, it may be argued. This supposition fails to carry much weight due to the numerous examples of educated, well-informed persons expressing the same view. Take a look at the nationally recognized Pastor Rod Parsley. Rod Parsley is the pastor of the World Harvest Church, a megachurch in the Columbus, Ohio area that has membership of over twelve thousand. He also leads nine other ministries, which include The Center for Moral Clarity, a Christian school, a bible college, and hosts a television show that airs across the U.S. and Canada. Due to his far reaching influence, John McCain sought his support in his run for the White House. Whatever one may think about Pastor Parsley, clearly he is not uninformed or lacking intelligence; his accomplishments, rather, reveal he is quite knowledgeable and very bright. Yet, Pastor Parsley, like the lady at the McCain rally, fails to make the distinction between Islam as a religion and radical Muslims who claim to be followers of Islam. In his book Silent No More, he includes a chapter titled “Islam: The Deception of Allah” and warns of a war between Islam and Christian civilization. Lest there be any uncertainty as to who exactly he believes this enemy to Christian civilization is, he states emphatically:

There are some, of course, who will say that the violence I cite is the exception and not the rule. I beg to differ. I will counter, respectfully, that what some call “extremists” are instead mainstream believers who are drawing from the well at the very heart of Islam.

Thus, Pastor Parsley, much like the confused lady at the McCain rally stating she did not trust Barack Obama because he was an "Arab", lumps all Muslims into the category of America’s enemies based on the actions of radicals/extremists. Accordingly, the concern that the Obsession DVD can blur the lines between radical/extremist Muslims and mainstream Muslims is certainly valid: we frequently see persons of all backgrounds attributing the acts of radicals to all Muslims and generalizing the ideologies of extremist to the true teachings of Islam.

In response to Pastor Parsley’s rhetoric, the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society issued a press release and publicly invited him to debate the merits of his views. The press release is copied below:

Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society Invites Pastor Rod Parsley to Debate

COLUMBUS, OH, 5/29/08: As widely reported by
various media outlets recently, Columbus, Ohio Pastor Rod Parsley has an extremely unfavorable view of Islam. He believes Islam is an “Anti-Christ” religion, the underlying spirit of the faith being “one of hostility”. He believes Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, “received revelations from demons and not from the true God”. He also believes America “was founded, in part, with the intention of seeing this false religion destroyed” and that 9/11 “was a generational call to arms”.

In a sincere effort to educate Pastor Rod Parsley, the members of his congregation, other Christian leaders who may hold similar views, and the millions of Americans who are quite unaware of the true nature of Islam, the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society invites Pastor Parsley to debate the merits of these views.

“Far from a hostile religion”, Dr. Mohammed Ahmad, President of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society, explains, “the word Islam is derived from the Arabic word slimm, meaning peace. “Moreover”, he continues, “Islam is titled after the objective to which it aspires: the attainment of peace – within the individual, amongst people, and between man and God - is what Islam prescribes as the very purpose of life”. It appears Pastor Parsley is quite unaware that the Holy Quran provides:

All people, regardless of faith, color or creed, are equal: “mankind is but a single nation” (2:213).

Total and complete religious freedom must be upheld: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256).

State governments must be democratic: “those whose affairs are decided by counsel among themselves” (42:38).

Financial independence of women must be established: “For men is the benefit of what they earn. And for women the benefit of what they earn” (4:32).

Justice must be administered in all matters: “Be maintainers of justice even though it be against your own selves or your relatives” (4:135).

A welfare system for the poor and needy must be institutionalized: “Give away wealth out of love for Him (God), to the near of kin and the orphans, and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask and set slaves free” (2:177).

War must be limited to cases of self-defense only: “Permission to fight is given to those on whom war is made” (22:39);

“And fight against those who fight against you, and be not aggressive” (2:190).

Are these principles contrary to the values and ideals upon which America was founded? Is there any other religious scripture that so explicitly defines the principles required to establish a peaceful, civil, democratic society?

It appears Pastor Parsley is also unaware that the Holy Quran:

Vindicates Jesus’ status of Messiah: “...whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, worthy of regard in this world and in the hereafter ...” (3:44);

Refers to Jesus as a “word” of God: “The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only a messenger of God and His word ...” (4:171);

Explains that Jesus was “strengthened with the Holy Spirit”: “And We gave clear arguments to Jesus son of Mary, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit” (2:253);

Has an entire chapter titled “Mary” (Chapter 19), after Jesus’ mother, and defends her against charges of being unchaste: “… for their uttering against Mary a grievous calumny” (4:156);

Provides that Jesus’ disciples received revelations from God: “And when I (God) revealed to the disciples ...” (5:111).

Can these beliefs be reasonably construed as inherently “Anti-Christ”? Do these plain confirmations appear to be inspired by “demons”? 
"Clearly, Pastor Parsley has relied on biased and inaccurate sources in forming his views about Islam", explains Attorney Fazeel S. Khan, Secretary of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society. "The erroneousness of his views", he continues, "is plainly manifested by his failure to make the primary distinction between one, Islam as a religion, and two, misguided persons claiming to be followers of Islam. "He has aligned himself with the Islamic extremists' interpretations of Islam; such an act only legitimates the extremists' cause, a result that impedes the global effort in eradicating extremist ideologies from the world", he concludes.

Inciting hatred towards members of a particular faith and calling for violent acts directed against them is neither Islamic nor Christ-like. The Holy Quran, rather, mandates resolving religious differences in a more civilized manner; it states: "Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and debate with people in the best possible manner" (16:125). It is in the spirit of engaging in respectful dialogue, as mandated by the Holy Quran, that the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society invites Pastor Parsley to a written, public debate on the validity of his views about Islam.

The Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio and is the U.S.A. branch of the international Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. For more information, you may contact Fazeel S. Khan at aaiml@aol.com or (614) 873-1030, and visit www.muslim.org.

Despite the title of his book being Silent No More, Pastor Parsley has chosen to remain completely silent in response to this invitation.

As argued in the Press Release, whenever addressing the issue of Islamic extremism a primary distinction needs to be made between what Islam as a religion prescribes and what some who claim to be followers of Islam practice. This is really the key in fully understanding the issue. It is widely recognized by political scientists that Islamic extremism is generally the product of political grievances, not adherence to religious obligations. Accordingly, if one is to continue to believe that Islam is the source that fuels terrorism carried out by Muslims,
“The main difference of beliefs between the two sections are as follows”;

**Lahore Section  ..........**

1. Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is khatam al-Nabiyyin, the interpretation of which is that he is the greatest and last of all the prophets.

2. The Holy Quran is the final Shariah (code) for the world.

3. No prophet, whether new or old, shall come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

4. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian was not a prophet but a Mujaddid (Reformer) and Promised Messiah and Mahdi in Islam.

5. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad never changed claim, views or definition of prophet hood in in 1901 with the Publication of Ek Ghalati ka Izala.

6. Belief in the advent of Mirza Sahib as a Mujaddid is not essential for becoming Muslim but his acceptance is necessary in the interest of progressive Islam.

7. Any one who profess faith in the Kalima-Lah ila illa illah Muhammad ur Rasul Allah (there is only one God and Muhammad is His Apostle) - is a Muslim and not a Kafir.

8. It is permitted to say prayers behind any Muslim Imam provided he is not guilty of dubbing other Muslims.

9. Marriage relations with non-Ahmadis are permitted.

10. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Wahi-e-Nabuwat has ceased, only Wahi-e-Walayat (Saintly revelation) is continued. Hazrat Mirza Sahib’s revelation was Wahi-e-Walayat and not Wahi-e-Nabuwat.

11. The Founder of the Lahore Section was Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A.LL.B. Translator of the Holy Quran into English, a companion and disciple of the Founder of the Movement.

12. The members of this section call themselves Ahmadis, and are generally known also as Ahmadis or Ahmadis of Lahore Movement.

**Qadian Section  ..........**

1. Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is khatam al-Nabiyyin, the interpretation of which is that he is the greatest though not last of all the prophets.

2. The same.

3. Prophets may come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

4. Mirza Ghulam Ahmd was a prophet as well as Promised Messiah and Mahdi in Islam.

5. The first written evidence of the change of the belief with regard to prophet hood was the poster EK GHALT TA IZALA.

6. Belief in the mission of Mirza sahib as a prophet is essential for becoming Muslim.

7. Any one, who does not believe Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian to be a Prophet, is a kafir.

8. It is not permitted to say prayers behind any Imam who does not recognize Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s claim.

9. Marriage relations with non-Ahmadis are not permitted.

10. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Wahi-e-Nabuwat is continued. Hazrat Mirza Sahib’s revelation was Wahi-e-Nabuwat.

11. The Founder of the Qadian Section was Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, who was the son of the Founder of the Movement and was a young man in his teens at the time of his noble father’s death.

12. The members of this section call themselves Ahmadis, but are generally known as Qadianis.
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