

Poem by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908)
Written 1905, published 1908
which prophesied the horrors of the First World War

"A sign will come some days hence,
which will turn over villages, cities and fields.
Wrath of God will bring a revolution in the world,
The undressed one would be unable to tie his trousers.
Suddenly a quake will severely shake,
mortals, trees, mountains and seas, all.
In the twinkling of an eye the land shall turn over,
streams of blood will flow like rivers of water.
Those who don robes white like jasmine at night,
morning will make them (red) like poplar trees.
Men will be dazed and birds will lose their senses,
pigeons and all will forget their songs, nightingales too.
That hour, that time, will be hard upon every traveller,
they will lose their way as if they have lost their senses.
With the blood of the dead, the running waters of the mountains
will turn red like red wine.
The terror of it will exhaust everyone, the great and the small,
even the Czar will be at that hour in a state of the utmost distress.¹
It will be a glimpse of wrath, that heavenly sign,
the sky shall draw its dagger to attack.
But don't be quick to deny, O you ignorant one, lacking knowledge,
My being truthful depends entirely on this.
A revelation from God is this, it will not go amiss.
Be patient for some days, as a God-fearing, persevering one.

(Barahin Ahmadiyya, Part 5, page 120)

¹ *Translator's Note:* The word which means "utmost distress" is *zaar* in Urdu. This line is playing on that identity of sound so that in Urdu it reads that the Czar will be in a state of *zaar*.

Comments

The First World War began in August 1914. It is quite amazing that the Lahore Ahmadiyya newspaper *Paigham Sulh*, dated 13th August 1914, published an article on its front page with the heading: *The Great Prophecy of the Promised Messiah about the War in Europe*. Below the heading, this poem is printed in a large size. The article begins as follows:

“The signs of the mighty earthquake, whose news was given nine years ago by the Promised Messiah in the verses of poetry quoted above, are at this time before our eyes. The present war in Europe has created turmoil in the world today, and there is no part of the world where the effect of this war is not being felt in one way or another.”

Remember that this was written when the horrors of the First World War were yet to unfold during the next four years, and many people in Britain thought that the war would be over before the year 1914 ended.

Very often when we say that a prophecy has been fulfilled by some event, the objection is raised that we are saying this *after* the event has occurred. But here our organ *Paigham Sulh* stated *before* most of the events of this war that it would be a fulfilment of the prophecy in this poem.

Regarding the prophecy about the Czar of Russia in this poem (“even the Czar will be at that hour in a state of the utmost distress”), the article says:

“Although, seeing the present conditions and the power and might of Russia, a hasty and short-sighted person will ridicule these words, but bearing in mind the powers of God we can say that it would not be surprising if ultimately he ended up in a state of utmost distress.”

That did happen three years later in 1917.

BBC documentary Britain's Great War, Part 1

It has been long recorded in our literature how the signs mentioned in this poem, which seemed beyond comprehension when it was written, were fulfilled in the terrible horrors of the First World War.

You can see a glimpse of this fulfilment in the above documentary, Part 1 of which was broadcast on BBC1 TV on Monday 27th January 2014. I refer below to its first six minutes or so, consisting of the introductory overview before the title of the programme appeared, and the opening sequences after the title appeared. Let us compare some of those comments with descriptions in the poem by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

1. The documentary told how people were waiting on 4th August 1914 for the Big Ben clock to strike the hour of 11.00 p.m., at which time Britain would declare war on

Germany (if its ultimatum was not met). The striking of the clock on the hour of 11.00 was called in the documentary as the “sound of apocalypse”, and the documentary presenter said “doom”, “doom”, “doom” to the sound of the clock striking this hour. “Apocalypse” and “doom” is similar to Hazrat Mirza sahib’s description of what this calamity would be like.

2. The documentary said the war was the “bloodiest conflict the human race had ever known”, and visited “new terrors”, an example of which were the first air raids in history. Hazrat Mirza sahib’s poem says streams of blood will flow like rivers and the sky will draw its dagger to attack.
3. The documentary said that the war was to “turn the country upside down”. The poem says: “the land shall turn over” and this calamity “will turn over villages, cities and fields”. The poem’s words could mean “turn over” both physically and figuratively.
4. The poem says: “Men will be dazed”. The Urdu expression translated as “dazed” means to lose your sense and reason, and not know what you are doing. The documentary said that British cabinet ministers “were beginning to fall apart”, mentally. The Prime Minister and two of his ministers wept openly in cabinet. The German ambassador was “crazed with anxiety” and became “a nervous wreck”. The Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey also wept openly on two occasions. This happened in a country, we were told, where men simply did not cry in front of people due to the tradition of the “stiff upper lip”.
5. It is interesting to note that the first scene, after the title of the programme appeared, showed the bird house at London Zoo, with birds twittering. We were informed that, two days before war was declared, the Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey visited this bird house for an hour “trying to calm his troubled mind” as he was “sick with worry”. He was a great bird lover. Hazrat Mirza sahib writes in the poem above: “Men will be dazed and birds will lose their senses, pigeons and all will forget their songs, nightingales too”, as if to say: You will not find any consolation in birds and their songs, they will be as terror-struck as people.

On the next page the text of the original Urdu verses is displayed.

Compiled by Zahid Aziz.

اک نشان ہے آنے والا آج سے کچھ دن کے بعد

تاریخ امروزہ ۱۵ اپریل ۱۹۰۵ء

آئے گا قہر خدا سے خلق پر اک انقلاب

یک بیک اک زلزلہ سے سخت جنبش کھائیں گے

اک جھپک میں یہ زمیں ہو جائے گی زیر و زبر

رات جو رکھتے تھے پوشاکیں برنگِ یاسمن

ہوش اڑ جائیں گے انساں کے پرندوں کے حواس

ہر مسافر پر وہ ساعت سخت ہے اور وہ گھڑی

خون سے مردوں کے کوہستان کے آبِ رواں

مضمحل ہو جائیں گے اس خوف سے سب جن و انس

اک نمونہ قہر کا ہوگا وہ ربّانی نشان

ہاں نہ کر جلدی سے انکار اے سفیہ ناشناس

وحی حق کی بات ہے ہو کر رہے گی بے خطا

جس سے گردش کھائیں گے دیہات و شہر اور مرغزار

اک برہنہ سے نہ یہ ہوگا کہ تا باندھے ازار

کیا بشر اور کیا شجر اور کیا حجر اور کیا بحار

نالیاں خوں کی چلیں گی جیسے آبِ رودبار

صبح کردے گی انہیں مثلِ درختانِ چنار

بھولیں گے نغموں کو اپنے سب کبوتر اور ہزار

راہ کو بھولیں گے ہو کر مست و بیخود راہوار

سرخ ہو جائیں گے جیسے ہو شرابِ انجبار

زار بھی ہوگا تو ہوگا اُس گھڑی باحالِ زار

آسماں حملے کرے گا کھینچ کر اپنی کٹار

اس پہ ہے میری سچائی کا سبھی دار و مدار

کچھ دنوں کر صبر ہو کر متقی اور بُردبار