

Dr Zakir Naik and the Lahore Ahmadiyya book *Muhammad in World Scriptures*

His article is a summary of our book

Compiled by Zahid Aziz

Some friends have noticed a remarkable similarity between talks presented on television by Dr Zakir Naik, the famous Indian lecturer on Islam, on the subject of prophecies about the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in Hindu scriptures and the coverage of the same subject in the well-known book *Muhammad in World Scriptures* by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, the great scholar of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement.

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

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

www.irf.net/irf/comparativereligion/middle/hinduism/muhammad.htm

The edition of *Muhammad in World Scriptures* I refer to below is on the website www.aaail.org and is reached by going to the *Books* link and looking under the name of the author Abdul Haq Vidyarthi. This book was first published in 1940 (which, to put it into perspective, is 25 years before Dr Zakir Naik was born).

A comparison

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

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

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

1. Except that in the Maulana's book the word *malecha* is spelt as *malechha*, and his quotation has the following extra words at the end: “O Ye! The image of the Most Pious God, the biggest Lord, I am a slave to thee, take me as one lying on thy feet.”

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

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

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

while the Maulana's book has:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The wording of the entire prophecy (of which about one-tenth is given above) is identical in the article and the book. Following the prophecy, Zakir Naik's article makes ten points about it, while the Maulana's book makes twelve

points. Naik's first two points are the same as the Maulana's first two points. His 3rd to his 10th point are the same as the Maulana's points (5) to (12), in the same order.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

alone have acquired the real wisdom of my father”. These three points under this prophecy are found in the Maulana’s discussion on page 129.

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

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

We may add here that the Maulana’s book was the result of his own deep study and research, after he had mastered the Sanskrit language around the years 1915–16. His knowledge of Sanskrit and the Hindu scriptures is demonstrated by his translation of *Yajur Veda* from Sanskrit to Urdu, and moreover by his public debates in pre-partition India with the Arya Samaj pandits in the presence of tens of thousands of people.

A famous debate

A debate on this topic took place in Diwan Hall, Delhi, on 5th February 1944, at which the prophecy about “A Praised One, Camel Rider” mentioned in the Atharva Veda was exhaustively debated between the Maulana and opposing pandits. (This is the prophecy in Zakir Naik’s article under the second heading.) As the annual conference of the Arya Samaj was taking place at the time in Delhi, their leading scholars were present. The Arya Samaj had challenged other religions to debates, and the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam of Delhi had accepted the challenge for Muslims. The topic of the debate was: “The truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is established from the prophecies contained in the Vedas”. There were some 25 Arya Pandits on the stage. Reports tell us that, in response to the arguments put forward by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, the scholarly Arya representative, Pandit Diyas Dev Ji Shastri, was unable to give any other interpretation to these words than as a prophecy. A report says:

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

Maulana Abdul Haq read out the prophecy again and again, but Pandit Diyas Dev Ji was unable to give any explanation, despite his scholarship and learning. Muslims were ecstatic and were sending blessings on the Holy Prophet. It seemed as if what Allah has described as the descent of angels, which was witnessed by Muslims in the battles in the time of the Holy Prophet, was taking place. The

Promised Messiah has called debates with the opponents of Islam as being the ‘holy wars’ of this age. In this ‘holy war’ at Delhi, Muslims witnessed the coming of angels, when on the one side was the solitary figure of Maulana Abdul Haq and on the other was a large number of Arya scholars of Sanskrit, but the call that was sounded from heaven was: *Al-Haq fi Āl-i Muhammad* (the truth is with the followers of Muhammad).

Before the conclusion of the debate, Maulana Sayyid Akhtar Husain Gilani [co-chairman of the proceedings on behalf of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman] made a strong appeal to Muslims to **refrain from** raising any slogans of victory as this would offend the Hindus, but to leave the hall in a calm and orderly manner. Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi’s rational style of argumentation, his virtuous behaviour, courtesy and polite manners, and the friendly attitude of the Ahmadiyya organisers, made a deep impression on the Hindus, while the hearts of the Muslims were filled with faith and knowledge. In religious history, this was the first debate of its kind to be seen in the capital city of India.”²

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

Do Hindu scriptures contain any Divine revelations?

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

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

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

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

2. *Paigham Sulh*, 16 February 1944, p. 8.

They may be the revelation of God or may not be the revelation of God.”³

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

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

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

3. See on his website www.irf.net the article ‘Common Questions asked by Hindus about Islam’.