

بسمِ اللَّدِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيْم The Light



anua

International Organ of the Centre for the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam

The *only* Islamic organisation which is upholding the finality of prophethood.

Webcasting on the world's first real-time Islamic service at

www.virtualmosque.co.uk

Editors

Germany	- Amir Aziz	
India	- Gowsia Saleem	
Sweden	- Kaleem Ahmed	
Suriname - Robbert Bipat M.D, PhD		
South Africa- Ebrahim Mohamed		
UK	- Shahid Aziz & - Mustaq Ali	
The USA	- Zainab Ahmad	
Contents		
THE CALL OF THE MESSIAH		2
<u>A Letter from a Friend</u>		3
A Tribute to Dawood Sydow and Ismail Peck		
by Ebrahim Mohammed		7
<u>Search for the Kingdom of Allah</u> by		
Dawood Sydow		10
Power of Words by Iain Dixon		14
L.A.M Vindicated		15

Broadcasts (UK time)

- 1. Urdu Skype: Sunday 09:00
- 2. English www.virtualmosque.co.uk
 - \geq Friday Sermon 13:00
 - First Sunday of month lecture 15:00.
- 3. French Sunday 11:00 Radio Virtual Mosque on Mixlr.com

Our Websites

- 1. International HO
- 2. Research and History
- 3. The Woking Mosque and Mission
- 4. The Berlin Mosque and Mission
- 5. <u>Ouran search</u>
- 6. Blog

Broadcasts from and about us

- \triangleright www.virtualmosque.co.uk
- \triangleright mixlr.com Radio Virtual Mosque

Interesting external links

- The British Empire. \geq
- Israel is NOT everyone's home only the Jews. \geq
- \geq What Caused the Iraq War?
- \geq Signs of *Tajdeed* in the Arab World?
- Gender Equality A Dream Unfulfilled. \geq
- Force in the name of Islam. \geq
- 1000 Year Old Mosque Allows Women to En- \geq ter!
- Statecraft and Islam.
- How Did Life on Earth start?
- Life of a Muslim Scholar Slave in the US.
- Muslim in the US turn to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to Explain Jihad.

External Links

The Light is not responsible for the content of external sites. The inclusion of a link to an external website should not be understood to be an endorsement of that website, the views it expresses or the site's owners (or their products/services).

Some links may have research, which disagrees with our beliefs. It is for us to consider such material and provide a rebuttal. Ignoring it will not make it go away.

We welcome all scholarly contributions to The Light.



The Call of the Messiah by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam



The Promised Messiah and Mahdi

Ahmad

(Editor's note: Any quotations from the Quran are translated from the author's explanations and are not literal translations of the verse quoted. This extract is from the English translation of a lecture he delivered in 1904 in Lahore, now in Pakistan, taken from the Lahore Ahmadiyya publication 'Essence of Islam', p. 71 – 77)

Signs of the Latter Age

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 kind of evidence but like the genuine diamond it shines in full effulgence in all its phases. Such is my claim to Promised Messiahship. Its truth shines 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 with the title Barahin-i Ahmadiyya about twenty-four years ago. A long and continuous series of lies is inconceivable. However good 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 imposter 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 an 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 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 circumstances published in Barahin-i Ahmadiyya, which I was then writing. Addressing me Almighty God thus spoke to me: "O my Ahmad, you are according to My Wish and you are with Me as My Unity and Oneness. So the time has come when you should be helped and made known among people. You have in My Presence a dignity which the world knows not. God shall assist you in all endeavours. You have dignity in My Presence, and I have chosen you for Myself. And I will make people follow and obey you and I will make you a guide to them. We will inspire people from heaven that they may assist you. Assistance shall come to you from deep and distant paths. People will flock to you from distant corners of the world. It is, therefore, meet that you should not turn away from them or get tired of them, because of their large numbers, but receive them with kindness and courtesy. And pray to God, 'O Lord, do not leave me alone and You are the best of inheritors.' God will procure for you the companions of the mat, and what know you who the companions of the mat are! You will 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 you My vicegerent upon earth, and people will say of you contemptuously, 'Wherefrom and how have you 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 does, but He will question everyone about what He said. They say, 'This is but a fabrication.' Say, 'It is God Who has established this depensation, 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 predominate 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 you against their mischiefs, though people may not be able to save you. You are before My eyes; I have named you Mutawakkil (one who trusts in God), and God shall not leave you until He has cut off the virtuous from the wicked. Two sheep will be slaughtered, and everyone who is upon earth must taste of death. There may be a thing to which you may be averse, but it may be good for you; and there may be a thing which you think good but its attainment may be injurious to you. God knows what is good for you and what is 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 will come to me from distant places and remote corners in such numbers that they should exhaust 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. Alone I lived then, in a small village, in the corner of solitude, 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 shinning like the mid-day 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 people. 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 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, namely, Shaikh Abdul Rahman and Sahibzada Maulvi Abdul Latif at the hands of the Amir Abdul Rahman and Amir Habibullah respectively. (Return to contents)

A Letter from a Friend Correspondence between Sufi Riaz Ali Carmali And Dr. Zahid Aziz

A message was received at one of our websites on 5 December 2018 from a Muslim brother, which we reproduce below with his permission.

"I am a Twelver Shia Sufi Muslim. I am also an Islamic scholar and researcher of Islam and its sciences. I am also a researcher of Christianity, Hinduism, world history, international politics, and Neoplatonic Philosophy.

But I am first and foremost a Muslim, a true monotheist, and I do not ascribe partners to Allah Ta'ala.

And my sole authority is the Holy Quran, though I accept those Hadeeth attributed to Prophet Muhammad that match with the Book of Allah, Subhana-hu wa Ta'ala.

Now, the purpose of this letter is just to salute you and commend you. I consider you as 100% Muslims and it would be an honour to perform Salah behind an Imam of yours and to eat meat slaughtered by you.

I know with some degree of certainty the differences between your Movement, the Lahore Ahmadiyyah Movement (LAM), and the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Community (AMC).

You believe, like the Sunnis and the Shias, that Muhammad (saw) is the last Prophet sent by Allah Tabarak wa Ta'ala to all Mankind and so you belong to Mainstream Islam.

Regarding the AMC, they believe that Muhammad (saw) is the final Law-giving Prophet, the final major Prophet and the final Messenger. But they believe in the possibility of very small prophets belonging from the Muslim Ummah, who are totally submitted to the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. These very small prophets they call "Ummati Nabi".

Though I reject the AMC's concept of "Ummati Nabi", I also consider them as Muslims, and I would have no problem to pray behind them and to eat the meat they slaughter.

My justification for accepting the AMC as Muslims is the following:

If we were to consider the AMC as non-Muslims because they believe in the false concept of "Ummati Nabi", then we would have to consider the Wahhabis as apostates and mushrik because they wrongly ascribe to Almighty Allah, hands, feet, face, and so on, while Allah is neither matter nor spirit, being totally transcendent, transcending even His Holy Names.

But I consider the Wahhabis as Muslims and I even pray behind them and eat the meat they slaughter, although here in Portugal the Wahhabi Community is almost non-existent.

The problem of nowadays Muslims is that they do not respect the minor differences each Muslim group has! Respecting these minor differences does not mean that one has to agree with these differences! One may disagree with them but we must respect them. And this has to be done peacefully.

I have some beliefs that are shared with you, and I have some beliefs which you may not

share with me. These are:

— The correct punishment for Zina is 100 lashes, as prescribed by Surah An-Nur. In Islam, there was not, there is not, and there will never be, stoning to death.

— The Arabic Quran we have, including the zabar, zer, pesh, is the same Arabic Quran Prophet Muhammad left. This is clearly stated in Surah 75. Rasulullah (saw) left the Arabic Quran we have now, in written form, many months before his demise. So I dismiss completely those false theories that say that it was first Abu Bakr and then Uthman who collected the Quran! Prophet Muhammad wrote himself the Arabic Quran we have now under the guidance of Angel Gabriel (as), and he had a committee of scribes who, under the Prophet's instructions, also wrote the Quran. Whenever Gabriel (as) brought a new revelation, he (as) would tell the Prophet (saw) where should it be placed in the written Quran. And when the revelation of the Quran ended, Gabriel (as) taught Muhammad (saw) the proper compilation of the Quran. So, one or two years before the demise of Muhammad (saw), the Arabic Quran was already in official written form. Narrations tell us that Prophet Muhammad placed one copy of the written Quran in his Masjid, so every Muslim could copy from it.

- The Holy Quran was revealed in the Arabic Language. Allah Tabarak wa Ta'ala explained in detail in the Holy Quran why He, the Only Reality, revealed His Book in Arabic. Our Master Muhammad (saw) knew only this language, and prior to the revelation, he could neither read nor write. But the purpose of the Holy Quran is for It to be properly translated into the languages of the world, so both Arabs and non-Arabs can have equal access to the Book of Allah Ta'ala. One who reads the Arabic Quran, without understanding Arabic, is performing a very good deed because he is reading the Word of Allah Ta'ala. But one who reads a good translation of the Holy Quran in one's mother tongue is performing by far a more valuable deed than the one who reads in Arabic without understanding it. Because the purpose of the Quran is to be a message to all Mankind and Jinn. And in order



for the Quran to reach all Mankind, it has to be properly translated. Muhammad (saw) himself gave the example when, after the Quran was complete, he ordered Salman Farsi to translate the whole Quran to Persian. Salman did so and Rasul-ullah (saw) approved his translation. During Islamic history, many Awliya-allah supported the reading of the translation of the Quran in one's mother tongue. Some of them are Rumi, Shah Waliullah Dehlavi and Allama Iqbal.

Now, I would like to know what your view on Tasawwuf is and on Wahdatal Wujud.

I end this letter by saying that this is a letter of support for your group even though we have minor differences of opinion.

Sufi Riaz Ali Carmali."

We sent him the following reply:

"We are greatly delighted and pleased to read your opinions about us. Allah has blessed and guided you to study these issues in depth, and to reach the conclusion that we are Muslims, while there is so much hostile propaganda against us declaring us as the worst of non-Muslims.

You write: 'The problem of nowadays Muslims is that they do not respect the minor differences each Muslim group has! Respecting these minor differences does not mean that one has to agree with these differences! One may disagree with them but we must respect them. And this has to be done peacefully.'

We agree entirely and whole-heartedly with your statement and have always tried to follow these principles, namely, to recognize the rights of other Muslims to have differences with us, and to respect them as our fellow Muslims.

I thank you very much for your letter of support.

As to your question about our view on Tassawuf and Wahdat-ul-wujud, I give below links to the writings of some of our founding elders on these subjects: www.aaiil.org/text/books/others/basharatahmad/essaysislamicsufiism/positionsufiismislam.shtml

www.aaiil.org/text/books/others/basharatahmad/essaysislamicsufiism/philosophysufiismislam.shtml

www.aaiil.org/text/books/kk/mysticismislam/mysticismislam.shtml

In addition, below is a link to a recent article by one of our members:

<u>www.ahmadiyya.org/Word-</u>

Press/2018/03/28/sufism-the-path-of-eachand-every-muslim-via-common-islam-quranand-sunnah/

We can also refer you to the following compilation (which is not on this subject):

www.ahmadiyya.org/allegs/quotes1.htm

but in which sections 5, 10 and the Appendix are relevant.

Once again, thank you and may Allah bless you."

In his reply, Mr Carmali wrote:

"I fully support any Muslim Community that abides by the Holy Quran. And I reiterate that the Lahore Ahmadiyyah Movement are as Muslims as any other group like the Sunnis and the Shia. According to the Holy Quran, the Lahore Ahmadiyyah Movement belongs to Mainstream Islam.

Even non-Muslim scholars of Islam say that Islam is Unique, both because of its uncompromising Monotheism, and because of the fact that Muslims do not have major theological differences between themselves.

When we see other religions, this reality does not apply.

Hinduism, for example, is considered by some scholars, not to be one religion, but an aggregation of different religions that just happen to have the same scriptures.



I am also inclined towards this view though I don't subscribe to it in its entirety.

Hindu Schools of thought have differences between themselves not only at the essence of their religion. Each Hindu School can be a religion Itself.

Adi Shankara's Advaita Vedanta School believe that when a person reaches "Moksha", "Liberation" in English, he or she merges with the Divine Being. Or worse, depending on the interpretation, when the person reaches Moksha, he/she realises that he/she was always the Divine Being Itself.

Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta School believes that when the individual reaches Moksha, he/she still retain their individuality. This system of Thought believes that human souls are an atomic fragment of the Divine Being.

Madhva's Dvaita Vedanta believes in the Unity of the Divine Being and states that once Moksha is reached, the "Jivanmukta" (the liberated person) becomes a perfect servant of God.

Valabha's Shudhadvaita Vedanta School has a view similar to Ramanuja's School.

In Christianity, the divisions between the Schools go at the core of their beliefs regarding the Trinity.

While Catholics state that the so called "Holy Ghost" proceeds from both the Father and the Son, the Orthodox believe that it proceeds from the Father only. This is a major dispute between these two branches of Trinitarian Christianity.

Another division that goes at the core of their beliefs is the fact that Catholics believe in the "Purgatory" while Protestants reject it completely.

Other division is the fact that Catholic have images and pray to their "saints", while the Protestants have no images and pray only to the Trinity. Jews also have major differences between themselves.

The Humanistic branch of Judaism, for example, states that in order to be a Jew, one neither needs to believe in the existence of God nor does one need to believe that their Sacred Scripture is wholly true!

In Sikhism, there are also major divisions. One School states that at Moksha, the individual merges with the Divine Being, while other School states that the individual retains its individuality.

In Buddhism as well, there are major differences between them. The Mahayana School of Buddhism believes in the existence of the Divine Being, while other Buddhist Schools don't believe in the existence of a Deity.

Islam is Unique, because all Schools, be they Sunni, Shia, Lahore Ahmadi, Ahmadi Muslim Community, Wahhabi, Bohra Ismailiyyah, Zaidiyyah, all have the same beliefs, namely:

all believe in the absolute existence and oneness of God, the One and only God, the Creator of everything;

all believe in the same Angels;

all believe in the scriptures of the past, not as they are presented to us now, but as they were revealed by Allah Ta'ala;

all believe that Allah Ta'ala sent 124 thousand Prophets to guide Mankind;

all believe, (even the AMC Jamaat in their distorted view), that Muhammad (saw) is the last Prophet of Allah Ta'ala;

all believe in the same Day of Qiyamah;

all believe in the same Paradise and the same Hell;

all share the same Holy Quran;

all perform the 5 daily Salah;

The Light

all fast in Ramadan;

all believe in the same Hajj;

all believe in the same Hadith, though the chain of narrators can be different; etc. etc. etc.

Having 99% of our religion in common, and with just 1% differences, Muslims fell prey to Satan and abandoned the translation of the Holy Quran.

Unity among Muslims is essential. And it starts with reading the translation of the Holy Quran and putting its noble teachings into practice.

One can read a translation of the Holy Quran made by Sunnis, Shias, Ahmadiyyah, Wahhabi, etc, because the Arabic Quran is the same, and the differences between each group's translation are very, very small!**(Return to contents)**

Dawood Sydow and Ismail Peck

Compiled by Ebrahim Mohamed

Dawood Sydow, 1911 - 1979

Dawood Sydow was born on the 10th February 1911. He was one of five sons and three daughters of Al Haj Hussain and Al Haj Fatima Sydow. His father was well known in the community as an extraordinary pious person. Dawood Sydow was married twice and had a son and a daughter from his first marriage and five sons and seven daughters from his second marriage. His secular education was limited to primary school level and he worked most of his life as a barber. It was this aspect of his life that made his role as editor, author, master debater and lecturer so remarkable. Everyone who met him and engaged in discussions with him found it difficult to believe that he had no formal education of note. From very early days in his life most of which was confined to Cape Town,



First row (floor): K. Dinnie, E. Allam, E. Jacosb, M. Mohamed, M. A. Arnold.

Second row (chairs): M. Karriem, S. Dollie, Al-Hajj F. Sydow, **Dawood Sydow**, A. Mohamed, G. Kippie, A. Allie,

Third row (standing): M. T. Fredericks, G. Davids, I. Davids, C. Ahmat, M. S. Jaffar, M. Abrahams, Y. Barnes.

Fourth row (standing): Ismael Peck, M. C. Titus, O. Sydow, A. R. Ashtiker, N. E. Rakiep, A. Titus, C. Ahmat

> South Africa, Dawood Sydow was a restless seeker of the truth, truth that the local clerics could not satisfy his searching soul. It was by accident that he came across some of the works of Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, a prominent and leading missionary associated with the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, who had visited Cape Town in 1926 at the invitation of the local Muslims. This encounter with the works of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement had a life-changing impact on him. It was around 1950 when Dawood Sydow formally started the Lahore section of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam affiliated to the Central Anjuman in Lahore, Pakistan. At the time, the organization was called The Mediator Islamic Association. About the same time, he registered a Muslim newspaper, called The Mediator, which he published on a monthly basis and distributed free to all the libraries, universities and a host of other interested parties as far as India, Australia and a host of other countries.

> Dawood Sydow spent most of his life studying the Holy Quran, the Bible, the works of the Founder of the Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad from what was available in English, etc. He became an expert in the Bible and had several debates with theological professors of



the University of Stellenbosch and local missionaries. A remarkable feature of his debates with missionaries was that he would often quote from the Bible from memory which had even seasoned Christian missionaries baffled. He gave several lectures on Islam to an avid group of members and supporters in Cape Town and Kimberley where had stayed for a short while. He gave a highly acclaimed talk on the subject "Why I am a Muslim" at a public forum, organized by the Rationalist Society of South Africa. At the same meeting a Jewish Rabbi and Christian Priest explained why they belonged to the Jewish and Christian faiths respectively. At the end of the meeting, the chairlady remarked that if she had to choose a religion now that she heard the renditions by all the speakers, it will have to be the religion of Dawood Sydow. It is interesting to note that the invitation to represent the Muslims at the meet-

ing was first extended to the head of the Muslim Judicial Council, but he refused. It was only then that Dawood Sydow was invited to speak on behalf of the religion of Islam which he willingly did. So, ironically, the man who was held as an imposter and heretic by Muslim clerics came to save the day for the Muslims. When a Muslim. Obaray, under the influence of Christian missionaries. wrote a book wherein he tried to prove that the tenets of Christianity with regard to Jesus' birth, resurrection and ascension are to be found in the Holy Ouran, Mr Sydow wrote a reply entitled, "A Reply to Obaray's, Birth, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus". The arguments used by Mr Sydow from

At the Central Anjuman's Golden Jubilee. 25th to 27th December 1964.

Sitting L. to R. Hazrat K. B. Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, Prof Muhammad Irshad (Indonesia), Mr Dawood Sydow (South Africa), Hazrat Maulana SadrudDin (Ameer). Mr Aziz Ahmad (Trinidad), Maulana Ghulam Ahmad Bashir (Holland), Mr Werner Yahya Suzulche (Germany),

Standing L. to R. Dr Malik Manzoor, Col. Saeed Ahmad (General Secretary), Maulana Abdus Samad Jamali (East Pakistan), Col. B. H. Syed (General Secretary, Woking Muslim Mission, Dr Allah Bakhsh (Administrator Golden Jubilee), Maulana Dost Muhammad (Editor, Paigham-e-Sulah), Mr Riaz Ahmad (Pakistan)

all his work from a very small council rented house in Bridgetown, a township in Cape Town, which he shared with his devoted wife Hajira and twelve children. Since Muslim clerics made it their business to prevent members of the Movement from worshipping in the mosques, Mr Sydow used to deliver the Friday khutbas from a make shift structure in the back vard of a devoted member (Mr Ebrahim Mohamed's father) that served as a mosque. Because of failing health, he was forced into early retirement as a barber and lived off a small Government pension for the rest of his life. He continued to dedicate his entire life to the

Mr Sydow conducted

the Holy Quran and authentic sources rebutting

some time in Pakistan where he attended the

the false claims made by Obaray had such a profound effect on him that he retracted his book from circulation.

Dawood Sydow wrote an autobiographical account of his life in metaphor, using the heads of the Holy Quran to describe his journey through life. This account which was published in the Light, the official magazine of the Central Anjuman in the 60's, was hailed as a classic, especially for one with hardly any secular education. Whenever misleading statements were made about Islam and the Movement, he would immediately respond with a rebuttal. In this respect his Reply to Maulana Sema wherein he again rebutted the false claims this time by a leading member of the ulema, that Christian doctrines are found in the Quran, is a gem as well as his many open-letters to the Muslim clergy.

propagation of Islam. In the 1960's he spent



annual Jalsa (in December 1964) and met some prominent members of the Jamaat. After a severe asthmatic attack, Mr Sydow breathed his last in the late evening of the 17th October 1979, in hospital. Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi ra'jioon. May Almighty Allah shower His blessings on his soul and grant him entry into Paradise.

Ismail Peck: 1927 - 2010

Mr Ismael Peck – at front first on the right. Hafiz Maulana Sher Muhammad behind him to the left.



Ismail Peck was born on the 6th July 1927. He came from a staunch Sunni background with only primary school education. He was married with three daughters and two sons. He was an extremely humble person and worked as a labourer for the postal services for most of his adult life. He hails from Athlone, Cape Town, South Africa.

His first encounter with Mr Dawood Sydow, the Head of the Lahore Branch of the Ahmadiyya Movement in South Africa, in the 1960's, involved a heated debate on the death of Nabi Esa* on whom be peace. He held the view that anyone who believed that Nabi Esa was dead, was outside the pale of Islam. After several discussions and after being confronted with convincing arguments from the Holy Quran by Mr Sydow, he was eventually convinced that Nabi Esa had indeed passed away. From that date Ismail Peck developed an inseparable bond with Dawood Sydow and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. Mr Peck's association with the

Movement was not without any personal sacrifice from the start. His mother, under pressure from the ulema, disinherited him and he was not allowed to attend her funeral. This was a sore point in his life, but he did not relent, nor did he leave the Jamaat. During the Ahmadiyya Case, he also received many death threats, but never relented an inch. Mr Peck, following in the footsteps of Dawood Sydow, became an avid student of the Bible and had, over the years, committed to memory large tracts from the Old and New Testaments. This gave him an advantage in the several debates he had with wellschooled Christian missionaries. His knowledge in this regard was often sought by members and friends who had encounters with missionaries. Despite his secular handicap, he compiled an extremely useful booklet for young aspiring students of comparative religion entitled The True Message of The Quran, Torah and Bible.

Mr Peck will most probably be best remembered for the pivotal role he played in the Ahmadiyya Case. Dr Zahid Aziz, who fulfilled the role of translator for Maulana Hafiz Sher Muhammad in the Ahmadiyya Case, paid a fitting tribute to Mr Peck on the news of his death: "It is with the deepest grief that we report the death in Cape Town today, 27th July 2010, of Mr. Ismail Peck, inna li-llahi wa inna ilai-hi raji' un. Mr Peck was the plaintiff in the Cape Town civil court case, 1982–1985, against various bodies of the anti-Ahmadiyya Ulama, in which he laid the claim that he, an Ahmadi, was a Muslim and it was defamatory to call him kafir, and it was a denial of his legitimate rights to refuse him burial in a cemetery that was designated for Muslim burial. While knowledgeable in the Quran and the Bible, Mr Peck was a humble man of an ordinary position in life. But it took extraordinary courage to stand up as the plaintiff when the Ulama did all they could to get the case withdrawn. Once the litigation process began, Mr Peck was at risk of his life since if he had died the case would have terminated. Despite all dangers, he stood firm like a rock and saw the case through to the end, including appearing in court to give personal testimony. When the

January 2019

The Light

judge, Mr. D.M. Williamson, read out his judgment on Wednesday 20 November 1985 and, near the end, announced the words "Second Plaintiff is declared to be a Muslim", those who heard these words, including myself, were overcome by an indescribable ecstasy and sense of gratitude to Almighty Allah. In the post 1974 and 1984 atmosphere, it made life worth living just to hear these words. My prayer is that may Allah now pronounce the same judgment on Mr Peck, and admit him into His mercy and forgiveness, amen - Dr Zahid Aziz." (Return to contents)

My Search for, and Discovery of the Kingdom of Allah An Account in Metaphor

By the Late Dawood Sydow

(This article was first published in The Light, 16 August 1965. An abridged version is reproduced here in fond memory of Mr. Dawood Sydow, South Africa. May Allah be pleased with him. - Ed.)

"And call not with Allah any other God. There is no God but He. Everything will perish but He. His is the judgment, And to Him you will be brought back." (28:88)

Introduction

Having lived for fifty years on this earth, passing through various phases that fifty years can offer, I feel an urge deep down within me, demanding expression. This urge is the result of studious observation of nature around me and of research of the proclaimed words of Almighty Allah.

In this "Narrative" (Al-Qasas – 28*), I intend to relate to the best of my limited ability how and what I found in the Divine Kingdom of Allah. My limitation, however, is emphasized by the fact that I have no college or university Sher Muhammad, a witness from Pakistan, who gave historical and theological evidence in the Cape Town Supreme Court in support of Mr Peck's application for an interdict against the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC).

training, therefore I crave the indulgence of the reader to forgive whatever errors must naturally occur.

Ever since The Most High Allah said "Kun" ("Be"), and this mighty creation, of which I am but a most minute particle came into being (*Fa-Yakoon*) and the fact that I have been included to come into being through that Great Divine Command, was enough to make me realize my importance in His scheme of things.

Being aware of my position it was only natural that I investigate and try to discover the purpose of my existence.

Though being born in an orthodox Muslim home, yet the early part of my life was more dedicated to purely worldly activities, with hardly any consideration for the more serious aspects of life. Being one of a large poor family and being born at a time when this world underwent the two major crises, i.e., world wars, I was deprived of receiving higher school education, and had to be content with what could be had in standard two. Furthermore, my confidence and faith in people was severely shaken from a very early age due to a customary belief

Ahmadi member Mr Ismail Peck (left) and Hafiz

^{*} The numbers that appear throughout the article, after names of chapters of the Holy Quran, represent the numbers of the chapters of the Qur'an.



current under Western civilization. At the time of Christmas, parents would tell their children that "Father Christmas" will bring them toys on Christmas eve. Having complete faith and confidence in the veracity of my parents, I used to look forward to this festive occasion when my childish dreams of receiving beautiful toys will be realized through the agency of this romantic figure. This illusion was beautiful while it lasted, but fortunately or unfortunately. I discovered on one such night that it was but a lie that I had been told. Being of a very sensitive nature, this discovery instilled in me a certain amount of distrust in whatever my parents afterwards told me in reply to the many natural questions which cropped up in my childish mind. When I enquired of them where I came from, I was told that I was once a little monkey that had been shaved of all its hair and with its tail cut off. I later discovered this to be an even bigger lie than the Father Christmas story, and thereupon lost complete confidence in whatever little trust was still in me towards the things I was told. Therefore, when I was told about a God Whom nobody has ever seen and Who it was impossible to see, I viewed it as but another of those "Father Christmas" stories. This state of affairs is of course not conducive to an appreciation of higher thoughts and resulted in my turning solely to worldly things and enjoy purely what worldly pleasure I could have. To live and enjoy what the world has to offer became for me the be-all and end-all of life. However, the pleasures and pains, the successes and disappointments, the hopes, and fears, the laughter and tears of the first thirty years of my life had, somewhat moulded me and made me matured enough to realize that, of all that this world had to offer, there was nothing lasting enough that could withstand the ravishes of time and that could satisfy the small voice deep down within me which was yearning for a pleasure or happiness that would be lasting. A pleasure or happiness which would not be marred by disappointments and despair, a pleasure wherein neither grief nor fear were known. It was this yearning that made me of "Those who yearn" (An-Naziat – 79). To satisfy this yearning, I set out on the "Pilgrimage" (Al-Hajj - 22) to seek "The Clear Evidence" (Al-Bayvinah - 98) of the "Kingdom" (Al-Mulk - 67) of

Allah.

Having been married for fifteen years, that is, from the age of puberty to thirty years of age, to the most beautiful and richest "woman" "Umm Ad-Dunya" (The World), I discovered that I had deluded myself in believing that in her arms and in her charms true happiness could be found. I came to realize that I had, all these years, mistaken the shadow of reality for the substance itself. It was upon this discovery, twenty years ago, that I pronounced and gave this woman, "Umm ad-Dunya" the first "Divorce" (At-Talaq - 65), and during an "Iddah" lasting for five years, I went forth in search of "The Sure Truth" (Al Haqqah - 69).

The Narrative (Al-Qasas - 28)

I travelled through the darkness of "The Night" (Al-Lail - 92) of ignorance, so as to reach "The Brightness of the Day" (Ad-Duha - 93) of enlightenment; I studied "The Stars" (Al-Buruj -85.) of wisdom, and their wonder and brilliance spurred me on to seek their "Truthful God" (Saad - 38). I witnessed "The Moon" (Al-Qamar - 54) of deception and thought I had found what I had set out to find. But I became sad and disappointed when she set and disappeared. I held "Counsel" (Ash-Shura - 42) with myself and decided that this could not be: "The Most High" (Al-Ala - 87).

I then moved on through "The Sandhills" (Al-Ahqaf - 46) of doubt, and at last reached "The Mountain" (At-Tur - 52) of hope and there I found "The Fig" (At-Teen - 95) and honey from "The Bee" (An-Nahl - 16) upon which I refreshed myself. I decided to take rest, and being but "The Man" (Al-Insan - 76) of weakness, who have to "Wrap Himself Up" (Al-Muddathir - 74) with that which "Covers Oneself" (Al Muzzamil - 73), I laid myself down to reflect on the wonders of the creation around me hoping therefrom to receive a lead whereby I may be able to discover the reality of all things. Hardly had I settled down when I was awakened by "The Ant" (An-Naml - 27) and by "The Comer by Night" (At-Tariq - 86), who turned out to be "The Israelites" (Bani Israel - 17). They invited me to "The Cave" (Al-Khaf - 18) and introduced



me to "The Prophets" (Al-Anbiya - 21). There was "Noah" (Nuh - 71), "Abraham" (Ebraheem -14), "Joseph" (Yusuf - 12), "Jonah" (Yunus - 10), "Luqmaan" (Luqmaan - 31), "Hud" (Hud - 11) and also the whole family of "Amraan" (Al-Imraan -3) including Moses (Moosa), David (Dawood), Solomon (Sulayman), Zakariya, Jesus (Esa) and his mother "Mary" (Maryam - 19). They provided me with a seat upon "The Rock" (Al-Hijr - 15) and brought forth "Voluntary Gifts" (Al-Anfaal - 8) of precious pearls of wisdom; they then sacrificed "The Cow" (Al-Baqaraah - 2) from among "The Cattle" (Al-An'am - 6) and prepared "The Food" (Al-Maidah - 5). After we had dined "The Poets" (Ash-Shu'ara - 26), performed and then "The Announcement" (An-Naba'a - 78) was made about "The Overwhelming Event" (Al-Ghaashiyah -88) which concerned "Muhammad" (Muhammad - 47) and his enemies "The Disbelievers" (Al-Kafiroon - 109) and "The Hypocrites" (Al-Munaafiqoon - 63) who sought "The Immunity" (Al-Baraa'a - 9). Thereafter, "The Ranks" (As-Saff - 61) was formed, and I found myself with "Those Ranging in Ranks" (As-Saffaat - 37) who after "The Kneeling" (Al-Jathiyah - 45) performed "The Adoration" (As-Sajdah - 32) I was then given "The Pen" (Al-Qalam - 68) and wrote what I experienced.

Surely these are "The Believers" (Al-Mu'minoon - 23) for among them I felt what is to be experienced by "The Believer" (Al-Mu'min - 40). Then came "The Daybreak" (Al-Fajr - 89), "The Dawn" (Al-Falah - 113) of realization. I experienced "The Shaking" (Al-Zilzal - 99) of fear, which only left me with the appearance of "The Sun" (Ash-Shams- 91) of truth; and with "The Expansion" (Al-Inshiraah - 94), of its light I saw "The City" (Al-Balad - 90) of "The Quraish" -106.

As I came down from "The Mountain" (At-Tur - 52) however, I was met by "The Jinn" (Al-Jinn – 72) who had much "Gold" (Zukhruf - 43). I realize now that they were "The Assaualters" (Al-Aadiyaat - 100) who caused in me "The Default of Duty" (At-Tattif - 83), with "The Abundance of wealth" (At-Takaththur - 102), I remarried "The Divorced" (At-Talaq - 65) "Pleading woman" (Al-Mujadilah - 58) from among "The Women" (An-Nisa - 4); a marriage which lasted for a period of five years, until I reached the age of forty. During this time, I became more and more aware of "The Manifestation of losses" (At-Taghabun - 64) due to not respecting "The Prohibition" (At-Tahrim - 66) and having lent my ears to "The Slanderer" (Al-Humazah - 104). The Spiritual losses of those five years are now to me as a thousand years, more so when I realize the loss of the spiritual light received among those of "The Elevated Places" (Al-A'raf - 7) and I now find myself among those of "The Banishment" (Al-Hashr - 59). I then realized that unless I made special effort to seek forgiveness of "Almighty Allah" (Qaf - 50), I will be among the losers at "The Time" (Al-Asr -103) of "The Event" (Al-Waqi'ah - 56) of "The Resurrection" (Al-Qiyamah - 75).

Having had enough of "The Drought" (Ad-Dukhaan - 44) of spiritual barrenness, and having once again been made aware of the reason of "The Calamity" (Al-Qari'ah - 101) which had caused me to stray from the guidance which I had received from "The Congregation" (Al-Jumu'ah - 62) of those "Sent Forth" (Al-Mursalat - 77) from among "The Allies" (Al-Ahzab - 33) I came to a definite decision to continue my search.

I, for the second time, which is also the last time, "Divorced" (At-Talaaq - 65) myself from "The Woman who is examined" (Al-Mumtahanah - 60) and found wanting. Now in "The Light" (An-Nur - 24) of true understanding and from "The Star" (AnNajm - 53) of guidance, I sought "The ways of Ascent" (Al-Ma'aarij - 70) to "The Majesty" (Al-Qadr - 97) and "The Beneficent" Allah (Ar-Rahmaan - 55).

I was told by Moses and David and Jesus, to seek out "Muhammad" (Muhammad – 47), who would be born at the time of "The Elephant" (Al-Feel - 105), who would be in the midst of "The Thunder" (Ar-Ra'd - 13) of war, who will be saved by "The Spider" (Al-Ankabut - 29), who will be feared by "The Romans" (Ar-Rum - 30), who will be found in the midst of "The Companies" (Az-Zumar - 39) of "The Believers" (Al Mu'minoon - 23) and who will be the cause of "The Scatterers" (Ad-Dhaariyaat - 51) and "The



Folding Up" (At-Takweer - 81) and in whose hand is "The Victory" (Al-Fath - 48). They said he would lead me, even as was led "The Saba" (As-Saba - 34), to "The Unity" (Al-Ikhlaas - 112) of The Divine.

The Perfect Man

Many were those who described to me this man, Muhammad Mustafa (may peace and the blessings of Allah be showered perpetually upon him), but I received a most complete picture of this Great Prophet and Holy Messenger of Allah only, when quite by accident, I met his great Divine Deputy and faithful servant, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, and the Great Mujaddid of this age. He took my hand in Pledge (Bai'at) and told me that after living at the feet of his beloved master,

Muhammad Mustafa. for many years, extolling his praises, and after praying night and day, the Most High Allah raised him SO that he should revive the love for the religion of Muhammad in the hearts of his followers who had

BUT I RECEIVED & MOST COMPLETE PICTURE OF THIS GREAT PROPHET AND HOLY MESSENGER OF ALLAH ONLY, WHEN QUITE BY ACCIDENT, I MET HIS GREAT DIVINE DEPUTY AND FAITHFUL SERVANT, HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD, THE PROMISED MESSIAH AND MAHDI. AND THE GREAT MUJADDID OF THIS AGE.

become bewildered because the original beauty of Islam had become lost among the ugly distortions of self-seeking people who had usurped true leadership over them. And in their bewilderment, they lost true guidance and became attracted by the false beauties of the Dajjal. He told me that there is only one man who had the key to the kingdom of Allah, and that man was the Beloved Master, Muhammad Mustafa. He explained that the Great Master was not only the last of all the Prophets, but also that his Prophethood was so great that it reaches out to the very end of time. The Holy Prophet, he said, has prophesied for all time and all ages to come therefore no other Prophet will ever be needed or appear after him. He told me that with the

Holy Prophet, prophetic revelation was closed for all time while only the type of revelation (saintly) granted to the true and holy followers, was open for all to strive after. He told me that he had received the key of the kingdom of Allah from his Beloved Master so that the door thereto may be unlocked by whoever would care to make the great Divine Journey to come into personal contact with its Holy King. He advised me to make a study of "The Discrimination" (Al-Furqaan - 25).

Upon studying "The Discrimination "I met him who was admonished because "He Frowned" (Abasa - 80). Then I met the Perfect man:

"O Perfect Man (Ya Seen - 36)! By the Qur'an, full of wisdom! Surely, you are one of the

Messengers, on a right way. A revelation of the Almighty, the Merciful, that you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless."

He led me to "The Apartments" (Al-Hujuraat - 49) of felicity where

everything was made plain. What an honour to meet him who caused "The Bursting Asunder" (Al-Inshiqaaq - 84) of the shackles of "The Iron" (Al-Hadeed - 57) off the slave; not only that of the menial, but also "The Cleaving" (Al-Infitaar - 82) off, of the shackles which enslaved the minds of men. He, through whom was bestowed "The Abundance of Good" (Al-Kauthar - 108) on all "The Men" (An-Nas - 114) because of his own "Act of Kindness" (Al-Ma'un - 107), which is "The Help" (An-Nasr - 110) for the poor and needy and the orphans, and which extinguishes "The Flame" (Al-Lahab - 111) of the wrath of the Almighty Allah.

that with the He tells me that I evolved from "The Clot" I Shall Love All Mankind.



(Al-'Alaq - 96) of blood into this marvelous creation of "The Most High" (Al-'Ala - 97); and that there is no limit to my progress in "The Kingdom" (Al-Mulk - 67) of Allah. But let me relate to you first, the beauty of Muhammad Mustafa and the wonderful journey upon which I embarked under his guidance, peace and blessing of Allah be forever showered upon him.

Muhammad Mustafa

"The Perfect Man" was neither too tall nor too short. His complexion was white, and the beauty of his face was like that of the full moon. His hair was curly and flowed down to his

was exposed to the sun and air looked like an

urn of silver chased with gold. His breast, free

from all malice, was broad, and no part of it seemed more prominent than the rest. Its sur-

face was even and transparent and smooth.

Both the shoulders of the Prophet were broad and thickly overgrown with hair. His shoulders,

ankles and arm-pits were well covered with

flesh. His back was broad, and near his right

shoulder-blade was a mark like a seal, and in it

there was a black mole, somewhat yellowish,

around which there was some thick hair. Both

his hands and arms were fleshy, his wrists long

and his palms broad. His fingers were as if they

were phalanges of silver. His palm was soft even

as velvet and filled with scent like the palm of

the perfumer. His thighs and calves were fleshy.

His body was moderately stout, muscular and

As there is no darkness in moonlight, so is

sinewy. His gait was firm, his steps steadfast.

shoulders; and his beard was full, while his moustache was clipped. His neck was more beautiful than that of other men, it was neither long nor short. The part of it, which

He took my hand in Pledge (Bai'at) and told me that after living at the feet of his beloved master, Muhammad Mustafa, for many years, extolling his praises, and after praying night and day, the Most High Allah raised him so that he should revive the love for the religion of Muhammad in the hearts of his followers who had become bewildered because the original beauty of Islam had become lost among the ugly distortions of self-seeking people who had usurped true leadership over them.

beheld therein the Most Precious Gems of Wisdom, which only those in search of Truth can appreciate. There are Thirty Divine "Apartments" in this Wonderful Kingdom of the Most Gracious Allah. On the door of each of these "Apartments" are inscribed, in gold, the words: "In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent and The Merciful." A most beautiful plaque catches the eye as one enters through the portals whereupon are engraved these valuable gems:

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, The Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of Requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, the

> path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor

those who go astray. Amen. (Return to contents)

THE POWER OF WORDS By Iain Dixon

Our words can hurt. Our words can heal. Our words can destroy. Our words can build up. Are we careful with the words we use? In many ways our words are like toothpaste. Once toothpaste has been squeezed out of the toothpaste tube, it is impossible to push the toothpaste back into the tube! In the same way, once our words have come out of our mouths, it is impossible to retrieve them! Whatever we have said, whether good or bad.....they are squeezed out in to the world forever.......with either the power to do good, or the power to do evil.

Do your words harm, or do they heal?

We praise our beautiful Allah for the gift of words. He after all is the inventor of words. He speaks his purposes into being. Words can be

The Divine Kingdom of Allah

Mustafa, the well-wisher, bright.

Upon entering through the portals of the Divine "Kingdom" (Mulk) of Allah (Al-Qur'an), I



like containers, carrying knowledge, wisdom, and encouragement to others. Our words can also be used like hooks. As a shepherd can use the hook at the end of his rod to catch a sheep and pull it from danger, so our words can alert others to dangers ahead, and cause them to move to safety. But words can also destroy people, discourage people, intimidate people. Are you in the construction business, or the demolition business? Do your words build up people, or tear them down?

How do you use your words?

Seven of my favourite words in the (English translation) of the Honoured Quran are found in Surah 4:163. We are told there: "and to David we gave the Psalms." The Psalms are songs and praises to Allah. But they are so much more. Just as pure white light is an amazing blend of all the colours of the rainbow, so too the Psalms of David are an amazing blend of praise, prophecy, and practical wisdom and guidance for us.

"And to David we gave the Psalms."

The Psalms of David are preserved in the Bible scriptures. We read there: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD."- Psalm 19:14. What a challenge this is! That all the words we speak are to be acceptable in the sight of Allah! We are also told: "Keep thy tongue from evil , and thy lips from speaking guile."- Psalm 34:13. Whether we are in a mosque, or in our homes, or even in our places of employment, we are constantly being challenged to guard our lips, and to speak only in a way that glorifies our creator. Our words can be like deathly snake venom or have the healing properties of sweet honey. You make the choice!

Guard your lips!

David prayed a simple prayer: "Set a guard over my mouth LORD, keep watch over my lips."- Psalm 141:3. Allah wants us to pause each day, and reflect on the words we use. Do we ask Allah to guard our mouth? Do we work in harmony with heaven each day in seeking the best words, the words that will glorify our Creator, and uplift mankind? This world puts us under pressure to compromise, and to conform to its standards. But we are to be different. We are to be a set apart people. Rather than being shaped by the influences of the world around us, WE are to change the environment around us. A Thermometer is AFFECTED by the temperature that SURROUNDS it. But a Thermostat SETS the temperature around it. Allah challenges each one of us to be like a Thermostat, setting the standard around us, changing the environment around us with our words.

So, let us be a people of kind words, encouraging words. Let us be in the construction business, and not in the demolition business! When we enter a dark room, one flick of a light switch brings light to the whole room. May our words be as powerful as a light switch.....bringing light into a darkened world! David said of Allah's words: "The entrance of YOUR words gives light, it gives understanding to the simple."-Psalm 119:130. May we humbly imitate our creator and use our positive words to give encouragement and guidance to those that dwell in darkness. Ameen. **(Return to contents)**

Council of Europe calls for Muslim couples in UK to legally have to register marriage before or during Islamic ceremony

(The Independent, 24 June 2019)

(Editor's note: The organisation has been 'fighting' for 30 years to ensure that Muslims are safeguarded in law as well as *sharia*. We are pleased that important political institutions have now taken up our cause and look forward to the British Parliament taking concrete steps to protect all parties.)

Muslim couples getting married in the UK should be legally required to civilly register their union before or during the Islamic ceremony, the Council of Europe has said.

Raising concerns about the role of sharia councils in family, inheritance and commercial law, the human rights organisation made up of 47 member states, called for obstacles stopping Muslim women from accessing justice to be removed.

to conform to <u>A resolution called</u> on British authorities *I Shall Love All Mankind*.



step up measures to provide protection and assistance to those who are in a vulnerable position and run awareness campaigns which teach Muslim women about their rights.

"Although they are not considered part of the British legal system, Sharia councils attempt to provide a form of alternative dispute resolution," it says.

It adds: "Whereby members of the Muslim community, sometimes voluntarily, often under considerable social pressure, accept their religious jurisdiction mainly in marital and Islamic divorce issues, but also in matters relating to inheritance and Islamic commercial contracts.

"The assembly is concerned that the rulings of the Sharia councils clearly discriminate against women in divorce and inheritance cases."

The Council also called on member states to protect human rights regardless of religious practices and voiced concern about the "judicial" activities of "Sharia councils" in the UK.

Specialist lawyers say many Muslim couples do not follow Islamic ceremonies with civil marriages – a requirement under by the 1949 Marriage Act.

Last February, a Home Office commissioned experts review into the application of sharia law concluded that Muslims in the UK should undergo a civil marriage as well as a religious ceremony to make sure women are protected under the law.

The measure was needed to lessen "discriminatory practices" in the councils, the report said. However, it added that abolishing Sharia councils was "not viable" and they were "fulfilling a need in some Muslim communities".

The review found that the vast majority of people using sharia councils were women seeking an Islamic divorce but very few council members were women.

Citing a number of examples of "bad practice", the report said some had been inappropriately questioned on personal relationship matters. Women had also been invited to make concessions to their husbands in order to secure a divorce.

In one instance a forced marriage victim was asked to attend a council at the same time as her family, it said. Evidence indicated the proportion of Muslim couples who do not have a civil marriage was "high and increasing", it added.

However, in a landmark ruling at the High Court in August, the Honourable Mr Justice Williams found a woman was entitled to maintenance from her husband after they split, even though they had only undergone a "*nikah*" ceremony and had not formally registered their marriage.

The Council of Europe's new resolution welcomed the recommendations put forward in last year's Home Office review.

It also called on the UK to ensure councils operate within the law "especially as it relates to the prohibition of discrimination against women, and respect all procedural rights".

British authorities should work with Muslim communities, women's organisations and other non-governmental organisations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, it said.

It also set a deadline of June 2020 for the UK to report back on reviewing the Marriage Act, which would make it a legal requirement for Muslim couples to undergo civil marriages – which is currently required for Christian and Jewish marriages.

Responding to the resolution, a Home Office spokesperson said: "Sharia law does not form any part of the law in England and Wales. Regardless of religious belief, we are all equal before the law. Where Sharia councils exist, they must abide by the law.

"Laws are in place to protect the rights of women and prevent discrimination, and we will work with the appropriate authorities to ensure these laws are being enforced fully and effectively."

Maya Oppenheim Women's Correspondent @mayaoppenheim (Return to contents)

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (UK) Founders of the first Islamic Mission in the UK - established 1913 as the Woking Muslim Mission. Dar-us-Salaam, 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, UK, HAO 4JQ Centre: 020 3637 8159 · President: 01793 740670 · Secretary: 07737 240777 · Treasurer: 01932 348283 E-mail: *info@aaiil.uk* Websites: *www.aaiil.org/uk* | *www.ahmadiyya.org* | *www.virtualmosque.co.uk* Donations: https://www.cafonline.org/charityprofile/aaiiluk