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**PUBLISHER**

Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah

All correspondence should be forwarded to the editor at:

**The Review of Religions**  
**The London Mosque**  
**16 Gressenhall Road**  
**London, SW18 5QL**  
**United Kingdom**

© Islamic Publications, 2009  
 ISSN No: 0034-6721

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Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

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Cover pic: The Temple of Heaven in China (photo by Fazal Ahmad)

# PRESS RELEASE

**16 January 2009**

As the war in Gaza nears its fourth week, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at takes this opportunity to condemn the continued attacks which are leading to a humanitarian disaster. Innocent men, women and children are losing their lives on a daily basis due to the brutality of the occupying force. Whatever action is being taken is wholly disproportionate and cruel.

The world Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad has cautioned that the current conflict in Gaza could yet escalate further. He said:

***“I have always said that if fairness and justice does not prevail then the world is facing a grave disaster. If we wish to save our future generations from the horrific effects of war then we must act now and with justice. Otherwise, I fear, the current situation may not remain limited to just one or two countries but could escalate into a global war, the result of which would be truly devastating.”***

It is of note that during the current crisis the majority of the Muslim world has remained silent and it has been left to academics, politicians and various organisations in the West to condemn what is happening in Gaza. The Muslim world should be grateful to all of them for displaying the courage and conviction to speak out against such atrocities. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

***“The cruelty of the Israelis is progressively increasing. Indeed many people who had previously offered their support are now turning against them. Those countries who remain silent are***

***actually assisting with this cruelty.”***

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at views with utmost concern the growing humanitarian disaster that is occurring in Gaza. The community is committed to alleviating this suffering. Commenting upon this, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

***“The situation in Gaza is getting worse and worse. We see that innocent children, women and the elderly are being killed on a daily basis. The United Nations and other organisations such as Save the Children have been given limited access to provide aid. Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat should individually support such organisations to the best of their ability and on a collective level our own charity, Humanity First, will also do so.”***

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at wishes to be clear that it is a peaceful community who harbours no political agenda or ambition. It wishes only to serve the world by spreading its message of peace. Amidst the current conflict, the community's motto of, *'Love for All, Hatred for None'*, is ever more resonant. The community desires and prays for peace in Gaza and in all other troubled parts of the world. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad continued:

***“May God protect and safeguard the world from self-destruction and calamity. May peace prevail and may the world be saved from all forms of war and terror.”***

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at also wishes to remind all concerned, that in the past whenever the name of Islam has been used to justify any form of terror or extremism, the Jama'at has always condemned such acts without hesitation and it will continue to do so in the future. In this respect the Jama'at is forever guided by the Qur'anic injunction that *'There should be no compulsion in religion'*.

*(End of Press Release)*

# EDITORIAL

*by Fareed Ahmad, UK*

Recent reports from India note a disturbing rise in violence following the recent terrorist activity in Mumbai in November 2008.

What happened in Mumbai was inexcusable and merits utter condemnation. All parties must work together to bring those behind such atrocities to justice. There is absolutely no question about that. The militant madrassahs and other centres that train such terrorists – whether in Pakistan or anywhere else – and those who fund them, must be exposed and their leaders and proponents held to account for the sake of national and international peace.

Governments must become more vigilant in ensuring that extremism has no place to hide and flourish – this is no time for half-measures and certainly no time for half-truths. To achieve this without further escalating the problem between the nuclear neighbours would be a notable success not just for Mumbai but also for the worldwide struggle against extremism.

Similarly the violent reaction to Mumbai in some quarters, where Muslims and Christians have been subjected to violence, is also inexcusable and threatens the social fabric of India. This is a time for people to stand united and not give in to tlynch mob desires for revenge and retribution. It is a time for society to say that no matter what, we will not throw away our hard-earned peace and play into the terrorists' hands who so desperately desire anarchy and lawlessness.

To permit such violence and turn a blind eye to it would do untold damage to the peace of the whole nation. India on the whole has a proud history of peaceful co-existence and Indians must stand united against the common enemy that is the modern-day terrorist. The best way that this can be done is to uphold the law, promote mutual respect and ensure that people of all faiths can live in peace and security.

The Government and authorities have a particularly challenging task, but if they can lead the way in providing security for all, then half of the battle is already won.

As has been said many times over in the past by many faith leaders – no religion promotes violence or murder - so let not the activities of a few ruthless terrorists fracture and destroy the peace of a nation. Both India and Pakistan need their citizens to be loyal and stand united and the citizens need their Governments and authorities to protect them all and dispense absolute justice. It is not a time for these nuclear countries to be trigger happy.

Only then can the countries prevent themselves from free-falling into the vicious circle of violence and revenge that has destroyed so many generations before the world over.

**NOTE FOR THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS**

Verse references to the Holy Qur'an item count 'Bismillah...' (In the Name of Allah...) as the first verse of each Chapter. In some non-standard texts, this is not counted. Should the reader refer to such texts, the verse quoted in *The Review of Religions* will be found a verse earlier, i.e. at one verse less than the number quoted in this journal.

For the ease of non-Muslim readers, '(saw)' or 'saw' after the words, 'Holy Prophet', or the name 'Muhammad', are used normally in small letters. They stand for '*Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*' meaning 'peace and blessings of Allah be upon him'. Likewise, the letters '(as)' or 'as' after the name of all other prophets is an abbreviation meaning 'peace be upon him' derived from '*Alaihis salatu wassalam*' which are words that a Muslim utters out of respect whenever he or she comes across that name. The abbreviation 'ra' or (ra) stands for '*Radhiallahu Ta'ala anhu*' and is used for Companions of a Prophet, meaning Allah be pleased with him or her (when followed by the relevant Arabic pronoun). Finally, 'ru' or (ru) for '*Rahemahullahu Ta'ala*' means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him.

In keeping with current universal practice, local transliterations of names of places are preferred to their anglicised versions, e.g. Makkah instead of Mecca, etc.

## *The Law of Nature Demands*

**This series sets out, in the words of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a summary of his exposition of four outstanding topics: ISLAM; ALLAH, THE EXALTED; THE HOLY PROPHET<sup>(saw)</sup> and THE HOLY QUR'AN. The original compilation, in Urdu, from which these extracts have been translated into English, was collated with great care and diligence by Syed Daud Ahmad Sahib, Allah have mercy on him and reward him graciously for his great labour of love. Amin. The English rendering is by the late Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, may Allah be pleased with him, and is quoted from *The Essence of Islam*, Volume 2. All references throughout, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, are from the Holy Qur'an.**

**T**he All-Wise did not desire to leave weak man to his own imagination and conjecture, but has supplied him with every type of preacher and lecturer who could satisfy him and could set at rest his spiritual restlessness and has provided him with the words which could heal him of his illness. God's law of nature establishes this need of revelation. Is it not true that millions of people, when they are caught in misery or sin or neglect, are affected by the words of a preacher or an adviser and their own knowledge and their own thinking do not prove adequate? The degree of satisfaction to be drawn from such sources depends upon the respect and the honour that the person concerned feels for the one who talks to him. It is only the promise of a person who is truthful in his promises and has the power to perform them that brings satisfaction and content to the hearer. In such circumstances who can doubt the obvious

proposition that, concerning matters of life after death and matters of metaphysics, the best means of satisfaction and of the removal of spiritual pain is the Word of God. When a person believes fully in the Word of God, it delivers him from many whirlpools and contends against severe passions and bestows steadfastness in frightful accidents. When a wise person at the time of any difficulty, or in the grip of passion, finds God's promise or warning in the Word of God, or someone else explains to him what God has commanded, he is so deeply affected that he forthwith repents. Man is often in need of being comforted by God. Very often he is overtaken by such misfortunes that had not the Word of God provided him with glad tidings he would have been so discouraged as perhaps to deny the existence of God, or in his disappointment would have broken off from God altogether, or would have died of sorrow:

*And We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives, and*

*fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient, who, when a misfortune overtakes them, say, 'Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return.' It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided.*

(Ch.2:Vs.156-158)

In the same way, for overcoming one's passions God's word is needed as at every step man encounters matters which can be remedied only by the word of God. When a person desires to turn to God he encounters many obstructions. Sometimes he recalls the delights of the world, or he is attracted by the company of his cronies or he is awed by the difficulties of the way. Sometimes habits and customs block his way and sometimes considerations of honour, fame or power try to obstruct him. Sometimes all these combine together like an army and pull him in their direction and tempt him with their immediate benefits. Their combination develops such force that his own ideas are not able to withstand it. In such a contest, the effective armament of God's

word is needed so that the opposing forces may be vanquished at the first assault. Can anything happen one-sidedly? How then is it possible that God should keep silent like a stone and His servant should make progress on his own in his loyalty, sincerity and steadfastness, and that he should be pulled forward in the field of love and strengthened by the idea that there must be a Creator of heaven and earth?

Conjecture can never take the place of fact. For instance, suppose that a poor debtor has been promised by a truthful wealthy person that at the due time he would payoff all his debts, and there is another poor debtor who has been given no promise by anyone but gives rein to his imagination that perhaps he too would be helped by someone to payoff his debts at due time. Can both these persons be equally satisfied? Certainly not. All this is comprehended in the law of nature and no verity lies outside of it. Alas! Those who claim to follow the law of nature break it themselves and run over to the

other side and act contrary to what they had affirmed.

*(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 1, pp. 340-342 footnote 11)*

I do not know who has misled you to imagine that there is some contradiction between reason and revelation on account of which they cannot subsist together. May God bestow sight upon you and remove the veils from your heart. Can you not appreciate this simple thing that when through revelation reason arrives at its perfection, and is warned of its errors, discovers the true direction of its path, is delivered from confusion, is relieved of useless effort and travail, converts its doubtful knowledge into a certainty, and advancing from conjecture is informed of true facts and is comforted and finds satisfaction, then is revelation its benefactor and helper and supporter, or is it its enemy and opponent and causes it harm?

What bigotry and blindness is it to imagine that a supporter who serves as a clear guide is a highwayman and obstructor and





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

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

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

that one who pulls out of a pit is he who pushes into the pit. The whole world knows and all those who have eyes can see and those who can reflect and observe find that there were millions of such in the past, and are also present today, who put their faith in the excellence and greatness of reason and were known as wise and guided by reason and yet they denied the existence of God and died in that condition. On the other hand, show us but one person who believed in revelation and yet denied God. As revelation is indispensable for firm faith in God then it is obvious that where this condition is lacking there can be no firm faith. It is clear that those who deny the possibility of

revelation deliberately prefer the way of faithlessness and support the spread of atheism. They do not reflect that if the faculty of hearing is also to be deprived of hearing His word, then how can one believe in the existence of a Being Who is hidden and cannot be seen or smelt or touched? Even if by observing the creation an idea of the existence of the Creator comes to mind, when a seeker after truth, despite his lifelong effort, never beholds the Creator nor hears His voice, nor finds any sign of a Living Being, then will he not imagine that perhaps he was wrong in imagining the existence of a Creator. Perhaps the atheists and the physicists are in the right who

regard some elements in the universe as the creators of others and do not admit the need of any other creator. I know well that if a follower of reason will pursue his thinking his mind will be assailed by this doubt, for it is not possible for him to escape such doubts when he fails in his search for some personal sign of God. It is in the nature of man that if he considers something necessary and indispensable through his conjecture, but fails to discover its existence despite every search and inquiry, he begins to doubt the correctness of his conjecture and in the end denies it and hundreds of doubts opposed to his conjecture assail his mind. We often indulge in conjecture with regard to a hidden matter that it will be thus and thus, but when the fact is known it turns out to be something quite different. These daily experiences teach one the lesson that it is the height of foolishness to be satisfied with pure conjecture. Till conjecture is supported by fact all exhibition of reason is a mirage and no more, the end of which is atheism. If you desire to be an atheist, you can do as you please; otherwise,

you can be delivered from the fierce flood of doubts, which has swept thousands of wiser people than yourself by one stroke into the depths, by taking a firm hold of the strong handle of revelation. It will never happen that pursuing only your ideas based on reason you will advance to a point where you behold God sitting somewhere. With your perverse thinking, you will end up finding God without any signs and devoid of the signs of the living, and, after being frustrated in your quest for Him, you will join hands with your atheist brethren.

*(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 1, pp. 344-346, footnote 11)*

### **OBJECTION**

Complete understanding can only be obtained through something which can be observed at all times and in all ages. This characteristic is found in the book of nature, which is always open and is never closed, and it should therefore be taken as one's guide, for something which is closed most of the time and opens only on certain occasions cannot be a

guide.

**ANSWER**

To regard the book of nature as open in comparison with Divine revelation is a sign of blindness. Those who possess healthy insight know well that only that book can be described as open the writing of which can be deciphered clearly and in the reading of which no doubt is left. Who can prove that anyone's doubt was removed by merely looking at the book of nature? Who knows whether anyone has been led to the goal by the book of nature? Who can claim that he has completely understood all the arguments of the book of nature? Had it been an open book why should those who rely on it have been involved in thousands of errors? Reading this one book why should they have differed so much among themselves that some might have admitted to some degree the existence of God and others might have repudiated it altogether? Even if it were to be assumed, for the sake of argument, that one who after reading this book does not deem it necessary that God should exist,

would be granted a long enough life to discover his mistake, at one time or the other, the question still remains that if this book is open why did its reading lead to such errors? Do you consider a book as open, if its readers differ with regard to the existence of God and go astray at the very first step? Is it not true that having read this book of nature thousands of philosophers became atheists or remained idol worshippers and only he from among them followed the straight path who believed in Divine revelation? Is it not true that those who confined themselves to the reading of this book and were considered great philosophers continued to deny God's control of the universe and His knowledge of particulars and died in that condition of denial? Have you not enough intelligence to know that if a letter is construed in one way by X and in another way by Y and in an altogether different way by Z, the text of the letter cannot be regarded as plain and open, but is considered doubtful and confused? This is not a matter the understanding of which needs great intelligence, but is an

obvious verity. However, what can we say of those who persist in describing darkness as light, and light as darkness, and day as night, and night as day?

Even a child can understand that to expound one's meaning the proper way appointed by God Almighty is through clear speech. The only instrument for expressing the thoughts of the mind is the faculty of speech. It is only through the use of this instrument that one person can be informed of that which is in the mind of another person. Every matter that is not expounded through this instrument falls short of being completely understood. There are thousands of matters' concerning which it becomes impossible for us to arrive at a true understanding merely on the basis of natural arguments, and our reflection upon them is subject to error. For instance, God has made the eye for seeing and the ear for hearing and the tongue for speaking. That much we can understand by reflecting on the nature of these limbs, but if we rely only on these natural indications and pay no attention

to the explanations of Divine revelation, then our natural inclination would be that without discriminating between proper and improper occasions for their use we should look at whatever we wish and hear whatever we desire and should express whatever passes through our minds. The law of nature indicates only that the eye is for seeing, the ear for hearing and the tongue has been created for speech, and we are misled into thinking that in the use of the faculties of sight and hearing and speech we are completely free and uncontrolled.

Now, if the Divine word were not to define the law of nature and were not to clear up its confusion by its open statements, there would be great risk of one's incurring numberless dangers by merely following the law of nature. It is the Word of God alone which by its clear statements lays down the limits of our speech, action, motion and abstention and teaches us good manners and furnishes us with pure light. It is the Word of God which, for the guarding of our sight and hearing and speech, has

laid down:

*Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is well aware of what they do. (Ch.24:V.31)*

This means that the believers should guard their eyes and ears and private parts and should avoid every undesirable activity of sight, hearing and private parts. Thus would they be able to foster inner purity. That is to say, their minds will be safeguarded against passions for these are the limbs which incite passions and involve the animal faculties in trial.

Observe, therefore, how the Holy Qur'an has emphasised control over eyes and ears and private parts and forbidden indulgence in any impurity. In the same way the tongue has been directed to adhere to the truth, as is said:

*O ye who believe! fear Allah, and say the right word. (Ch.33:V.71)*

That is to say, one is to utter only that which is true and proper and should be free from everything

vain and false. To direct all faculties along the straight path, a comprehensive warning has been issued which is enough to pull up the heedless and that is:

*And follow not that of which thou hast no knowledge. Verily, the ear and the eye and the heart - all these shall be called to account. (Ch.17:V.37)*

That is to say, the ears, the eyes, the heart, and all limbs and faculties possessed by man will be called to account for their improper use. Thus have all limbs and faculties been directed towards good and proper use expressly and emphatically in the Word of God and every limb is, in clear language which admits of no doubt or confusion, directed to adhere to the straight path. Can these explanations and details be ascertained by reading any page of the book of nature? Certainly not. Then which is the open book? This one or that one? Which of them has prescribed the limits and the proper use of natural faculties? Had gestures alone been sufficient why should man have been invested with a

tongue? He has bestowed the tongue upon you. Has He not Himself the power of speech? Is it proper to say of Him Who created the whole universe without the aid of any matter and without the need of builders and labourers and carpenters, but only through His will, that He does not possess the power of speech, or that He has the power but that out of miserliness He has deprived man of the grace of His word?

Is it right that one should think of the All-Powerful as being weaker than the animals? The lowest animal can inform another animal of certainty about its own existence through its voice. A fly can inform other flies of its advent by its humming. According to you, however, the All-Powerful does not possess even the faculty of a fly. As you say clearly that He has never opened His mouth and has never possessed the faculty of speech, you want to affirm that He is imperfect and defective, whose other attributes are known, but whose attribute of speech has never been discovered. How can

you say with regard to Him that He has bestowed upon you an open book in which He has clearly declared His mind? Indeed your view of Him can be summed up by saying that God Almighty has furnished no guidance and that you have discovered everything by your own ability.

Divine revelation can be described as open in the sense that it casts its influence on the hearts of all. Every type of temperament is benefited by it and every type of seeker derives help from it. That is the reason why many people have been guided through Divine revelation and very few, indeed almost none, through reason alone. Even reason affirms that that should be so. It is obvious that when a person, who becomes known to people as a righteous informer, describes his experience and observation of matters relating to the life after death and calls in aid arguments of reason to expound his meaning, he has a double force at his disposal. First is that it is believed concerning him that he has observed the matter that he speaks of and has seen it with his own eyes; and

secondly, he illustrates the truth in the light of clear arguments. The combination of these two types of proof invests his preaching and advice with a strong force which pulls at even the hardest of hearts and influences every type of soul. His exposition comprises different types of illustration which can be understood by every type of person who is not wholly bereft of reason and for the understanding of which no particular standard of ability is needed. He can satisfy every type of person according to the temperament of each and at the level of his capacity. His speech has great power to pull men's thinking towards God and to make them discard the love of the world and to impress upon their hearts a concept of the hereafter. It is not confined to the narrow and dark concept to which the discourses of the followers of reason are confined. Its effect is widespread and its benefit is complete. Every vessel is filled with it according to its capacity. This is indicated by God Almighty in His Holy Word:

*He sends down water from the sky, so that valleys flow according to*

*their measure, and the flood bears on its surface swelling foam. And from that which they heat in the fire, seeking to make ornaments or utensils, comes out a foam similar to it. Thus does Allah illustrate truth and falsehood. Now, as to the foam, it goes away as rubbish, but as to that which benefits men, it stays on the earth. Thus does Allah set forth parables.*

(Ch.13:V.18)

This means that God sends down His Word from heaven and every valley begins to flow with the water of the Divine Word according to its capacity.

That is to say, every one benefits from it according to his temperament and ideas and ability. Exalted natures are benefited by the wise mysteries and those who are even higher find a wonderful light the description of which is beyond words. Those who are lower, observing the greatness and personal perfection of the righteous informer, believe sincerely in what he says and they also arrive at the coast of salvation by boarding the ark of certainty. Only those are left outside who

# My Claim to Promised Messiahship

by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam  
Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>

*The following is an article  
written by the Promised  
Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> himself and  
taken from the September  
1904 issue of the Review  
of Religions (Vol.3, No.9).*

Gentlemen, I would now say something about my own claims, which I have published in this country. Reason and history bear witness to the fact that when the darkness of sin overshadows the earth, when all sorts of transgressions prevail in the world and evil is supreme, when the spiritual sensibilities are deadened, when the earth is growing impure with immoral practices and the love of God being numbed in the hearts of men, a poisonous wind begins to blow, the mercy of God then ordains that life should again be breathed into dead hearts and the earth should be quickened afresh. As there are changes of seasons in the physical world, so there are revolutions in the spiritual world. In autumn the trees lose their verdure and freshness, and are stripped of their leaves and branches, and look like a man who being in the last stage of consumption loses all his flesh and blood, or like a leper whose face is disfigured by the effects of leprosy and whose limbs have dropped down. But they are not left in this state. Another period comes, and autumn is followed by



spring when a new life is given to the dead plants and they sprout forth into fresh leaves. Similar to these changes in the physical world, there are changes and revolutions in the spiritual world and periods of light and darkness follow each other successively like day and night. At certain stages of the history of the world, men are stripped of spiritual excellences and the perfection of manhood like trees in the autumn, while at others a wind blows from heaven which breathes life afresh into their hearts.

Thus our time is also the beginning of a spring. The deadness of autumn was witnessed in the Punjab during the days when this country was under the Sikh sway. Knowledge had then quite disappeared and ignorance had become prevalent. Religious books had become so rare that they could not be found except in some high family which remained intact from Sikh oppression. The night of the Sikh rule has been followed by the day of British dominion which has brought us the invaluable blessing

of peace. The truth is that if regard is had to the general peace and security prevailing in the country and to the comforts which we can and do enjoy, it is unjust to compare the days of Sikh rule with even the nights of British Government. The time in which we live is a time of physical as well as spiritual blessings, and what has already appeared is a sign of the richness of the harvest that we may yet reap.

It is true, however, that being the commencement of a new age, this period presents varying faces. Some faces are hideous because they go against righteousness and the true knowledge of God, while others present attractive features and there is a lustre of righteousness in them. There is no doubt, however, that the British Government has taken great pains to spread learning in the country and to advance the cause of science and knowledge. Printing presses have multiplied copies of books to an extent unknown in any previous age and placed them within the reach of all. This vast spread of knowledge has brought to light

many hidden libraries and cast the light of publication upon many rare manuscripts, and thus it has changed the whole appearance of society within a few years.

Side-by-side with the growth of learning and spread of knowledge spoken of here, there has been a continual falling off from the standard of purity in practice, and the plant of atheism has struck a deep root in most hearts. There is no doubt about the benefits and blessings which the British rule has brought to us, nor can anyone question the unparalleled peace and liberty which it has established in this country, but most people have not made a right use of this liberty and peace. Instead of being thankful to God for His great obligation in placing us under the benign rule of such a peaceful and kind Government, most people have become utterly neglectful of and stolidly indifferent to God and have wholly given themselves up to the pursuits and cares of this world, so wholly indeed as if this world were their permanent abode and

they were not under the control of any Higher power or under any obligation to Him. As happens generally, with peace transgression has become more flagrant, and on account of daily increasing hard-heartedness and indifference, the country is now in a very dangerous condition. Ignorant people commit the most brutal and heinous deeds like savages, and every grade of society is more or less involved in some sort of evil. Public houses are much more frequented than other shops, and professions involving open immorality are daily increasing, while places of worship are only used for the performance of ceremonials devoid of life and inner worth. In short a violent outburst of evil and iniquity has taken place, and as a flood destroys all embankments and sweeps away whole villages before it in a single night, so the flood of passions is sweeping away all barriers to sin before it. Cimmerian darkness has spread over the world, and it has reached the point at which it must either be regenerated and receive a light from heaven or be utterly destroyed and brought to

“ ...after nearly six thousand years from the time of Adam... God would breathe into a man the soul of truth and love and knowledge spiritually after the likeness of Adam, and he would be called the Messiah, because God would Himself anoint his soul with the ointment of His love...

..This Messiah who on account of the promise of God concerning his appearance is called the Promised Messiah in sacred books.. ”

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naught. But the prophetic utterings give us to understand that the end is yet a thousand years off. Moreover, the new physical order of this world which has been brought about by the numerous discoveries and inventions of the last and the present century, is clearly indicative of a similar change for the better in the spiritual system of the world. There is pressing necessity for such spiritual reform, for spiritually the world stands on the brink of destruction and is so depraved that the wrath of heaven must be kindled against it. The force of passions is growing too strong while the spiritual tendencies have been utterly weakened and the light of

faith has been extinguished. A light must, therefore, be kindled from heaven to shatter the clouds of darkness which overhang this world, for, as we see daily, the gloom, of night is not dispelled until the heavenly light makes its appearance. As there is a heavenly light which lightens the corners of the earth, so there is also a heavenly light which illuminates the corners of the heart, and the truth of both these laws is manifest.

Since God created man, it has been His unchangeable law that He sheds His light upon mankind through one of their own number, so that there may be a unity and oneness among them.

The person who is thus chosen, receives the light of perfect Divine knowledge from God, drinks deep at the fountain of His perfect love, is spoken to by Him, made to walk in the path of His perfect pleasure and granted a deep-seated zeal to draw others to the light, the knowledge and the love which have been granted him. Thus drawn by him and sharing in his knowledge because of their close connection with him, other people are also kept back from sins and guided to the path of piety and righteousness.

In accordance with this time-honoured law, Almighty God prophesied by the mouth of His prophets that after nearly six thousand years from the time of Adam<sup>(as)</sup> when great darkness would prevail upon earth and an irresistible flood of passions would make the love of God wane and iniquity predominate, God would breathe into a man the soul of truth and love and knowledge spiritually after the likeness of Adam<sup>(as)</sup>, and he would be called the Messiah, because God would Himself anoint his soul with the ointment of His

love. This Messiah who on account of the promise of God concerning his appearance is called the Promised Messiah in sacred books, would, it is foretold, be made to stand against *Satan*, and between him and the evil one there would be a mighty struggle, the final struggle between good and evil. For this spiritual fight *Satan* would bring all his hosts into the field and gather together all his power and make use of all his resources. Never shall a fight like this have occurred between good and evil before, for on that day the tricks of *Satan*, and the means by which he can mislead people, would all be exhausted. After a heavy fight, the Messiah of God would drive back the powers of darkness, and the glory, majesty, unity and holiness of God would be proclaimed upon earth and would continue to be declared for a thousand years, the seventh day of the Holy Books of God. Then will be the end. I am that Messiah: let him who will, accept me.

Doubts would, perhaps, be entertained here by some as to the existence of *Satan* and they

would wonder at the mention of *Satan* and his hosts. Let them bear in mind that every man's heart has two attractions with it, the attraction of good and the attraction of evil. The first of these is attributed in Islamic law to the angel or the spirit of goodness, and the second to *Satan* or the spirit of evil. Man is inclined sometimes to evil and sometimes to goodness, and this is what is meant by the struggle between good and evil. I think there are many men in this gathering who will, simply on hearing my claim to Promised Messiahship and Divine revelation, call me a liar and look down upon my claim, but I do not condemn them, for so it has been from the beginning. Every messenger of God had to hear words of abuse and contempt from his people in the early stages of his mission, and it may be said truly that a prophet is not without honour but in the beginning of his career as a prophet.

That Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and Messenger of God to whom the Holy Qur'an was revealed, and who gave us a law which is the

culmination of all laws, of being called whose followers we are all proud, was also received in the same manner by his people. For thirteen years he suffered persecution and tortures at the hands of his enemies alone and helpless, and received their scoffing, insults, affronts and outrages with the greatest patience and forbearance – all these cruelties of his enemies reaching their climax in that unkindest cut of all, his expulsion from Makkah. Who knew at that time that that helpless and forlorn man was destined to become the guide and leader of millions of human beings? Such is the Divine law that the ones sent by God are laughed at and despised at first. There are very few who recognise them in the beginning and hence they must suffer at the hands of the ignorant and bear all sorts of scurrilities, abuses and taunts until the time comes when God should open the hearts of men for their acceptance.

Such is my claim. But the work for which Almighty God has appointed me, my function as the Promised Messiah, is that I

should remove the estrangement which has taken place between God and man, and re-establish man's connection of purity and love with his Divine master. I have been raised that I should put a stop to religious wars and lay the basis of peace, concord and fellow-feeling between men, that I should bring to light the religious truths which have long been hidden from the mortal eye, that I may show true spirituality by dispelling the darkness of passions from before its face, that I may manifest the working of Divine powers within man by prayer or by concentration of attention, and most important of all that I should re-establish the pure and glorious unity of God which is free from every mixture of *shirk*, and which has disappeared from the face of earth. All this will be effected not by my power, but by the mighty power of Him who rules in heaven and earth. I see that on the one hand Almighty God having trained me in His deep knowledge and having made me the recipient of His revelation, has granted me a zeal for bringing about these reforms,

and on the other He has Himself prepared hearts which are ready to accept my words.

I see that a mighty revolution has taken place in the world since I was appointed by Almighty God to this heavenly office. While in Europe and America the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus is being rejected by all sensible thinkers, in India idol-worship is fast losing ground. Though these people are yet ignorant of true spirituality and are content with a few words in which is contained a formal expression of their beliefs, yet they have broken asunder many ties which held them to unbelief, and they are now as it were standing on the threshold of unity. I hope that in the near future the grace of God would take many of them by the hand and place them within the stronghold of unity where there is all peace and safety, and where a man is granted perfect love and perfect fear and perfect knowledge. This is not a mere wish but Almighty God has given me the glad tidings which make me entertain this hope. The manifestation of this heavenly

ordinance has been brought about in this country so that different people may soon be seen gathering into one flock, and that the night of discord and enmity may soon be changed into the bright morning of peace and concord.

That the different people will be ultimately made one nation, is the universal hope of all religious sects. The Christians think that the time is coming when all the nations of the earth will accept the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. The Jews entertain the fond hope that their Messiah will soon appear and make them the inheritors of the whole earth and bring the gentiles into the Jewish faith. The Islamic prophecies also give the hope of the advent of a Messiah who would make Islam the predominant and universal religion of the world, and the promised time of advent goes no further than the commencement of the 14th century of Hegira. And at this very moment the Pundits of the Sanatan Dharm are anxiously waiting for the advent of an *avatar* who would spread the true faith in the whole

world. The Aryas, though they do not believe in any prophecy, share in these universal views and are trying their best to spread the Arya religion in the East as well as in the West. Nor has the Buddhist religion remained behind in this movement, for it is also showing signs of activity and reform. But what is most wonderful of all, and may perhaps excite laughter, is that in this competition of religions for superiority, even the sweeper community is not quite indifferent, but it also is awake to the serious necessity of protecting itself from hostile religions. In short, the competition of religions has grown hot and every sect is inspired with the zeal to make acquisitions from other faiths. There is a commotion in the religious world more violent than the commotion which is caused in the sea by a storm, and as the billows roll down upon one another, so do at present the different religions.

The various movements described above lead one at least to this conclusion that the time has come at which Almighty God has

willed to gather all men into one fold. Regarding this very time, He says in the Holy Qur'an:

*And on that day We shall leave some of them to surge against others, and the trumpet will be blown. Then shall We gather them all together.*  
(Ch.18: V.100)

Reading this verse along with the preceding verses its proper significance appears to be that when there will be a hot competition for victory among the various religions, and they will be in a tumult like the waves of the ocean, then will Almighty God bring into existence a new dispensation which will draw all capable hearts to itself. Then will they know what religion is, and a new life, the soul of true righteousness, will be breathed into them and they will be made to drink at the fountain of true knowledge of God. It was necessary that this world should not have come to an end until this prophecy which was announced by the Holy Qur'an 1300 years ago was fulfilled.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned many other signs of the last ages when all people would be gathered upon one religion; for instance, that the rivers would be generally split into canals, that the earth would bring out its hidden treasures of minerals, inventions and sciences, that such means would come into existence (referring to printing presses) as would cause books to be multiplied in large numbers, that a conveyance would be discovered which would render the camels useless and facilitate men's going to and fro, that the means of correspondence and of the mixing together of different people would become easy, and that the sun and the moon would eclipse on specified dates in the month of Ramadhan. All these signs of the mercy of God would be followed by another which is indicative of the wrath of heaven, *i.e.* the raging of a destructive plague which would affect every town and village, utterly laying waste some and leaving others in a partially desolate condition. God would then be in great wrath because the signs which He manifested at



the hands of His Messenger were belied, and the Apostle whom He had sent was rejected and called an impostor.

All the signs enumerated above, which the Holy Qur'an has described as the signs of the appearance of the Promised one, have been fulfilled in this age. Thus there is a clear path for anyone who exercises his judgment and understanding for my acceptance, because all the signs appointed for the appearance of the Promised Messiah have been manifested by God for me. Besides the signs mentioned above, the Holy Qur'an fixes the time of the appearance of the Promised Messiah in another manner too. In it we are told that one day with God is equivalent to a thousand years as is indicated in the verse:

*And they ask thee to hasten on punishment, but Allah will never break His promise. And verily, a day with thy Lord is a thousand years of your reckoning.*  
(Ch.22: V.48)

Therefore, the seven days men-

tioned in the Holy Qur'an indicate seven thousand years which represent the present age from Adam to the end spoken of in the holy books of God. I do not mean to say that seven thousand years is the whole time from the beginning to the end of the world, for from the Holy Qur'an it appears that the world existed before the Adam spoken of in the Holy Book. Of course we cannot say who the people were that lived upon earth then because we have no details in our hand. But it appears that one cycle of this world lasts for seven thousand years and hence also the seven days, each day standing for a thousand years. We cannot say through how many such cycles the world has passed up to this time, and how many Adams have passed away before our own Adam<sup>(as)</sup>. As God has ever been the Creator, therefore we believe that His creation must have existed always in one form or another though it is difficult for us to specify the particular form. Here too the Christian faith has made an error, for the Christians believe that the world was created and heaven and earth made only

six thousand years ago, and that before that time the creating power of God had forever remained unemployed. I do not think any sensible person can subscribe to such a belief which is absurd on the face of it. The Holy Qur'an on the other hand teaches us doctrines whose truth can never be questioned. It teaches us that God has always been a Creator and will forever be a Creator, and if He wills He can destroy heaven and earth and make them anew millions of times. He has told us that from the Adam who is our ancestor to the end of this cycle, there is a period of seven thousand years, which are as seven days with God. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, appeared in the fifth thousand after Adam or in the fifth day of this cycle. This is indicated in the chapter entitled the '*Asr*' (Afternoon) the letters of which, according to the mode of reckoning numbers from letters, represent the number of years which had elapsed from Adam<sup>(as)</sup> to the time of the revelation of that chapter to the Holy

Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. According to this calculation six thousand years have now elapsed from Adam<sup>(as)</sup>, and a period of one thousand years more would complete this cycle.

The Holy Qur'an as well as the previous books give us to understand that the Messenger of God who would appear in the last ages in the likeness of Adam<sup>(as)</sup>, and would be called the Messiah, would be born in the last days of the sixth thousand from Adam<sup>(as)</sup>, as Adam<sup>(as)</sup> was born at the end of the sixth day. These signs are sufficient to lead a thinking mind to the true conclusion. The seven thousand years of this cycle are further divided according to the prevalence of good or evil, every odd thousand being the time of the prevalence of virtue and true guidance, and the even thousand of the supremacy of *Satan*. Thus in the fifth thousand our Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> was born for the regeneration of the world and *Satan* was then put into chains. Then followed the sixth thousand, from the beginning of the fourth to the fourteenth century after Islam, in which

*Satan* was let loose and evil predominated. And now we are in the seventh thousand which is the time of God and His Messiah and of every goodness and virtue, of the true faith and regeneration of mankind, of righteousness and the proclamation of the Unity of God and Divine worship. With the entrance of the world upon the seventh thousand, the Millennium, no other Messiah can set his foot upon earth, for his time is now gone. The true Messiah is he who has appeared in time and made known his appearance to the world. All these prophecies are contained in the Holy Qur'an, and they were also uttered by the earlier prophets. In fact, no prophecy has been uttered with such frequency and force as the prophecy relating to the appearance of the Messiah in the last ages and to the evil of the Anti-Christ.

Some men think that the prophecy relating to the appearance of the Promised Messiah is contained only in the traditions [hadith] and not in the Holy Qur'an, and accordingly they

demand a proof of it from the Word of God. A reflection upon the words of the Holy Book is sufficient to convince any reasonable man that this prophecy is contained in the plainest words in the Holy Qur'an. In the chapter entitled the *Tahrim*, it is indicated that some individuals from among the Muslims would be called *Ibn-i-Maryam* (the Son of Mary), for in this chapter at first the faithful are compared to Mary and afterwards the breathing of a soul into her (i.e., the faithful like her) is mentioned. This indicates that the faithful who observe complete obedience to Divine commandments and make themselves like Mary, will be rewarded by God by being made Christ-like. It is in reference to the attainment of this stage that Almighty God says of me in a revelation published in the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*: "*O Mary! Enter thou and thy friends into paradise,*" and again: "*O Mary! I have breathed into thee the soul of truth,*" (thus symbolically Mary was impregnated with truth); and last of all: "*O Jesus! I will cause thee to die a natural death and would then raise thee to Myself,*" where I

am addressed as Jesus Christ as if raised from the dignity of Mary to the dignity of Christ. Thus the promise contained in the *Tahrim* has been fulfilled in me, and I am named by God as the son of Mary.

Again, in the chapter entitled the *Nur* (Light), Almighty God says that successors to the Holy Prophet would be raised from among the Muslims like to the successors that were raised to Moses as in the verse:

*Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear: They will worship Me, and they will not associate anything with Me. Then whoso is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious.*  
(Ch.24: V.56)

From the Holy Qur'an it also

appears that the religion of Islam would witness two terrible disasters which would endanger its very life. One of these came upon Islam with the death of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and was averted at the hands of Abu Bakr<sup>(ra)</sup>, the first caliph according to Divine promise. The second disaster according to the Holy Qur'an would be the evil that would be wrought by the Anti-Christ, to repel which the Promised Messiah would appear. It is to this great evil that the concluding words of the *Fatihah*, which every Muslim must repeat in his prayers, contain an allusion, and to this time of tribulation that the prophecy contained in the same verse (Ch.24: V.56) refers which occur in the *Nur* immediately after the words in which successors to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> are promised. In these words Almighty God tells us that in the last ages when the faith of Islam would be severely shaken, so much so that there would be fear of its extinction and of its being swept off wholly, He would re-establish it with firmness upon the earth, and grant the Muslims a security after that great fear. To

the same effect the Holy Qur'an says elsewhere:

*God is He who sent His messenger with the guidance and the true faith so that He may ultimately [i.e. in the time of the Promised Messiah] make it victorious over all other religions.*

(Ch.9: V.33)

Again, the verse: *Verily we sent down the Holy Qur'an, and verily We will be its guardians,*" (Ch.15: V.10) also refers to the time of the Promised Messiah for as it speaks of the sending down of Revelation which was effected through the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, it also speaks of guarding the revealed word from its enemies when it would be in danger of being brought to extinction, which is the function of the Promised Messiah. Here I have briefly pointed out the verses in which the advent of the Promised Messiah is indicated, either in plain words or by way of allusion, as a detailed proof would not have suited the limits of a lecture. This is a sufficient proof for any one who seeks an evidence of my claim in the Holy Qur'an in the

same manner in which he seeks an evidence of the claim of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> or Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> in the previous books. So if these prophecies are not regarded as sufficient, it must also be admitted that there is no prophecy in the Torah concerning the appearance of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> or our Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, for if the words of the former prophecies are not very definite, neither are they so in the case of the latter prophecies. It is exactly here that the Jews stumbled in the recognition of the two prophets, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>, may peace and the blessings of God be upon them. For instance, if it had been stated in plain and clear words in the prophecies foretelling the appearance of our Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> that he would be born at Makkah, that his name would be Muhammad, that his father and grand-father would be known respectively as Abdullah and Abdul Muttalib, that he would be of the Ishmaelite race, that being persecuted at Makkah he would flee to Madinah, and that he would be born so many years after Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, not a single Jew could have denied him. The

difficulties in the case of the prophecies relating to the appearance of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup>, are still greater, and it is on this ground that the Jews to this day consider themselves excusable in rejecting Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. In these prophecies it is clearly stated that Elijah<sup>(as)</sup> would re-appear before the advent of the true Messiah and prophecies containing this condition are contained in the revealed books. But since Elijah<sup>(as)</sup> did not re-appear, therefore the claim of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> to Messiahship could not be regarded as true by the Jews. When confronted with this difficulty, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> replied that by the appearance of Elijah was meant the appearance of one like him, and not his own appearance. But this explanation was rejected by the Jews as directly opposed to the Word of God which spoke not of the advent of the like of Elijah, but of the advent of Elijah<sup>(as)</sup> himself. These considerations show clearly that the prophecies relating to the appearance of the prophets of God are always deep so that they may serve to distinguish the righteous from the wicked.

This is not, however, all that I can say in support of my claim. A claim based on truth is not attended with only one sort of proof, but like the genuine diamond it shines in full effulgence in all its facets. Such is my claim to Promised Messiahship. Its truth shines forth from whatever point of view it is considered. My claim to being sent by God and of being the recipient of Divine revelation, dates from a period of over 27 years, and it was published in my book entitled *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyyah* about twenty-four years ago. Such a long and continuous series of lies is inconceivable. However great a liar a person may be, he cannot be guilty of concocting a falsehood extending over such a lengthy period of time and affecting the whole world. Moreover, Almighty God does not assist an impostor. Consider a person who with every new sun concocts a new falsehood and fabricates a new lie, forges words and prophecies and pretends that it is an inspiration which he has received from God, or the Word of God that has come down to him as a revelation from

the Almighty, while God knows that he is a great liar and impostor in what he says every day, consider if God would grant assistance to such an accursed being, if He would make him and his followers flourish and increase for long years and frustrate the designs and plans of his enemies to bring him to naught. Yet for 27 years, I have been receiving the assistance of God without any intermission and the number of my followers has constantly increased notwithstanding the hardest opposition. Do not these facts point me out as the true one?

There is another argument which settles conclusively the truth of my claim. Twenty-four years previous to this at a time when I was quite unknown to the world and lived in the corner of solitude, Almighty God revealed to me certain prophecies concerning my future life which were at that very time and under those very circumstances published in *Barahin-i-Ahmediyyah* which I was then writing. Addressing me Almighty God thus spoke to me: "Oh my Ahmad, thou art

according to my wish and thou art with me. Thy secret is My secret. Thou art to Me as My Unity and Oneness, so the time has come when thou shouldst be assisted and made known among men. Thou hast in my presence a dignity which the world knows not. God will assist thee in all fields. Thou hast dignity in My presence and I have chosen thee for Myself and I will make many people follow and obey thee and will make thee a guide to them. We will inspire people from heaven that they may assist thee. Assistance will come to thee from deep and distant paths. People will flock to thee from distant corners of the world. It is, therefore, meet that thou shouldst not turn away from them or get tired of them, because of their vast numbers, but receive them with kindness and courtesy. And pray to God, 'O Lord, do not leave me alone and Thou art the best of inheritors.' God will procure for thee the companions of the mat, and what knowest thou who the companions of the mat are. Thou wilt see tears flowing from their eyes, and they will say, 'O Lord, we have heard

the voice of one who invites people to faith in God. Verily, I will make thee My vicegerent upon earth, and people will say of thee contemptuously, 'Wherefrom and how hast thou got this dignity and high rank?' Say to them, 'My God is a wonderful God and wonderful are His powers.' He is not questioned of what He doeth, but He will question every one as to what He said. They say, 'This is but a fabrication.' Say, 'It is God who has established this dispensation,' then leave them in their vain sports. God is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it victorious over all other religions. They will try to extinguish the light which God has kindled, but God will make that light perfect and kindle it in hearts that are ready to receive it, though the unbelievers may not like it. God will protect thee against their mischiefs, though people may not be able to save thee. Thou art before my eyes; I have named thee *Mutawakkil* (Truster in God), And God will not leave thee until He has severed the virtuous from the

wicked. Two sheep will be slaughtered, and every one who is upon earth, must taste of death. There may be a thing to which you may be averse, but haply it may be good for you; and there may be a thing which you deem good but haply its attainment may be injurious to you. God knows what is good for you and what injurious, but you do not know."

It will be seen that the revelations given above contain four grand prophecies. Firstly, at a time when I was alone and companionless, about 24 years since, God gave me the glad tidings that I would not be left alone but would have numerous followers and that people would come to me from distant places and remote corners in such numbers that they should tire me. Secondly, that I would receive great assistance from these people. What I was when these prophecies were published, and what I am now when about a quarter of a century has elapsed since their publication, is known to the whole world. I lived alone in the corner of solitude then in a



small village, but now I have more than 200,000 followers. The third prophecy mentioned in the same connection is that people would do their utmost to bring this dispensation to naught and to extinguish this light, but all their efforts would be fruitless and all their designs would be frustrated. These three prophecies are shining like the meridian sun. No sensible person would hold that these wonderful disclosures of the deep secrets of the future, upon which no guess or surmise could shed the faintest light, could be announced beforehand except by a revelation from Almighty God, the Knower of all secrets. There was no circumstance which could make the most intelligent person guess that the helpless and solitary man who had never stepped out from the corner of solitude, would one day become the leader and guide of hundreds of thousands of men. If it is within the power of man to reveal such secrets, let another such instance be cited. The grandeur of these prophecies is made more manifest and the heart of man bows with true

submission before the mighty knowledge of God when the third prophecy foretelling the attempts of the people to thwart the fulfilment of these prophecies, and God's promise to bring about their fulfilment in spite of every opposition, is borne in mind. Can a mere mortal thus challenge the world? No, he cannot even say that he would live for such a time. The fourth prophecy which particularly deserves the reader's attention is that relating to the slaughter of two sheep which was fulfilled by the martyrdom of two of my disciples in Afghanistan, *viz.*, Sheikh 'Abdul Rahman and Sahibzada Maulvi 'Abdul Latif at the hands of Amir 'Abdul Rahman and Amir Habib-ullah [rules of Afghanistan] respectively.

Besides these, there are hundreds of other prophecies which were fulfilled in their time. On one occasion, I informed Maulvi Hakim Nuruddin that a son would be born to him who would have sores upon his body, and the prophecy was published in a book. Some time afterwards the

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promised son was born and he had the sores on his body as described in the prophecy. The Maulvi Sahib is present in this gathering, and every one can question him as to the truth of this statement. On another occasion, ‘Abdul Rahim Khan, one of the sons of Sardar Muhammad ‘Ali Khan, Rais [a clan leader] of Malerkotla, was attacked with a serious disease and all hope of his life was lost. When I prayed for him to God it was revealed to me that the boy would recover on my intercession; so like a kind and affectionate sympathiser, I prayed for him and the disease was gone. ‘Abdullah Khan, the second son of the same gentleman, also fell ill and the attack was so serious

that death seemed to be certain. I prayed for him and was informed of his recovery by God and he accordingly recovered. There are numerous other signs and if I were to relate them all, this lecture would not be finished even in ten days. Hundreds of thousands of men bear testimony to the truth of these signs because they were shown before their eyes. One hundred and fifty of these I have collected in a book called the *Nuzool-ul-Masih* which will be published shortly. These signs are of various sorts. Some of them were manifested upon heaven, others upon earth; some related to my friends, while others were in connection with my enemies; some affected myself and my children and others have

been manifested by God through my enemies without any intervention on my part. To the last class belongs a sign which was manifested through Maulvi Ghulam Dastgir of Qasur, who published in his book *Fateh Rahman*, of his own accord a prayer against me to the effect that of us two God might destroy the liar first. A few days had passed when the Maulvi died and thus bore a testimony to my truth. Besides this, there are thousands of men who were informed of my truth through visions and who have thus accepted me.

There are other considerations of importance in determining the truth of a claim to prophethood. Whether the claimant has appeared in time of need, i.e., at a time when the need of a guide was felt by the world, whether he has come exactly at the prophesied hour, whether he receives assistance from God, whether he has fully refuted the objections brought forward by his opponents against his claim, are points which go a long way to prove the truth or falsehood of

his claim. If all these questions were satisfactorily answered, they would be an evidence of his truth. Now it is clear that at the present moment, the need of a guide and reformer is very strongly felt by the whole world. Islam needs the soothing hand of a reformer who should bring about union and agreement among the con-tending sects and the strong hand of one who should defend it against hostile attacks, while the world generally needs a spiritual guide who should restore to it the spirituality which it has lost, and re-establish the certainty which has vanished away from its face, and thus strengthening faith release people from the bondage of sin and turn them to paths of virtue and righteousness. These are facts which no one can deny unless he is blinded by prejudice, and therefore I clearly fulfil the first of the conditions enumerated above, *viz.*, the condition of coming in time of need. In the second place, it requires to be seen whether I have come at the prophesied hour. In point of time the clearest prophecy is that relating to the appearance of the

Promised Messiah at the end of the sixth and the commencement of the seventh thousand from Adam. Computing by the lunar year, the seventh thousand has begun and by the solar year the sixth is coming to a close. Besides this the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> had said, as reported in an authentic tradition, that among the Muslims a reformer would appear at the commencement of every century to give fresh life to the holy religion of Islam. But more than a fifth of the fourteenth century has passed away, and no other reformer can be pointed out who has claimed an authority under the tradition referred to above. Thirdly, it is to be seen whether God has assisted the claimant or not. This condition is eminently fulfilled in me, for opponents stood up against me from among every community and left no stone unturned to bring me to naught and made all sorts of plots against me, but all their designs and plans were hopelessly shattered by Almighty God. There is no community which can say that it did not exert itself to destroy me. But against their

wishes Almighty God gave me honour and made thousands of men my followers. What is it if not heavenly assistance, for upon earth no efforts were spared to blot me out. The stronger the opposition grew, the more I was made to flourish, until my following now exceeds two hundred thousand. Had not a hidden Hand been in my support, and had my mission been based on human machinations, I would have been long before shot by one of the arrows of which I was made an aim, and being utterly destroyed no trace of mine would have been left today. For there is no doubt that an impostor does not prosper, but meets with destruction in one way or another, because God Himself is his enemy. But Almighty God guarded me from every evil that was designed against me in accordance with His promise which He had made twenty-four years before. What a wonderful assistance from the Almighty that He first informed me in my loneliness and solitude that He would assist me and bring thousands of men to me and disappoint my enemies in

their evil designs against me, and then brought all this to fulfilment as He had foretold. How manifest is His assistance and how clear this sign! Can it be within the power of man or devil that he should when quite helpless foretell his mighty success in the future, and this should be fulfilled notwithstanding the efforts of numerous enemies who rise against him for his destruction? The fourth condition, *viz.*, that the objections of the opponents should be fully refuted, has also been fulfilled by me. The greatest objection that has been put forward against my claim is that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> is alive and that he himself must come back into the world in fulfilment of the prophecy relating, to the advent of the Promised Messiah in the last ages. It has been shown by me in refutation of this objection that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> is dead and he cannot come back. For the Muslims, the authority of the Holy Qur'an is conclusive which says:

*I said nothing to them except that which Thou didst command me –*

*“Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.” And I was a witness over them as long as I remained among them, but since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou hast been the Watcher over them; and Thou art Witness over all things.*  
(Ch.5: V.118)

The occasion of this verse in the Holy Qur'an is that on the day of judgment, God would question Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> if he had said to his people that they should take him and his mother for gods and worship them. In answer to this, Jesus would say that he had said to them only what God had commanded him to say, *viz.*, that they should worship God alone and consider him as His apostle only, and that he knew what they did so long as he was among them, “but since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou didst witness their doings and I was quite ignorant of what happened after me.” The reply of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> here is that his followers did not set up the false belief of His divinity until after his death. If, therefore, it is held by a Muslim that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> is still alive, he shall also have to admit that the

Christian doctrine is true. Moreover, here Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> displays an ignorance of the condition of his followers after his death, a fact which is inconsistent with the theory of his readvent, because in the latter case he should not remain ignorant of the doctrines invented by the Christians after his death. The belief that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> would come back into the world, and joining with the Mahdi, slay the infidels, falsifies the Qur'anic verse quoted above, and must, therefore, be rejected. Nor can it be held that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> would conceal before God the fact that he had gone into the world, lived there for forty years and slain the Christians, for that is far from the dignity of a prophet, and besides nothing would remain concealed on the day of judgment. If any one has true faith in the Holy Qur'an, he can see that the whole plot of Mahdi's murderous deeds and Jesus' descent from heaven to assist him in that bloody task, is brought to naught by a single verse.

When the opponents are vanquished in every point, as a last resource they bring forward the

slender objection, that one or two out of thousands of my prophecies have not been fulfilled, while as a matter of fact this is untrue. Besides this, it will be seen that the prophecies so objected to related to the punishment of certain individuals and the Divine law is, as appears from the Holy Books of God, that a prophecy relating to punishment is always conditional, whether the condition be or be not expressed in it, and the punishment can be averted upon repentance or deeds of charity or upon manifesting a fear of God. The prophecy of the prophet Jonah<sup>(as)</sup> is an example of this. There was no express condition in that prophecy, yet the punishment was averted on the people's repentance. If, therefore, the law established above were not true, the prophethood of Jonah<sup>(as)</sup> would be seriously in question. It cannot be questioned that God's intention to punish a people is suspended or averted on their repentance; and what is prophecy but a manifestation of that intention through a prophet? If such intention can be suspended or averted when it is not disclosed

to any person, there can be no objection to its being suspended or averted when it has been revealed through a prophet.

Now the essence of the prophecy relating to the death of Abdullah Atham which is objected to in my case, was that of the two, Atham and myself, the party in error would be brought to destruction before the eyes of the other. The truth of this prophecy has been sealed by the death of Atham, and it is quite unreasonable to object to it on the ground that he did not die within the stated time, for the limit of time had with it a condition in express words. Atham showed fearfulness and was granted a respite according to the express condition of the prophecy, but when he concealed the truth, he was soon seized by God and died in accordance with the prophecy. Even if the condition had not been expressly stated, he could have taken the benefit of it according to the Divine law with regard to the prophecies of punishment. Besides this, all the details are not always contained in prophecies, and such details are only manifested after their

fulfilment. It also happens that an error occurs sometimes in the interpretation of a prophecy, for after all prophets are mortals. For instance, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> had prophesied that his twelve apostles would sit on twelve thrones, whereas one of them became the devil's in his lifetime. He had also prophesied that the men of his time would be still living when he would come back. This also remained unfulfilled on account of error in the interpretation of the words of revelation. Some other prophecies of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> too met a similar fate. As to my prophecies, there are thousands of them that have been fulfilled in all their details and to ignore all of these, while selecting one or two for objection, is nothing but intentionally rejecting the truth. I fully hope and am certain that if anyone were to live in my company for forty days consecutively, he would witness a heavenly sign. Here I finish this lecture and think that what I have said is sufficient for a seeker after truth. And peace be upon him who follows truth and guidance.



# *Making the World a Haven of Peace*

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*The following is the address by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V delivered at the reception held on the inauguration of Baitul Afyyat (Sheffield) on 8 November 2008.*

All the honourable guests, peace and blessings of God be upon you all.

First of all, I would like to thank all our respected guests, who have come here on the auspicious occasion of the inauguration of this mosque.

By doing so you have all shown your friendship, illustrated great courage and given proof of your care for humanity. What the world requires most of all is tolerance. As the world draws closer and a global village begins



to emerge, there is a need to replace hatred and malice with love, affection and forbearance. One should be sensitive to the feelings of others and there should be respect and reverence for each other's faith. Attention needs to be drawn towards discharging the rights of each other.

If these qualities do not emerge, then despite the world coming together, it will be further divided and its drawing closer will prove to be a curse rather than being a source of pride. Therefore, it is very praiseworthy that you have respected our feelings by participating today. These are the avenues that will lead to love, kindness and tolerance and take us all the way up to the pinnacle of humanity.

My prayer is that this function today offers a means of consolidating love, affection and tolerance and proves to be a milestone for the development of these qualities. As for how far we understand this concept and adhere to these principles, permit me, please, to clarify.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, has taught us that there were two purposes of his coming.

One was to bring man closer to God, the Creator, and the other was to draw the attention of mankind towards discharging the rights of God's Creation. He said that discharging the rights of others selflessly was a very difficult task. However, he further stated that after joining his community it is obligatory upon Ahmadis to fulfil these duties.

Our slogan of '*Love for All, Hatred for None*' is based on this teaching, namely, that if malice and hatred are present then due rights cannot be upheld. So while this mosque, which, by the way, is called Bait-ul-'Aafiyat, as I have mentioned earlier, that is a house of peace, tranquillity and safety, draws our attention towards the worship of Allah, it also continues to impress upon us the obligation to serve and safeguard the rights of His Creation. As a result of observing these rights, love, affection and peace will further develop.

“ ..When Allah the Almighty is so merciful towards His Creation then what right do people have **not** to show mercy to their fellow beings and not treat them with kindness?

It is our duty to try and bring man closer to God. But as for those who do not accept these teachings, we should not erect walls of hatred between them and us, for that is not our purpose. ”

We, therefore, try to live within these parameters, whose outer boundaries are guarded against those who usurp the rights of others and spread hatred. This discipline is supervised by the Khalifa of the time. Whosoever tries to exceed the limits causes himself harm.

We claim that everything we do is for the sake of God Almighty. And God Almighty is very kind to His Creation. The majority of the world does not fulfil the rights of its Creator, but even so God Almighty does not seek revenge. This does not mean that God does not exist, as it is said by some schools of thoughts. Nor does it lead to the question, which is: If someone does not

exist, how can he take revenge? Allah says in the Holy Quran that if He starts punishing people immediately, they go astray, then not only man but all living creatures in the universe will be eliminated. The following verse throws more light on it. The Qur'an says:

*And if Allah were to punish men for their wrongdoing, He would not leave thereon a living creature, but He gives them respite till an appointed term...*  
(Ch.16: V.62)

So we believe in that God Who does not punish the moment a wrong is committed. Were He to punish instantly, He could easily terminate or withdraw the

resources upon which we are dependant.

Upon reflection we will realise that our lives and what we eat are dependent upon a wide array of things, ranging from small bacteria to livestock, even the total life in the earth.

If these did not exist then we could not obtain vegetables or crops, nor would we get milk to drink. According to our beliefs, some persons are punished in this world, whilst others are punished in the Hereafter. But God's Mercy encompasses all things. (Ch.7: V.157)

When Allah the Almighty is so merciful towards His Creation then what right do people have not to show mercy to their fellow beings and not treat them with kindness? It is our duty to try and bring man closer to God. But as for those who do not accept these teachings, we should not erect walls of hatred between them and us, for that is not our purpose.



In the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty has instructed us that *There should be no compulsion in religion.* (Ch.2: V.257) When each person is free to adopt any religion, there can be no reason for any hatred.

It is our duty to mention the beauties of Islam and spread this message far and wide because this too is one of the duties owed to man, that is to say, that whatever you find good for yourself, you should try and invite others to join you in the same. Nevertheless, if anyone does not accept your invitation, relations should continue as before. This is the beautiful teaching that we try to spread.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, who we

believe to be the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) and who, according to our belief and faith, was sent to gather all religions under the name of one God, says:

‘Our Community should become exemplary. Whosoever in our Community shows a poor example or displays weakness in his deeds and beliefs is cruel.’

We must always demonstrate such examples that are liked both by God Almighty and by the holy persons who are sent by Him. Therefore, if a thought arises in anyone’s mind that because of this Muslim mosque the peace in this area will be destroyed, he or she should not worry. From this mosque, God Willing, a beacon of light will shine forth, from which, according to the Commandments of God, love and peace will spread.

God Almighty says in the Qur’an:

*Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and*

*giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonished you that you may take heed. (Ch.16: V.91)*

In this verse we have been commanded to adopt three values and to abstain from three evils. If we ponder over them, we will find that these are the qualities that lead to love and affection and that prevent chaos and disorder in society. Every just person will surely accept that the comprehensiveness of this verse is unparalleled elsewhere.

The first point a true Muslim has been enjoined to act upon, is justice. Justice is not limited to one’s family and friends, nor is it limited to one’s fellow countrymen, nor to those of a like faith. We have been commanded to act with justice even towards an enemy who has been most cruel.

If you look at the early history of Islam you discover that many Muslims were killed; some were even tied to two camels that were then driven in opposite directions, thereby rending their

bodies apart.

This cruel treatment was inflicted on both men and women. Furthermore, Muslims were prevented from even worshipping in the Ka'abah, the most sacred House of Allah. Indeed, so many cruelties and tortures were inflicted upon the Muslims by the non-believers of Makkah that there is no time to recount all of the incidents here.

In spite of all this, when the Muslims rose to power they were commanded not to let a people's enmity incite them to act otherwise than with justice because justice was the preferred way of God Almighty. If today some Muslims do not rise up to these standards, it is not the fault of the teachings of Islam but a folly on the part of such Muslims.

Because they have accepted the Imam of the age, members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strive to attain these high standards. Our community strives towards a justice that removes misunderstandings and grudges, and draws attention to the importance of preserving the

rights of one another.

Another quality (mentioned in the verse I just quoted) is to not only act with justice but to do good unto others. Justice requires that punishment should always be proportionate to the crime. If a criminal has shown enmity towards you, you should not cause his retribution to be excessive. In any case where someone has caused you injury, and you think that by not punishing the individual you would be able to reform him, then you should forgive, for that would be better. The real objective is reformation, rather than seeking revenge, for, after all, the true purpose is that the person should recognise his mistake and should not repeat it in the future.

How did the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> do good to others? Well, he not only forgave those who were extremely cruel but he went so far as to assist them in their businesses and trade. For instance, some were given thousands of sheep, and that was not because they had become Muslim; on the contrary,

they were given the assistance whilst they were still non-Muslims.

This is the standard of good works that can establish peace in society and can end enmities. And this becomes apparent from the next commandment, which is '*giving like kindred*'.

When somebody does good to someone else he should not follow it up by reminding him of his past favours. Furthermore, treating the cruel as though they were your kindred is even more virtuous than the doing of good alone.

The best example of how to treat one's kindred, is the example of how a mother treats her child. A good mother serves her child continuously but never reminds her child of her favours. When she cares for her children, she is not doing it with the intention that when the children grow up she will force them to look after her by reminding them of how much or what she did for them during their childhood. In fact, she cares out of love and

compassion.

No matter what race, religion or nationality a mother belongs to, she continues to bear the same feelings of love for her children. Hence, this is the relation one man should have with others and this is the feeling one must hold for others. Only then will enmities be converted into friendship. Only then will peace and security in societies prevail. And only then will the world be saved from a catastrophic war.

God Almighty widens the circle of His Mercy for such people who have this love for their fellow human beings and they are saved from natural and seasonal disasters.

Having mentioned these three good deeds, God Almighty has pointed out three evils. The three good deeds can only be developed when a person abstains from the three evils. The first of the three evils mentioned is '*fahshaa*'. This is an Arabic word. The meaning of this word is an evil that is known only to he who commits it.

If we reflect, then we will see that there are many evils that man commits that he alone knows about whilst he continues to appear pure in the sight of others. However, we have been commanded that in order to maintain peace to a high standard we should save ourselves from such evils that only we ourselves know about.

The second evil that we have been warned against is '*munkar*', which means an evil that outwardly causes no harm but upsets people. And the third evil is '*baghyi*' which means an evil that is both internally and externally manifest and that causes harm and grief to people. So unless these three evils are removed, a person cannot perform the good deeds required to establish peace and love in society.

This, in brief, is the teaching which I said is to be expected from a true Muslim. This mosque of ours has been built for the worship of One God and to perpetuate these principles amongst Ahmadi Muslims, so

that the people around us come to know the true teachings of Islam. And when Ahmadi raise the slogan of 'Love for All, Hatred for None' it is raised in this spirit. I assure all of you that my words are echoed by each and every true Ahmadi. To try and make the world become a haven of peace is our duty. It is our responsibility to make the world recognise its Creator. The purpose of our creation is the worship of God. The world can have no fear from those who hold such an objective.

At the end of the verse which I presented before you, it is stated '*that you may take heed*' and these words mean that a person must always remember that he owes an obligation to God Almighty and to God's creatures as well.

You must acquire the good deeds that I mentioned earlier and abandon the evils pointed out and strive to discharge these rights. Only then will you be known as rightly guided. Only then will you be considered to be true servants of God and to be amongst those who understand

the purpose of their creation.

If today man really wants to be successful in establishing peace, then instead of finding fault with others he should try to control the Satan within. By removing his own evils, a person should present a wonderful example of justice, of doing good and of giving like kindred. He should discharge the rights of others and only then can trust be developed amongst others.

As a result, true peace will be established. There can never be a guarantee of lasting peace if every person considers himself to be correct, constantly finding fault with others and hurting their sentiments. Nor can it be established if the followers of one faith mock and ridicule another religion, its founder and his teachings. And nor can peace be guaranteed if people outwardly express positive attitudes but bear hatred within their hearts.

Today, when we talk of the global village and of wanting to save the world from destruction, we have to strive more than ever

before.

The current situation prevailing in the world indicates that despite the fact that we understand that if there is another world war, the entire world will be affected by its fallout, we are, nevertheless, slowly moving towards it – that is the message I gave to our Parliamentarians as it is mentioned by one of our honourable Members of Parliament. My prayer is: May God Almighty enable man to discharge his duties to Him and His Creation so that the world can be saved from this horrific destruction that looms over us.

Finally, I would like to say, once again, that I am very grateful to all of you who have taken the time to listen to me.

May Allah reward you for this.

Thank you very much.

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# Islam in *CHINA*

*by Fazal Ahmad – UK*

**A lot of global political attention in recent years has been on China as it emerges as a heavyweight in the global economy. Mention is often made of its Muslim minorities in the West of China and their push for independence, but not many people know much about the background to Islam's emergence in China.**

**This article provides an outline of how Islam entered China, how it has evolved, and the various ethnic Muslim groups in the country.**

China is a huge nation of over one billion people in a country that spans most of Asia, over 3000 miles from West to East; in fact it is probably better to think of China as a continent in its own right. Being a Communist country, religion was actively discouraged for decades, and even now, is tolerated within limits. Islam, like Christianity, is a minority religion in the country. The main faiths are Confucianism, Daoism (or Taoism) and Buddhism. So how did Islam come to reach China and what are the conditions of the Muslims there now?

## **Chinese spirituality before Islam**

The Chinese psyche is inclined towards commemoration of their ancestors and spirits. The traditional faiths of the Chinese included Buddhism, which had come via India, but also Chinese faiths such as Confucianism and Daoism. Chinese culture spans back many millennia and it can be daunting to make any sense out of their myths and legends, such as their fascination with dragons, but if you pierce through the mist of time, you will find that there are

historical events and spiritual insights shrouded within these tales.

The Chinese started to absorb 'formal religion' at a time when prophets were active throughout the world. At a time when Socrates<sup>(as)</sup> was active in Athens, Krishna<sup>(as)</sup> in India, Zoroaster<sup>(as)</sup> in Persia, in China, Kung Fu-Tsu<sup>(as)</sup> (Confucius<sup>(as)</sup>, 551-479 BCE) began to preach on the means of social harmony.

Confucius<sup>(as)</sup> left a legacy of moral teachings in his 'I Ching' on doctrine, duties of people to their family, neighbours, friends, rulers and government. He laid out a detailed set of guidance on marriage, music, wealth, learning and government. His message was that God had created order in the Universe, and man must understand his place and behave appropriately in order to progress. He discussed the concept of a 'superior man' in the following terms:

'The superior man does not set his mind either for anything or against anything. What is right he will follow. The superior man is quiet and

calm, waiting for the appointments of Heaven, while the mean man walks in dangerous paths, looking for lucky occurrences.'

Confucius<sup>(as)</sup> was followed by Lao Tzu<sup>(as)</sup> who laid the seeds of Daoism. So for many centuries, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism gained popularity across China. This began to change as China opened its doors to foreign cultures largely as a result of the opening of trade routes such as the Silk Route.

### **The Silk Route**

Mere mention of the name '*The Silk Route*' conjures up evocative images of camels, vast flat plains surrounded by mountains, colourful trading cities such as Samarqand and a flow of goods and ideas from East to West and back again.

China was well known for its innovation at the time that Islam was emerging out of Arabia and there is a well known quote attributed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>:

*'Seek knowledge even if from China.'*

Although there has always been robust debate about the authenticity of this quote, there is little doubt that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> would have been aware of China, as the Arabs had strong trading links with China via the Sri Lanka and Malaysia sea routes.

The Silk Route describes a number of overland routes that went from Turkey and the Middle East through Central Asia to China via Samarqand, Kashgar and Xi'an, and traders would journey for weeks and months on each epic trip. Often large caravans of camels were taken on these trips.

### **Spread of Islam into China**

Many Muslims entered from the West of the country along the Silk Route. One such early pioneer was the companion Thaabit ibn Qays who died in 635 CE on his return from China and was buried in the Xingxing Valley east of Hami. His tomb is venerated by Chinese Muslims to this day.

Islam entered China through Arab and Central Asian traders. Actually,

the first 'official' delegation went in 651 CE under the auspices of the 3rd Caliph, Hadhrat 'Uthman<sup>(ra)</sup> who despatched Sa'd ibn abi Waqqas, the Prophet's maternal Uncle.

He sent a message of peace to the Chinese Emperor encouraging him and his people to embrace Islam. The Emperor Yong Hui, in the second year of his reign, had no interest in adopting these foreign ideas and beliefs, but out of respect, responded by ordering the building of the Memorial Mosque in Canton City (Guangzhou), China's first Mosque which still stands today. The Annals of the T'ang Dynasty make the first mention of the Muslim Arabs.

Part of the Annals of Kwangtung as recorded by Arnold read:

'At the beginning of the T'ang dynasty there came to Canton a large number of strangers from the kingdoms of Annam, Cambodia, Medina and several other countries. These strangers worshipped heaven and had neither statue, idol nor image in their temples. The kingdom of

Medina is close to that of India, and it is in this kingdom that the religion of these strangers, which is different to that of Buddha, originated. They do not eat pork or drink wine, they regard as unclean the flesh of any animal not killed by themselves. They are nowadays called Hui Hui ...”

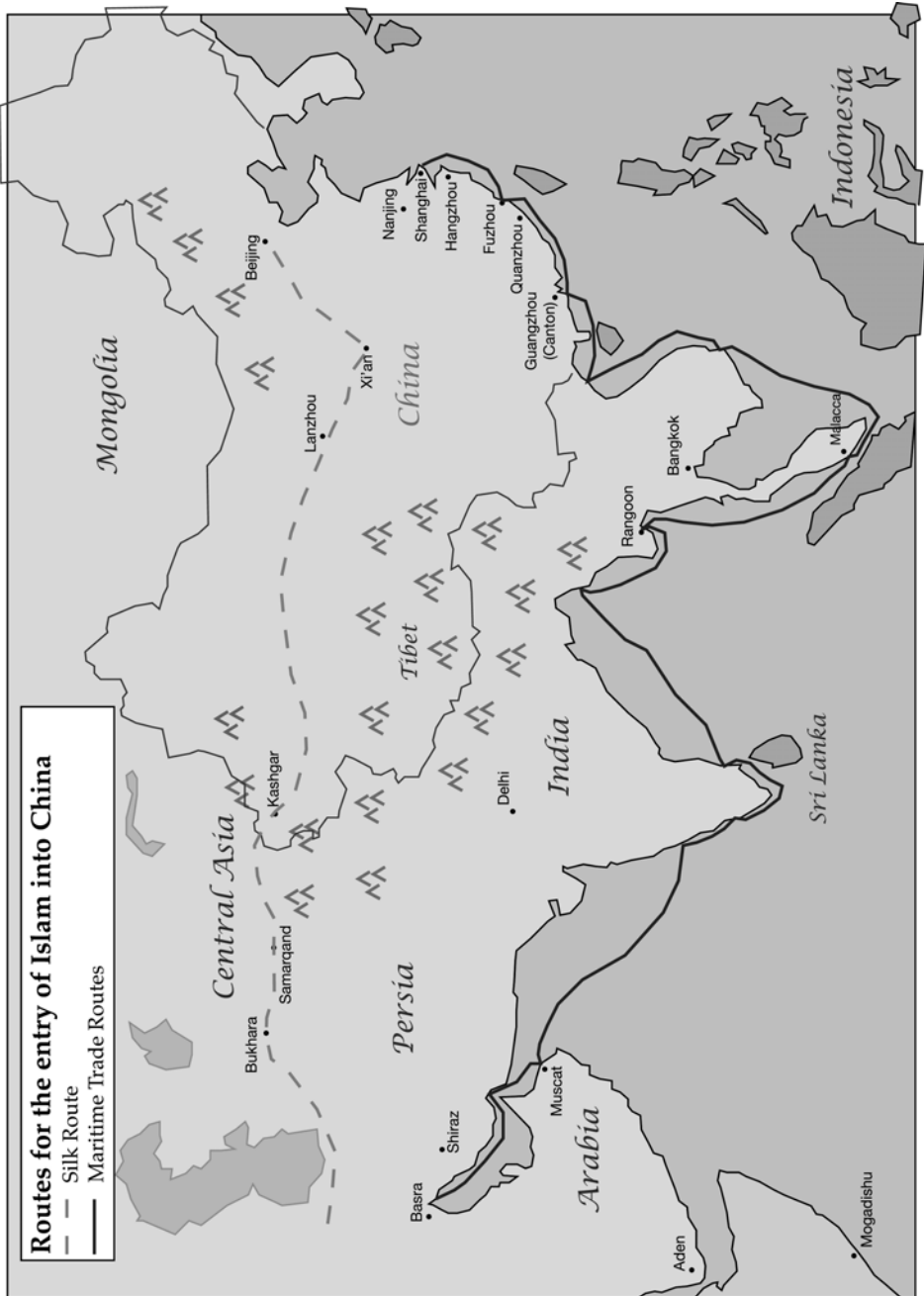
Canton (Guangzhou) became one of the first Muslim settlements in China as successive delegations visited through this city and were well received. The interest of the Chinese was more to do with trade opportunities than spirituality, and many of the early Muslims settled and married local women which helped to foster closer ties. As thousands of Arab traders settled in South China, these exchanges became more and more regular. An account from Abu Zeid Hassan in the 9th century describes boats laden with cargo from Oman heading for China from Basra and Siraf. The boats would take a route via India and Sri Lanka, then through the Malay Peninsula eventually to Canton and beyond.

Often the Muslims adopted the

names of their Han wives or the nearest Chinese name or letter to their original Arabic names; for example settlers with the name Muhammad or Mustafa would often adopt the name Mu or Mo, those named Hasan would become Ha, Said would become Sai and so gradually, the names became integrated into Chinese culture.

A century later, the Annals again record that an ambassador called Sulaiman was sent by the Muslim Caliph Hisham in 726 CE to the Chinese Emperor Hsuan Tsung. Many years later in 756 CE, his son Su Tsung called upon the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur to help him recover his capital cities. The Arab troops that assisted him remained in China, married local women and settled.

On the South Coast of China, apart from Guangzhou, Muslim traders also settled in Quanzhou, Yangzhou and Hangzhou over 1000 years ago and built their own mosques and facilities. Some also followed the Jintang Canal northwards. Tens of thousands of Arabs lived in these cities at that time.



Often, Chinese rulers encouraged Muslim immigration for their own needs, so for example, in 1070, the Song Emperor Shenzong asked over 5,000 Muslims from Bukhara in modern Uzbekistan to settle in north-east China to act as a buffer between the Song and their enemies the Liao. These men were led by Prince Amir Sayyid.

### **Consolidation of Islam in China**

Up to now, the Muslims were tolerated as foreign guests, but in the 13th century, having already taken control of the Muslim Middle East, the Mongol hoards devastated China. At this time, many Muslims from Central Asia were forced by the Mongols to migrate to Western China to assist with the administration of their empire. When Kublai Khan became the Emperor in 1259 CE in Khanbaliq (Beijing), he appointed ‘Umar Shams al-Din (commonly known as Syed Ajall) from Bukhara as his treasurer, and eventually as Governor of Yunnan, the region in the South-West towards Vietnam.

Before his death in 1270 CE, ‘Umar Shams al-Din had a great



*Niujie Mosque, Beijing*

reputation as an honest leader who built Confucian Temples as well as Mosques in Yunnan. His family went on to strengthen Islam and his grandson obtained recognition for Islam as a ‘True and Pure Religion’ from the Emperor in 1335 CE. Other descendants went on to build Mosques in the city of Nanking.

The Muslims continued to consolidate their position on the coastal cities beyond Canton to the extent that when the traveller, Ibn Battutah of Morocco, visited China (probably after 1342), he reported that:

‘in every town there is a special quarter for the Muslims, inhabited solely by them, where they have their Mosques; they are honoured and respected by the Chinese.’

“ ...The Muslims learned to survive in a way that did not bother the local population. They dressed as Chinese, worked diligently and praised Confucius<sup>(as)</sup>...

..Muslims retained a link to the rest of the Muslim world as every year, a small number would make the pilgrimage to Makkah by sea. ”

With the establishment of the new Ming Dynasty, it was the Muslim general Lan Yu who in 1388 led the Ming army to a decisive victory over the Mongols in their heartland beyond the Great Wall.

There had been a period of instability when the Mongols were removed from China as the Muslims were seen as their administrators. Ming Emperor Hung-Wu offered the Muslims many privileges and as their conditions improved, they were provided with new facilities and many new Mosques were built. These conditions continued to flourish throughout the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644 CE).

The Muslims learned to survive in a way that did not bother the local population. They dressed as

Chinese, worked diligently and praised Confucius<sup>(as)</sup>. The only outward differences were in the ceremonies of marriages and deaths, and the fact that the Muslims did not drink alcohol, gamble or eat pork. Also, Muslims were known for their focus on cleanliness. In that sense, it is surprising that they did not translate the Qur'an into Chinese, but continued to read in Arabic, something that drew attention to the community, particularly when times grew hard. Muslims retained a link to the rest of the Muslim world as every year, a small number would make the pilgrimage to Makkah by sea. They did not preach Islam outside of Mosque compounds, so this again reduced any potential friction with the authorities.

“ ...By 2000 CE, official estimates claimed that there were now 200 million religious believers in the country, 11% of those being Muslims. The largest community is the 9.8 million Hui Muslims, followed by the 8.4 million Muslims of Uyghur in the West of the country.”

Chinese Mosque education (equivalent to Sunday schools) called *Jingtang jiaoyu* was established in the 16th century through the perseverance of Hu Dengzhou (1522- 1597).

In the late 17th century, the great Chinese Muslim scholars Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu and Liu Jielien wrote many books in Chinese on Islam and the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. These books helped to increase the knowledge of the Chinese Muslims, although the wider population were still largely ignorant about Islam as the Muslims did not preach publicly.

### **Muslim Massacre**

The downturn for Muslims began with the rise of the Qing Dynasty in 1644. Qing Emperors made life very hard for Muslims. First they prohibited the Halal slaughter of animals, then they banned the construction of new Mosques and

the pilgrimage for Hajj.

Conditions grew bleak for Islam in the second half of the 19th Century when rebellion led to the slaughter of possibly millions of Chinese Muslims.

There was an uprising of Hui and other ethnic Muslim groups against the Qing Dynasty from 1862 to 1877 in the provinces of Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia and Xinjiang. There were many grievances and to some extent, the coming together of the different sects and ethnic groups was out of convenience, but it is claimed that they wanted to create an independent Muslim country west of the Yellow River.

Whatever their motivation, the rebellion was crushed, and estimates of the number of Muslims killed vary from 1-8 million. Many Hui and other ethnic Muslims migrated from Western



China to neighbouring Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan from 1878 and their descendents still live there whilst maintaining their Chinese roots.

Things stabilised again after the fall of the Qing Dynasty when Sun Yat Sen established the Republic of China and told the people that the country belonged equally to all citizens, including the Han, Hui Muslims, Tibetans and the Mongols.

### **Modern Islam in China**

As mentioned previously, China is a Communist state, and as such, faith was not encouraged and went underground for many years. The China Islamic Association was formed in 1952 but was forced to go under-ground in 1958. It was the reform years from 1978 that brought religion back to the surface. Five religions were officially recognised in China: Buddhism, Catholicism, Taoism, Protestantism and Islam.

The religions and their Mosques, Churches and Temples were revived, and many new converts were attracted to them. By 2000

CE, official estimates claimed that there were now 200 million religious believers in the country, 11% of those being Muslims. The largest community is the 9.8 million Hui Muslims, followed by the 8.4 million Muslims of the Uyghur in the West of the country.

Across the country, there are ten main Muslim groups: Hui, Uyghur, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Tatar, Tadjik, Dongxiang, Salar and Bao'an. In many parts of the country, they live separately and have limited interactions with each other in the same way that religious sects co-exist, but in the major cities where the Muslims are a minority, they often come together in unity realising that they have more in common than their theological differences.

In cities such as Beijing or Shanghai, the Muslims cannot be distinguished from ordinary Chinese as beards are not exclusive to Muslims, nor is modest dress exclusive to Muslim women. Perceptions of Muslims from the mainstream population are that they eat lamb kebabs and do not eat pork, and observe strict

cleanliness. In Beijing, the Muslims of the city live in several pockets and are often involved in the butchery trade where they provide *Qing Zhen* (Halal) meat for their own communities and also 'clean' meat for the wider population who respect Qing Zhen.

China has over 45,000 Mosques, most with a hybrid style of Arabic and Chinese. A typical example is the Niujie Mosque in the Hui district of Beijing which looks like a Chinese Temple from the outside, and on the inside has decorated pillars, walls and ceilings with red and other traditional colours, and gold Qur'anic lettering. The mosque dates from the 10th century and indeed the graves of two Arab missionaries are within the compound.

The main features of a mosque are there: a mihrab (niche), prayer mats facing Makkah, an ablutions hall, and a nearby Qur'anic School. The style is definitely Chinese and the minarets are built as pagodas and not that tall. One account describes that the Muslims did not build tall minarets so as not to offend the superstitious locals.

The mosque stands on a major crossroads in a Muslim area of Beijing not far from the Temple of Heaven, and across the road, there are Muslim shops and boutiques selling Halal meat, books and Islamic clothing (hijabs, hats etc).

However, the State is still wary of religion as a catalyst in breaking up the country (memories of the rebellion of the 19th century remain strong), and so maintains tight control over all clergy and religious instruction. Imams in China are educated at one of ten Qur'anic Schools where they are also educated in state law and religious policy. Imams attend regular meetings at the China Islamic Association and are also encouraged to attend inter-faith meetings to promote understanding and goodwill. Indeed many of the Imams are aged 20-40 unlike in the Middle East where they are often from the elders of the community.

China has also had some innovations such as women Imams who lead congregations of women in Mosques, but in general, the Muslims follow the same basic

worship as Muslims elsewhere, and 10,000 attend the Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah every year.

There are many cities and regions in China that have maintained a significant Islamic heritage and a strong Muslim population to this day including Xi'an and the Xinjiang auto-nomous region.

### **Influential Chinese Muslims**

Through the last thousand years, many of the Chinese Muslims played a significant role and are worthy of mention.

#### *Zheng He*

Zheng He (1371-1433) was a famous Hui Muslim explorer who led a fleet to explore the West from 1405 to 1433. Born in Yunnan in 1371, he was descended from Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din 'Umar of Uzbekistan. His Arabic name is Hajji Mahmud Shams.

Between 1405 and 1433, Ming Emperor Yongle sponsored seven



*Chinese style Mosque in Lanzhou, Gansu Province*

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expeditions by sea to gain control of trade in the Indian Ocean. The expeditions consisted of hundreds of boats and possibly a crew of 28,000. The expeditions went to Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Persia, Arabia and East Africa. Historian Menzies suggests that Zheng He's fleet even visited

Australasia and the Americas although this is hard to substantiate.

There is little doubt that the establishment and development of Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia was influenced by the travels of Zheng He who established some infrastructure in Malacca, Palembang, Java, Kalimantan and the Philippines. He left many of his crew there who went on to establish Muslim communities propagating Hanafi Islam in Chinese.

Zheng He died at sea and was buried there, though a tomb and museum in his name exist in Nanjing. Even today, July 11th is celebrated in China as Maritime Day in honour of Zheng He.

#### *Yusuf Ma Dexin*

Yusuf Ma Dexin (1794-1874) was a Hui scholar from Yunnan who was fluent in Arabic and Persian.

In 1841 at the age of 47, he left with a small group for Makkah to perform Hajj. Unlike modern travel which is fast and easy, travel at that time was arduous; he had to travel overland to Burma and then

took a steamship to Makkah. After performing Hajj, he remained in the Middle East for many years, studying at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo and then spent time in Jerusalem and Istanbul.

He returned to China where he became the first translator of the Qur'an into Chinese. He also wrote over 30 books on Islam in Arabic and Persian. He also compared Islam and Confucianism in an effort to build bridges. However, he also wrote strongly against the adoption of Buddhist and Daoist practices amongst Chinese Muslims.

Unfortunately he was also drawn into the Muslim Rebellion in 1856, and despite trying to reconcile the Muslims with the Qing leadership, he was considered a traitor and was executed in 1874.

#### *Osman Chou*

Muhammad Osman Chou, also known affectionately as Chini Sahib, comes from a line of Chinese Muslims in Shanghai.

In an attempt to gain a deeper education in Islam, he met

Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan in the Pakistan Embassy in China and, through his sponsorship, went with 5 other Chinese Muslims to Rabwah in Pakistan for formal training at the Jami'ah (Missionary Training Institute).

Since then he has written and translated several books on Islam for the Chinese people, including the Holy Qur'an. He has served with distinction as one of the most respected Ahmadi Muslim missionaries in Pakistan, South East Asia and the UK.

### **Chinese Muslim Cities**

There are many cities in China with a strong Islamic heritage and an active population of Muslims, some of which are described in more detail here.

#### *Xi'an*

As tourism flourishes in China, Xi'an is a popular destination because of the nearby Terracotta Army. Actually Xi'an itself has a lot to offer in its own right. At the time that Arab traders were first venturing east to China, Xi'an was becoming a booming trade city with a population of over 1

million, and was at that time the capital of China.

Trade brought with it new people and new faiths, and at the time, the city had thriving minorities of Muslims, Zoroastrians (Mazdeans), Manicheans, Jews and Nestorians. However, its status was not to last, and by the start of the 10th century, the capital moved from Xi'an.

The population were intrigued by the foreign settlers, but those communities coexisted rather than fully integrating with the local Han Chinese, and their religious ideas were not really propagated. The explorer Marco Polo visited the city in 1278 CE and noted:

“The people are idolators and subject to the Great Khan .... There are two churches here of Nestorian Christians.”

There is still a thriving Muslim community in the city today, and the heart of the city hosts the Great Mosque dating from 742 CE, one of the oldest Mosques in the world.

### *Kashgar*

Kashgar is a thriving town on the westernmost part of China in Xinjiang Province. Also known as Kashi, it had a strategic location on the Silk Route at the crossroads of the northern and southern Taklamakan routes. Once again, the Italian explorer Marco Polo visited here in 1275 CE and commented on the hard lifestyle of the people. The population of 250,000 are largely Uyghur.

The Id Gah Mosque holds 6,000 worshippers and is prominent in this Muslim city as the largest Mosque in all of China. It dates from 1442, and on Eid, anything up to 50,000 worshippers can be found praying largely on the floors outside this great old Mosque. The old Sunday Market reminds people of the role the city has as a centuries old trade hub sitting between the Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kazaks to the West, Pakistanis, Afghans and Indians to the South, and Chinese to the East. The city was also once home to Mahmud al Kashgarli (1008 – 1105 CE) one of the most respected Muslim scholars of his time.

### *Nanjing*

The city of Nanjing is the capital of Jiangsu Province in eastern China. It became the capital of China in 1368 and probably the largest city in the world at the turn of the 15th century.

This was also the golden age of Islam in China, and Nanjing became a centre for Islamic study. In particular, there was a lot of interest in comparative studies between Islam and Confucianism. Muslim scholars brought an understanding from the rest of the Muslim world of science, mathematics, astronomy, architecture and medicine. The scholars of Nanjing were in a unique position to not just translate this knowledge, but to help the broader Chinese population to assimilate the knowledge.

Some of the early Mosques such as the Liuhe and Jingjue Mosques are still standing in the city. The Jingjue Mosque stands on Sanshan Street and was built in the 14th century. In fact its name was given by the Ming Emperor Zhu Yuen Zhang. Under the guidance of Zheng He, it was rebuilt, and then extended in 1492 just as Islamic

Spain was taking its last breath in Europe.

### Conclusion

The much-maligned Chinese are a very thoughtful, respectful and spiritual people. Although the political engine of China is facing criticism, the Chinese themselves are very disciplined and considerate and embrace spiritual concepts very easily.

It is interesting that despite being forced to go underground for decades under Communist rule (as did the Muslims of Central Asia under Soviet rule), since restrictions

were lifted, the Muslims are back in strong numbers and with their culture and understanding of Islam intact.

Regular contact with the Middle East and South Asia has also ensured a continuous flow of information and active experience back into the Chinese Muslim community and a revival of religious zeal, though there is a difference amongst the Western Chinese who seek political leverage and the Eastern Chinese Muslims who seek to assimilate into mainstream society and practise their faith quietly.

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