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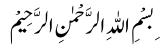
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# The Call of the Messiah

by

### *Hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

The Promised Messiah and *Mahdi* 



# The door of revelation is open, even now.

Do not think that revelation from Allah is not possible in the future and that it was possible only in the past? Do not think that the Holy Spirit cannot come down now? I tell you truly that every door can be closed except the door for the coming down of the Holy Spirit. Open all the doors of your heart to receive it. You remove yourself far from that sun when, with your own hands, you close the window through which light can enter. Therefore, rise at once and

throw open this window so it is inevitable for the light of the sun to enter your heart easily. Do you dare to assume that He has closed upon you the doors of His spiritual blessings at a time when they are most needed when Allah has not closed the doors of His blessings upon the world? When, in fact, He has multiplied them even more than before. No, not at all. That door has been open beyond any shadow of a doubt. Now, in accordance with His teaching as given in *surah Fatiha*, the door of earlier blessings has been opened for you, why do you decline to receive them? Create a thirst for this spring, and then the water will begin to gush forth, of itself. Cry like a baby for this milk so that it should surge up in the breast. Begin to deserve mercy so that you are shown mercy. Show anxiety and deep concern so that your minds are set at rest. Cry out with pain, again and again, so that a hand stretches out to take hold of you. Indeed, how very difficult is the way of the Lord! But, verily it is made easy for those who jump into the abyss, resolutely determined to face destruction and death. Blessed are they, who for the sake of the Lord, wage a war against their own selves. On the other hand, unfortunate are they who, for the sake of their baser selves, wage a war against the Lord and refuse to fashion themselves in obedience to His will. Whosoever, for the sake of his own self, disregards a commandment of Allah, will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Strive, therefore, to the utmost that not a jot or syllable of the Holy Quran should bear witness against you and cause you to be seized on that account, for indeed even a single grain of evil is punishable. Time is very short; the mission of your life is not yet fulfilled. Walk briskly, for the evening draws nigh. What-



ever you have to present before the Lord, examine it well and as often as you can, lest some defect remain to cause irreparable loss or, lest you take something with you which, in fact, should amount to no more than filthy and counterfeit spurious goods, not worthy to be presented at a royal court.

## **Elevated position of the Holy Quran**

I have been given to understand that there are some among you who totally reject the Hadith. If this is so, then these people are in manifest error. I have never taught them to hold such views. To the contrary, I firmly hold that Allah has provided three things for our guidance. The foremost among these is the Holy Quran, which sets forth the unity of Allah, His grandeur and greatness and it decides all points in dispute between the Jews and the Christians. Further, the Quran forbids you to worship anything other than Allah — neither man, nor beast, or sun, or moon, or any other heavenly body, or material means, nor your own selves. Therefore, beware! Do not take a single step in opposition to anything contained in the Holy Book. Indeed, I tell you truly that whosoever evades even the least of the seven hundred commandments embodied in the Holy Quran, closes the door of salvation upon himself.

The real and perfect paths of salvation have been opened only by the Holy Quran; all others were only its shadows. Therefore, you should study this Holy Scripture with the utmost attention and the deepest thought and you should love it as you have never loved anything else. For, indeed, as Allah has conveyed to me, "All good lies in the Quran". All kinds of goodness are to be found in it, and this is the truth. Unfortunate, indeed, are those people who give preference to other things over it. The Holy Quran is the fountainhead of your salvation and the source of all advancement and success. There is no spiritual need which has been omitted in this Holy Book. The supporter or denier of your faith on the Day of Judgement will be the Holy Quran, and apart from this Book, there is no other under the heavens which can provide you with direct guidance. It is indeed a great blessing of Allah to you that He has bestowed on you a Book like this. Indeed, I tell you truly that if this Book which has been given to you had been revealed to the Christians they would not have perished. Had this blessing and guidance which have been vouchsafed to you been extended to the Jews, in the place of the Torah, then many of their sects would not have ended up denying the Day of Judgement.

Realise, therefore, the value of the blessing bestowed on you. It is a precious blessing, and a great treasure. Without the Holy Quran, the whole world would have been no better than an impure clot of half-formed flesh. Indeed, it is a book compared to which all other scriptures and sources of guidance amount to nothing at all

The Holy Quran can purify a man within a week, provided there is no attempt to get away from it in form or spirit. The Quran can make you like the Prophets, provided you, yourself, do not try to run away from it. Apart from the Holy Quran, there is no other book which at the very beginning has taught its readers a prayer like this: *Guide us to the right path, the path of those* on whom You have bestowed Your favours, and has thus held out to them a great hope, namely, the hope of being shown the way which would lead them to the attainment of those blessings which were bestowed on those who were from among the prophets, the truthful, the faithful and the righteous. And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the faithful and the righteous, and a goodly company are they! (4:69) Therefore, strengthen your resolve and do not reject this invitation of the Quran when it calls you to work for the attainment of the blessing given to the earlier people. Allah, in fact, is inclined to bestow on you even more. He has made you inherit all their spiritual and material legacy and until the Day of Resurrection, these will not pass away from you to anyone else. Allah will not leave you deprived of the blessing of revelation, and of the tangible forms of communion generally spoken of as mukallamat and mukhatabat (clear and direct revelations received from Allah in words). He will vouchsafe



to you all those blessings which He ever bestowed on others. But whosoever, by way of insolence, should lie and should claim to have received revelation from Him, when, in fact, he had received no such revelation, or claim that he had the honour of communion with Him of the kind called *mukallamat* and *mukhatabat*, when, in fact, no such honour had been bestowed upon him, then, with Allah and all His angels as my witnesses, I declare that such a one will perish and be destroyed for having lied about his Creator and for having perpetrated a fraud. (From *Kishti-i Nuh*, Noah's Ark)

# Religious Views of Organ Donation and Transplantation II



by Adeeba Ali

(Editor's note: *Continued from the last issue a*nd edited for publication.)

#### Conclusion

My research has demonstrated that no religious scripture directly forbids organ donation or organ transplantation. Lack of religious information and disagreement between religious leaders has contributed largely to the shortage of organ donors especially amongst ethnic minorities.

The ethos of all faiths points towards saving lives, this act of altruism is greater than all the concerns that religious people may have with regards to organ donation and transplantation. Ironically this has not filtered down from the leaders to the followers.

All major religions of the world encourage organ donation and transplantation. There is no disputation that there are some concerns within each faith, especially the Abrahamic religions regarding defiling of God's creation, defining death and timing of burial. However, the similarity between all faiths is that saving a life is greater than all the other minute concerns. Thus, the overall conclusion with regards to religion is that organ donation and transplantation is acceptable, as long as it is to save a life.

In the US, the shortage of organs among

black African Americans has been fuelled by mistrust between the rich and the poor and large scale government experiments which left the black African American population to suffer.

Culture is largely influenced by religion and religious leaders. To overcome religious bias to transplantation one study suggested teaching controversial issues as part of the school curriculum.

The need to respect elders and value their opinion has contributed to a generational gap in knowledge in the information and social media age. With an increase in the need for organs, many oragnisations have been set up to raise awareness about organ donation, especially among ethnic minorities in the hope of eradicating the shortage.

Recently the co-founder of the African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust, Beverly De-Gale featured on BBC Breakfast News where she shared her story of losing her son to leukaemia. Many who have lost a loved one due to a shortage of either blood, stem or organ donor within ethnic minority communities, have begun to campaign and raise awareness of this predicament. Could this shortage of organs result from apathy or a sheer don't care attitude as it is not affecting me or my family? This question remains to be answered.

In conclusion, patients can have a good quality of life with an organ transplant and improvements in medical therapy. This is evident from form the longevity of many transplant patients. So, all the information we have today points to good outcomes for patients. The question remains whether we would want a second chance of life if we were ill and thus would we give a second chance of life if needed?

# Was the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) unlettered I?



by Shahid Aziz, M.Sc.

The traditional answer to this question is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) could neither read nor write. It is felt that it is important to emphasize this because it is an answer to the



oft repeated Jewish and Christian objection that the Holy Prophet had read the Old and the New Testaments. It is further asserted by them that he took their teachings, added some things from himself and created a new religion. Muslims reply that the Holy Prophet (s) could not read or write. Therefore, it was impossible for him to know what was written in these books and make it a basis of a new religion.

# Basis of the traditional view that the Holy Prophet could neither read nor write

There is universal agreement that the following is the first revelation that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) received.<sup>1</sup>

Read in the name of your ٱقْرَأُبِأَسُوِ مَيِّكَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ Lord Who creates

Creates man from a clot خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَانَ مِنْ عَلَيْ Read and your Lord is most اقْرَأُورَبُّكُ ٱلْأَكْرُهُ Generous

Who taught by the pen الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِٱلْقَلَمِ

Taught man what he عَلَّمَ ٱلْإِنسَانَ مَالَمُ يَعْلَمُ

knew not

It is said in hadith about the first revelation: 'Ayesha said "... the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet replied, 'I do not know how to read.' The Prophet added, 'The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, "I do not know how to read." Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, "I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?" Thereupon, he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, "Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists) has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous."2 . . . Then he (the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s)) went to Khadija bint Khuwailid . . . Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza, who, during the Pre-Islamic Period had become a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. . ."<sup>3</sup>

This is a long hadith and I have only quoted a small part of it here.

This forms the basis of the traditional belief that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) could not read or write. Imam ibn Katheer, for example, has quoted the above hadith under this verse in his commentary of the Holy Quran<sup>4</sup> and gone on to argue that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) was unlettered.

The other argument produced in support of the traditional belief is that there are verses in the Holy Quran where the word *ummi* is applied to the Holy Prophet (s). These verses are given below.

"Say: O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him, Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but He; He gives life and causes death. So, believe in Allah and His messenger, the *Ummi* **Prophet**, who believes in Allah and his words, and follow him so that you may be guided aright."5

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali has not translated the word *ummi* used here by the Holy Quran and left it as such as can be seen above. The other verse quoted in support of the traditional view is this:

"And you did not recite before it any book,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Holy Quran 96:1-5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Verses quoted at the head of the article.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Bukhari vol. 1, book 1, No. 3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Tafseer ibn Katheer vol. 5, page 666

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Op cit 7:158



nor did you write one with your right hand, for then could the liars have doubted."6

To challenge the traditional view, first, we look at the facts related in hadith and see whether they are correctly interpreted. Second, we need an alternative interpretation of the verses of the Holy Quran, quoted above.

# A critique of the traditional interpretation of the hadith

The first point to notice is that the hadith quoted above says that the angel asked the Holy Prophet (s) to read. This is very odd because Allah would surely know that the Holy Prophet was unlettered. Why would He send an angel who asks the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) to read! Also, had the angel brought a book with him which he was asking the Holy Prophet (s) to read? We know from hadith how the Holy Prophet (s) received revelation. It says:

"Narrated 'Aisha: Al-Harith bin Hisham asked Allah's Apostle: "O Allah's Apostle! How is the Divine Inspiration revealed to you?" Allah's Apostle replied, "Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell, this form of Inspiration is the hardest of all and then this state passes off after I have grasped what is inspired. Sometimes the Angel comes in the form of a man and talks to me and I grasp whatever he says..."

This shows that the revelation was always oral.

Thus, the angel did not have a book with him and he was not asking the Holy Prophet (s) to read anything that was written. We, then, need to think of an alternative interpretation. In the translation of the hadith given above we find an alternative translation of the Holy Prophet's reply. It says: I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or *what shall I read*)?' The alternative translation given in parenthesis here is by the translator.

Further, Hazrat Khadija took the Holy Prophet to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufil. The hadith quoted above tells us that Waraga was a Christian and that he knew how to read and write Hebrew. He knew that the Holy Prophet (s) was in search of the Truth. It is thus inconceivable that he would not have spoken to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) about the Old and the New Testaments and what is written therein. We also know that the Holy Prophet (s) was a trader and he went to countries where many Jews and Christians lived. Again, it is not believable that during his travels he did not speak to anyone about their religion and religious teaching especially as he was searching for a solution to the social problems of humanity. So, the argument that the Holy Prophet (s) could not have known what was written in the Old and the New Testaments because he was unlettered is very weak. He would have known about what was written in those books from Waraqa and other Christians and Jews living in Arabia as well as the people he met on his travels.

We also know that initial part of Surah Kauthar<sup>8</sup> was revealed first. It was written and hung on the wall of the Holy Kabaah with a challenge to the Quraish to complete it. They took up the challenge and called the greatest poets to come and complete it. They all failed and one of them said it was impossible for a human to complete it because it was Divine Words! Only a few people had embraced Islam at that time so who wrote this revelation? It is true that it may not have been the Holy Prophet but someone else but it does show that even among the early converts to Islam there were people who knew how to read and write.

In the aftermath of the Battle of Badr which turned the tide in favour of the Muslim State in Medina, the Holy Prophet (s) wanted to know how to deal with the seventy prisoners taken at the end of the battle. He consulted the Companions (r). And, after some discussion, it was decided that the prisoners can earn their freedom. One way to earn it was to teach Muslims to read and write. Each prisoner who was to earn his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Op cit 29:48

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Bukhari, Book 1, hadith 2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Op cit 108

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The Life of Mahomet: With Introductory Chapters on the Original Sources for the Biography of





freedom in this way was given ten people to teach and as soon as those in his charge could read and write, the prisoner would be released. If the Holy Prophet (s) was unlettered and he held the ability to read and write in such high regard, why did he not ask someone to teach him how to read and write? The only reason can be that he already knew how to read and write.

We have a further incident mentioned in Bukhari. This relates to the peace treaty at Hudaibia. It is written:

". . . the Prophet (s) intended to perform *Umra* in the month of Dhul-Qada. . . When the document of treaty was written, the following was mentioned: 'These are the terms on which Muhammad, Allah's Apostle (s) agreed (to make peace).' They said, "We will not agree to this, for if we believed that you are Allah's Apostle (s) we would not prevent you, but you are Muhammad bin Abdullah." The Prophet (s) said, "I am Allah's Apostle (s) and Muhammad bin Abdullah." Then he said to Ali, "Rub off (the words) 'Allah's Apostle (s)' ", but Ali said, "No, by Allah, I will never rub off your name." So, Allah's Apostle (s) took the document and wrote, 'This is what Muhammad bin Abdullah has agreed upon: . . "10

This shows that Hazrat Ali (r), the Holy Prophet's (s) son-in-law, could read and write. Imam ibn Katheer, who believed that the Holy Prophet (s) was unlettered says: "From among the earlier jurists Qazi Abu Waleed Baji and others have said that on the day of Hudaibia, the Holy Prophet (s) had written with his own hand this sentence in the peace-treaty: "these are the conditions upon which Muhammad son of Abdullah agreed . . ." This incorrect idea has occurred to the Qazi because of these words in Bukhari : "then the Holy Prophet (s) took it from him and wrote . . ." But this means that he ordered this to be written as is found in another narration."

This cannot be correct because the Holy

Prophet (s) asked Hazrat Ali (r) to delete the words 'Apostle of Allah' and replace them with the words 'son of Abdullah' but Hazrat Ali (r) refused. Why would another Muslim, fully aware of Hazrat Ali's (r) refusal, agree to delete the words 'Apostle of Allah' and replace them with 'son of Abdullah'? These authorities show that Bukhari clearly says that the Holy Prophet could read and write because from the treaty the Holy Prophet (s) himself deleted the words Muhammad – Prophet of Allah and wrote instead: Muhammad son of Abdullah. And, also that there were prominent Muslim jurists who believed that the Holy Prophet could read and write.

Further, we find in Bukhari:<sup>12</sup> Narrated: Anas bin Malik: Once the Prophet wrote a letter (or had an idea of writing a letter). The Prophet was told that they (rulers) would not read letters unless they were sealed. So, the Prophet got a silver ring made with "Muhammad Allah's Apostle" engraved on it. As if I were just observing its white glitter in the hand of the Prophet."

This hadith also speaks of the Holy Prophet (s) writing a letter although an alternative translation is also given. Thus, it is not an isolated hadith which speaks of the Holy Prophet writing something but there are several such ahadith.

One of the verses of the Holy Quran used in support of the idea that the Holy Prophet (s) was unlettered is the one where the word *ummi* is applied to him.<sup>13</sup> As has been pointed out Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali has left it untranslated. It has many meanings which are discussed below.

Commenting on verse 29:48 of the Holy Quran quoted above, Imam ibn Katheer also gives a hadith without giving its reference. He says: "Some people put forward a narration in which it is said that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) did not pass away until he had learnt to

Mahomet, and on the Pre-Islamite History of Arabia, by William Muir, Volume 1, p. ix, (1861). London: Smith, Elder and Co

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Sahih Bukhari, Book: Peace-making, vol. 3, Book 49, Hadith 863

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Tafseer ibn Katheer, vol 4, page 178

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Sahih Bukhari; Book of Knowledge; Hadith 65

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Op cit 7:158



write. This hadith is extremely weak."14

As far as the other verse used in support of the idea that the Holy Prophet (s) was unlettered is concerned, the answer is simple. Just because a person has not read a certain book or written one, does not mean that one cannot read or write. The hadith about the first revelation received by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) tells us that Waraqa had copies of the Old and New Testaments in Hebrew and not in Arabic. Obviously, the Holy Prophet (s) did not know Hebrew. The statement in the Holy Quran that he had not read any book shows that he did not know Hebrew, and not that he could not read or write Arabic. It is simply saying he was unable to read the previous scriptures.

(to be continued in the December issue)

## The Elephant I<sup>15</sup>

## by Humeira Ahmad

"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant?



Did He not cause their war to end in confusion?

And send against them birds in flocks?
Casting at them decreed stones —
So, He rendered them like straw eaten up?"

In the chapter that comes before this one, *Al-Hu-ma-zah* (The Slanderer), Allah had threatened destruction to those who found fault with others and looked down on them and regarded their own wealth as evidence of superiority. In this chapter a warning is contained for those haughty ones to whom wealth and might were the source of greatness. They were told that before their very eyes stood the Ka'bah which they believed to be the House of Allah and that they should remember the time when Abrahah, the King of Yaman, went with his army, in which was an elephant, to demolish the Ka'bah but the army suffered destruction.

The time when the people of the Elephant went to destroy the Ka'bah is an important date

in the history of the Arabs. Abrahah, the Christian King of Yaman (a province of Ethiopia), had built a famous church in San'a, the capital of Yaman. His plan was that the people of Arabia should visit his church as the focal point of gathering, rather than to Makkah, and that eventually they would all be converted to Christianity. But as the Arabs paid no heed to this church, he decided to destroy the Ka'bah so that when this central gathering point was pulled down, people would of their own accord throng to his church. All historians agree that this event occurred in the year in which the Holy Prophet (sas) was born and so this year is called the Year of the Elephant. The army of Abrahah came to be known as the Possessors of the Elephant because there was an elephant in the army. Some people are of the opinion that there were several elephants in it.

When the invading forces approached the surroundings of Makkah they seized some 200 camels belonging to Abdul Muttalib, the Prophet's paternal grandfather. Abdul Muttalib sought out Abrahah and asked him to return the camels, whereupon Abrahah, in great astonishment, remarked to him: "You are asking for your camels and you make no mention of the Ka'bah which I have come to demolish!"

To this, Abdul Muttalib replied: "I am the owner of the camels so I have come in search of them. The Ka'bah has a Lord and Master, Who will take care of it Himself." And so it came to pass.

On seeing the large army with their pompous parade of elephants, Abdul Muttalib realized that his people will not be able to confront them. So he asked his people to evacuate the city and to seek refuge in the neighbouring mountains. Before leaving, he held on to the latch of the door of the Ka'bah and addressed the Almighty: "We have no fear whatsoever. Man protects his home, so do Thou, O Lord, preserve Thy Own House. Their cross and their might can never triumph over Thy power." Before Abrahah could reach the Ka'bah, an epidemic spread through his army and destroyed it. The commentators of the Holy Quran all agree that this came about through the agency of flocks of





birds. These birds all carried a pebble in their beaks and two in their claws and on whomsoever a pebble fell he was destroyed.

However, Ikrimah says that those on whom the stones fell were struck down by small-pox (*Tafsir Razi*). Abrahah, too, was afflicted by this disease and when he returned to Yaman he died a miserable death, and the elephant, too, perished. Most probably what happened was that the birds had alighted on a swampy area that was filled with germs and had then flown away. Dried up pieces of dirt stuck to their claws and when they fell on Abrahah's army an outburst of small-pox resulted.

If Allah, Most High, could bring about the destruction of a whole big army through a flock of little birds, why could He not make the powerful group of unbelievers at Makkah taste defeat at the hands of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his insignificant band of followers? Of course He could, and later events fulfilled this prophecy to the letter, for one can clearly see how the powerful armies of the Makkan unbelievers were overcome by a weak band of the Prophet's companions.

Plain as daylight, too, was the manner in which Allah, Most High, protected the Ka'bah, the House of Islam, from destruction, and also the other houses of Allah, that is, the hearts of the believers, in each of whom the Holy Prophet had built a house of Allah and which he had purified of idols as he did to the physical Ka'bah itself.

There is a great warning in this: If any nation should try to demolish the house built by the Holy Prophet (sas), that is, Islam, and to destroy Muslims in whose hearts the Oneness of Allah and love for Islam have found root, then Allah will spring to their rescue just as He did in the time of the people of the Elephant. This is the sentiment that Dr. Iqbal expresses in this beautiful couplet:

توھید کی امانت سینوں میں ہے ہمارے آسان نہیں مِیا نا نام و نشان ہمارا

"The trusteeship of Islam resides in our hearts; Not easy is it to wipe us out of existence."

Specially targeted here are the Christian missionaries who, like their counterpart, the Christian King of Yaman, are determined to destroy Islam and defile the belief in the Oneness of Allah all for the sake of enhancing the glory of their churches and increasing their political dominion. Allah, Most High, will give assistance to Islam through the weak hands of Muslims in whose hearts Allah lives, just as He did in the time of the people of the Elephant. Surely He, Himself, is the Guardian not only of this House (of Islam) but also of the belief that Allah is One. He can make use of any instrument however feeble it may appear.

Today the elephants are represented by all kinds of criticisms aimed at the teachings of Islam and the hearts of Muslims in the attempt to create doubts about Islam and to erase the love of Allah from their hearts. The Christian Fathers are trying to replace the Ka'bah and all it symbolizes for Muslims with something else — the love of this worldly life - as is borne out by this statement of a well-known Indian Father, Imaad-ud-Din: "If we cannot succeed in converting Muslims to Christianity, we shall shake the foundation of their faith by a flood of objections." (To be continued in the December issue)



## Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (UK)

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