



The Light — U.K. edition

December 2006

The Lahore Ahmadiyya monthly magazine from U.K.

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Assalamu alaikum: Our next meeting —

Date: **Sunday 3rd December 2006**

Time: **3.00 p.m.**

Speaker: **Dr Zahid Aziz**

Topic: **Islam, Peace and Tolerance**

Regular activities:

Darus-i Quran and Hadith:

Every Friday at 2.30 p.m.

Meetings of the Executive:

First Sunday of every month at 2.00 p.m.

Meeting of the Jama'at:

First Sunday of every month at 3.00 p.m.

'Id-ul-Fitr Sermon, 2006

At Darus Salaam, London, 24th October

By Shahid Aziz

Chapter 2, verse 183 of the Holy Quran tells us: "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil."

So fasting is not a new religious duty or discipline. Earlier communities too fasted and this is evidenced by the fasts of the prophets Moses and Jesus in particular. It is true that fasts of other communities were seen as punishment so that by inflicting hardship and pain on oneself a person

expiated for one's sins whereas in Islam the purpose of fasting is to "guard against evil". But there is another purpose to fasting. In verse 185 the Holy Quran says:

"The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to people and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein..."

and in another place:

"We revealed it on a blessed night — truly We are ever warning." — 44:3

So another purpose of fasting is to give thanks to Allah for bestowing the Perfect Guidance upon

humanity. And that is why the month of Ramadan is called the holy month or the blessed month for it is in this month that Allah bestowed upon us His greatest blessing — the Holy Quran. That is one reason for Ramadan being called holy or blessed but there are other reasons also.

As we all know, to honour the previous prophets, the Holy Prophet Muhammad kept voluntary fasts before fasting was made mandatory. It was in the second year of *Hijra* that fasting was made compulsory for the Muslims and the whole community began to fast in an organized manner. As I said, the purpose of fasting is to enable Muslims to “guard against evil” but in another place the Holy Quran says:

“...the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and women who remember — Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.” — 33:35

So what reward were the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his companions given for fasting? When we think of reward we always think of comforts of this world, the things that will make our lives easy. That is not what Allah means by reward.

The sincerity and devotion with which the Holy Prophet and his companions took to fasting was immediately rewarded. Their reward for fasting came within days of starting to fast. It came in the form of news that a well-armed army was marching from Makkah to Madina in order to annihilate Muslims. What great faith did those early Muslims have who had to march out immediately after fasting was made compulsory.

It is reported in Bukhari: “When (the news of) the advance of Abu Sufyan (at the head of a force) reached the Messenger of Allah he held consultations with his Companions. Abu Bakr spoke (expressing his own views), but he (the Holy Prophet) did not pay heed to him. Then spoke Umar (expressing his views), but he (the Holy Prophet) did not pay heed to him (too). Then Sa’d b. ‘Ubada stood up and said: Messenger of Allah, you want us (to speak). By God in Whose control is my life, if you order us to plunge our horses into the sea, we would do so. If you order us to goad our horses to the most distant place like Bark al-Ghimad, we would do so. Now the Messenger of Allah called upon the people (for the encounter). So they set out and encamped at Badr.” (Book 19, Number 4394). In one report it is said that the Ansar said that they will not say to the Holy Prophet what Moses’

followers had said to him, which was that Moses and his God should go and fight.

The army that was gathered is generally believed to consist of 313. Among the army there were boys as young as 16. The cavalry consisted of 2 horses and the transport of some 70 camels. Most people marched on foot. It was 80 miles from Madina to Badr where the encounter took place. And this was their first Ramadan. On the other side were a 1000 well armed men and when they lined up for battle they were well fed and well rested. What was their reward then? Their reward was that Islam and its devotions had freed them from the wants and needs of this world. They sacrificed their property and they sacrificed their lives at the Command of Allah and His Prophet. They had no need for these things, all they wanted was Allah’s pleasure. Their reward was that they were forever immortalised. Their reward was that all their shortcomings were forgiven by Allah and their reward was that their deeds were preserved in the Holy Quran. How would money and power and silks and jewels compare with their reward!

Our Christian friends believe that had it not been for the original sin, man would have lived for ever. It is as if death is the end of everything. My grand-daughters have moved to their next school. Their existence in the last school has come to an end but they continue to exist; they have moved on to a higher form of education. This was the secret that was instilled into the early Muslims. Death to them was not an end, it was simply moving on to the next stage in a journey. It was this lesson they put into practice at Badr and changed the course of Islam, and the course of history.

The Holy Quran says: “And Allah certainly helped you at Badr when you were weak. So keep your duty to Allah that you may give thanks” (3:123).

There was another event of similar magnitude which took place in Ramadan and that was the conquest of Makkah. It was on the 10th of Ramadan in the 8th year after *Hijra* that the Quraish violated the truce of Hudaibiya they had signed two years earlier. Although the Holy Prophet had signed the treaty against the wishes of his companions the wisdom of so doing could now be seen because in just two years of peace tables had been turned and Muslims had become a powerful force. The Quraish immediately called for an emergency meeting and decided to delegate their chief Abu Sufyan to Madina for a renewal of the truce. But all Muslims he approached, being aware of his tricks, would not speak to him or do anything for him.

Abu Sufyan returned to Makkah in a state of bitter disappointment and utter horror. There he submitted a report which dismayed the Makkans but did not expect imminent danger. The Holy Prophet prayed to Allah to keep his preparations a secret. As the Muslim army gathered the Holy Prophet received a revelation that the secret had been betrayed. Hazrat Ali and Zubair rushed out of Madina looking for the spy and brought back a woman who had a letter hidden in the braids of her hair. She revealed that a companion by the name of Hatib was the author of the letter. It turned out that Hatib had a son and other family there and wanted to protect his family. In any country such a person would have been punished by death but such was the dignity and honour bestowed on the participants of the battle of Badr that despite Hazrat Umar's insistence the Holy Prophet pardoned Hatib.

As the Muslims neared Makkah the Holy Prophet asked them to spread out and at night light as many fires as possible. Realizing that it was a momentous occasion the Holy Prophet gave strict instructions that fighting was to be engaged in as a last resort. He announced an amnesty through Abu Sufyan, the Chief of Makkah. The holy city was conquered without any fighting and there was no bloodshed as the Holy Prophet declared a general amnesty. This was a blessing and reward for sincere fasting and obedience to Allah.

As the Muslims had fasted out of sincere faith Allah had rewarded them by supporting them on two occasions which changed the course of history. Islam changes communities by providing the individual with the opportunities to rise to the highest level of the spiritual plane. We do have the guidance which can take us to the same heights as prophets but Allah makes things easy for us. As the Holy Quran says: "Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you". And to make things easy for us Allah has so arranged that in Ramadan, especially on *Laila-tul-Qadr*, angels descend to the lowest firmament of heavens. The Holy Quran says:

"Surely We revealed it on the Night of Majesty. And what will make you comprehend what the Night of Majesty is? The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord — for every affair — Peace! it is till the rising of the morning." — 97:1-5

Could it be any easier to attain nearness to Allah? He sends down His angels and He comes down Himself and calls out if there is any one who needs His help. He stretches out His hand as a

father would to a drowning child to pull the child ashore. How unfortunate is the person who does not take advantage of this! We make a show of fasting but it cannot be sincere because if our fasting was sincere we would achieve what the companions did. We continuously ask for the reason for our fall from grace. Surely the answer is staring us in the face and that is that our devotions are not sincere, they are not for the sake of Allah, they are for show and to impress people with our piety. At the end of this Ramadan let us resolve to make everything that we do for the sake of Allah.

Ramadan, an exquisite plan

by Bushra Ahmed

Due to traditional and cultural values we lose sight of the significance of Ramadan. Also with the insight and proper understanding of this occasion, perhaps the inner struggle of fighting hunger and general behavioral control becomes easier to manage. The Holy Quran says:

"The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for guidance for mankind and the criterion for right and wrong."

During this month the Mighty and Majestic Allah sent down the first verses of His Book as a guide to us and a way to choose the best possible path laid out before us. You may ask: So what if the Quran was revealed, why fast for the whole month? It is because great importance is placed on this Book. There was great hardship and struggle to put this Book together. If we remember this time in history, we will allow more time to read the Holy Book and that will initiate and encourage abiding by the guidance provided. Perhaps due to Allah's bountiful wisdom He has made the Quran 30 parts long to coincide with the days of a month, which are approximately 30, allowing us to complete reciting of the Quran in this Holy month.

The purpose for fasting according to the Holy Quran is for *Taqwa* or righteousness. It is the month for doing right and gaining reward. Allah through His mercy and compassion sent down a Book for guidance and also opened the doors of Heaven for this month so as to let more people to enter therein. This has been said on various occasions by the Prophet (peace be upon him). We should show some sort of gratitude to Allah for giving us this chance.

How does Ramadan start? The sighting of a thin crescent of the moon indicates the first night of the whole month. This can be done by the naked eye or through various technological methods discovered recently. Ramadan goes by the lunar calendar which causes the time for it to shift about 12 days ahead every year around the world. This means all countries get a chance to have short or long times for fasting depending on the calendar.

The duration of one fast is throughout the day. We eat before dawn and after sunset. The time for *Sehri* is in the early hours of the morning and *Iftari* is just before *maghrib* in the evening.

Towards the end of Ramadan, even more mercy is shown on the night known as *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. It occurs in the last ten nights of Ramadan. We must stay up and pray as much as we can till *Fajr*. It is the best time to have our prayers answered.

The whole of Ramadan is by far not easy. It is said in a proverb: 'Heaven is surrounded by hardships and Hell by desire'. Allah has ordained us to do something that would be a struggle and cause hardship but simultaneously is helpful to us in particular for our health, mind, body and soul. It also helps us to be humane. This develops our character. It builds our strength and changes our perspective on life.

Specifically, it is advantageous to us in the following ways. It helps our digestive system, it is beneficial to our organs, it teaches self control and self discipline. It forbids bad habits such as lying or foul speech or arguing, falsehood, sexual intercourse and encourages alms giving as well as many other things.

If, however, you are unable to keep fast for a genuine reason such as illness, take medication, are pregnant, also if you are a traveller, then you must abstain from fasting. However you must make up for it later. This is why perhaps fasting lasts only a month, so as we have the rest of the year to catch up! If, however, you will not even be able to keep fast later, then a fixed amount of money known as *fidya* must be paid for all the unfortunate people of the world who cannot afford food let alone fasting.

The reward for fasting, in short, as promised by Allah, is reward and recompense in this life and the hereafter. In fact Allah loves it so much that He has said: "The smell of your breath during fast is more aromatic than musk".

I pray during this period that all our brothers and sisters be rewarded for all their efforts and struggle made not only in Ramadan but all throughout the year. ■

Islam and Tolerance – 1

by Prof. Henry Francis B. Espiritu, M.A. Philo.

[Note: This article has been submitted to us by the author through our brother Mr Shaukat Ali of Thailand. We are publishing it in two installments. Prof. Henry Francis B. Espiritu is an Assistant Professor IV in Philosophy at the University of the Philippines in the Visayas-Cebu College. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the Ateneo de Manila University. He is a convert to Islam, and his Islamic name is Abdil Ghaffar. Comments can be sent to him by email: espirituhenryfrancis@yahoo.com]

The current expansion in mass media communication reveals more evidently that our world contains a variety of cultures, races, religions, and ideologies. Despite globalization and its attendant efforts towards homogeneity, ours is still a pluralist world. As such, tolerance is a foundational notion and a very relevant conceptual and practical prerequisite in establishing a pluralistic society. In pluralism's point of view, people living in a society with varied religious, cultural, and ideological commitments should enjoy equal rights and should not sacrifice their beliefs at the mercy of the hegemonic ideology of a particular State or the dominant religion of the majority community. In our highly globalized world, tolerance and amity are all the more needed for the survival, cohesion, and progress of its citizens.

The contemporary mass media portray Islamic societies to be intolerant of others' religious and ideological persuasions. The purpose of this paper is not to examine whether the contemporary media is right or wrong in perceiving Islamic societies as intolerant. My aim in this essay is to show that authentic Islam — as contained in the pristine revelation of the Quran — promotes tolerance, harmony, and goodwill of all peoples despite their differences. In this paper, I want to reflect straight from the original source of Islamic tenets (i.e., the Quran) the tolerant attitude of Islam vis-à-vis religious, cultural, and ideological diversities found in human societies. Likewise, I will endeavor to show some thematic framework found in selected passages of the Quran that encourage tolerance and societal concord. I sincerely hope that by showing the tolerant and pluralistic pronouncements of the Quran, I will be able to encourage Muslims to fully practice and live out the Islamic mandates of tolerance, amity, and understanding in their daily lives. Likewise, I further hope that through this essay, I will be able to inform non-Muslims that

genuine Islam, as contained in the Quranic revelation and in the exemplary conduct of the Prophet, is a very tolerant religion that acknowledges and respects the divergent beliefs and ideological views of others.

The Quranic View of Pluralism and Its Relevance to an Islamic Understanding of Tolerance

The Quran is fully conscious of the pluralistic nature of human societies. Many Quranic passages describe the diverse expressions of life as found in human communities. Pluralism is therefore a fact which the Quran accepts as the basic reality of our human existence. The Quran says:

“For everyone of you We appointed a law and a way. And if Allah had pleased, He would have made you a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you. So vie with one another in virtuous deeds. To Allah will all return, so He will inform you of that wherein you differed.” (*Surah Ma’ida*, 5:48; the translation used in this paper is by Maulana Muhammad Ali).

The above passage is a very decisive proclamation supporting tolerance. The verse fully points out the pluralistic condition of humankind. The passage admits to the existence of societal and religious diversity characterizing human communities when it declares, “for everyone of you We appointed a law and a way”. It further says: “And if Allah had pleased He would have made you a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you. So vie with one another in virtuous deeds”. Notice that this verse says that our pluralistic situation is something that is willed and permitted by God to test human communities so that each community will vie with each other in doing good deeds. *Surah Mai’da*, v. 48 is likewise a very relevant passage in understanding the nature of Islamic tolerance. If God willed that this world contains socio-cultural, and religious diversities (when He could have made the world a “single people”), and if God himself has a divine reason for allowing these diversities (so that each society will “vie with one another in virtuous deeds”) then humankind should strive to accept, tolerate, and appreciate the fact of our pluralistic world.

***Surah Ma’ida*:48 as a Potent Islamic Manifesto in Support of Tolerance**

The late Maulana Muhammad Ali, an eminent Pakistani scholar of Quranic exegesis, asserts that *Surah Ma’ida*:48 is an explicit endorsement of pluralism and its attendant duty of tolerating the

various diversities of humankind. I quote from Maulana Ali’s exhaustive Quranic commentary to this particular passage:

“The appointment of a law and a way for everyone refers to the giving of different laws to different nations... Thus, the Holy Quran here recognizes the principle to which it refers frequently, that prophets were raised among every people (see 10:47; 13:7; and 35:24)... Man is placed above the whole of creation in that he has been granted discretionary powers so that he can choose to follow one path or another, as against the rest of creation, which must necessarily follow the laws to which it is subject. Hence led by that [God-given] discretion, men follow different ways, adopting different sects, whereas if man’s very nature had been so made as to make him unable to use his discretionary powers, all men would have been a single people, but then man’s better qualities, would not have been manifested.” (Footnotes on 5:48).

As commented by Maulana Muhammad Ali, *Surah Ma’ida*:48 explicitly declares that the Almighty God sent his messengers to diverse groups of peoples and gave these communities their respective commandments in keeping with the different circumstances of each community. The laws prescribed by God to the different communities ensure the holistic development of their respective people. The verse continues:

“And if Allah had pleased, He would have made you a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you. So vie with one another in virtuous deeds.”

This verse clearly pointed out that if God so willed it, He can create a single community out of varied groups of people. Nevertheless, God planned that humankind be varied in its communitarian expression. God’s endowment of a pluralistic world is His grace to humanity. Our differences provide venues for existential celebration of life and living: variety and diversity being the potent antidote to our humdrum existence. Each community has its own unique way of life, its own customs and traditions, its own laws. Nevertheless, no matter how diverse these ways of life are, it should be understood in the light of the Almighty’s life-affirming purpose in allowing such diversities — human flourishing. It is therefore clear from *Surah Ma’ida*:48 that although God can produce a uniformed world of totalities by imposing a single law for all communities, yet He prefers to create pluralistic communities so that humankind will learn the values of tolerance, harmony, and fraternity.

Another aim of God in creating varied communities is to test human beings in the conduct of virtuous deeds. He tests the various societies if they can live amicably and cordially with each other despite their differences. The divergence in each society's ways of life should not be a cause of disharmony and differences; instead, societal divergences should prod each community to vie with one another in the performance of virtuous conduct.

The Quran insists that the best way of putting an end to religious, cultural, and ideological conflict is to tolerate differences with openness and good faith. Each religious community should do righteous deeds according to their tenets; leaving to God the judgment as to which community is the best. The final section of the passage states: "to Allah will all return, so He will inform you of that wherein you differed". The verse is very precise in stating that it should be left to God (and to God alone) in deciding the truth of the matters that peoples dispute. It is not for humans to pontificate which view is true and which is wrong. Vain and fruitless arguments as to which religious, ethical, and ideological point of view is right or wrong will only lead to communal fracas and infringement of societal concord. Likewise, the verse firmly admonishes human beings to contend with one another in good deeds by utilizing their own respective laws as bases of their righteous conduct.¹

God as the Ultimate Source of all Revealed Religions: A Central Tenet in the Quranic Understanding of Tolerance

The prologue of *Surah Ma'ida*:48 states:

"And We have revealed to thee the Book with the truth verifying that which is before it [i.e., the previous scriptures] ... and a guardian over it".

This verse is likewise a strong proclamation in favor of tolerance and pluralism. The Quran is referred to as "guardian" of the truths revealed by earlier scriptures. Likewise, one of the roles of the Quran is that of a verifier of previous scriptures that come before it. This verse implies that the scriptures of various religions may be different, but the Ultimate Source of all revealed scriptures is the One and Only God. Thus, scriptures of different faiths are based on Divine revelation from the same Divine Source — Almighty God. The tolerant nature of Islam as a religion can be seen in this verse, in that the Quran takes it upon itself to be the confirmer,

verifier, and guardian of heavenly truths revealed in earlier scriptures.²

The inclusive nature of the Islamic faith can be further observed in the Quran's numerous narrations regarding the ministries of Jewish, Christians, and other pre-Islamic prophets. The Quran's inclusion of the prophets of other religions preceding Islam is meant to illustrate the pluralistic and tolerant dimension of the Quranic Revelation. Thus, we can safely assume that other religious communities are likewise included in the all-inclusive Quranic guardianship. The Quran fully acknowledges the different expressions of worship undertaken by different religions, while at the same time firmly holding to the Islamic expressions of worship (i.e., the five-times-a-day liturgical prayers, prescribed pilgrimage, Ramadhan fasting, etc.). In *Surah Baqara*:148 it is stated: "And everyone has a goal to which he turns (himself), so vie with one another in good works". Ustaz Abu Ya'qub al-Sijistani, a Fatimid theologian and philosopher of the tenth century AD, pointed out that *Surah Baqara*:148 is very much related to the phrase in *Surah Maida*:48, viz; "for everyone of you We appointed a law and a way". Ustaz Sijistani also opined that the phrase, "everyone has a goal to which he turns himself", can mean the diverse spiritual communities and the different spiritual approaches that peoples adopt in expressing to God their worship and devotion.³

In the Quran, Oneness of Humankind as well as Diversity of Expressions of Human Living are both Recognized

The Quran, in many numerous passages, explicitly pronounces the oneness of humankind. Humanity was created from a single being (*Surah Nisa*:1). All humans came from a single ancestry and living in the same homeland — earth (*Surah Hujurat*:13). Furthermore, *Surah Baqara*:213 says that the whole of humanity is essentially one in origin — God, humankind's Creator. God sent various messengers with their respective scriptures to guide the peoples of the world to righteous living. These prophets were sent to different places of the world and their revelations were suited to the varying milieus, mentalities, contextualities, and circumstances of the peoples and societies in which they were being sent. However, instead of respecting other societies' contextualities, people begin to be divided and incessantly fight against each other. *Surah Baqara*:213 further states that God in giving His

¹ Cf., Reza Shah Kazemi, *The Metaphysics of Interreligious Dialogue*. London: Institute of Isma'ili Studies, 2001; pp. 5-7.

² See, Paul Walker, *Abu Ya'qub al-Sijistani: Intellectual Missionary*. London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1996; pp. 26-32, 45-58.

³ Cf., Paul Walker, *op.cit.*, pp. 47-58.

revelation to different communities did not intend that they fight each other; but that the communities respect each other's differences (see at length Maulana Muhammad Ali's commentary of *Surah Baqara:213*).

— *To be continued in our next issue.*

News and Views

By Zahid Aziz

'Virtual Mosque'

Our *Virtual Mosque* live webcasting project is now in operation and comments are being solicited from viewers of this service on the Internet. The *'Id-ul-Fitr* service on 24th October was broadcast, as well as Friday prayer gatherings and our monthly meeting which was on 5th November. To receive these broadcasts, please go to the website:

www.virtualmosque.co.uk

Then in the left hand column click on *Virtual Centre* and from under *Virtual Centre* click on *Live Prayers*. This will display a page which is headed *Live Prayers*. Then, as instructed on that page, click on the words *Live Webcam!* which are a short way below the heading. This should, usually, launch Windows Media Player on your PC. If a service is being broadcast you will be able to see and hear it through this Player.

The quality and continuity of the reception is dependent on many factors that come into play between the point of transmission and the point of reception, where you are. It also depends on the current state of technology. Many of these factors, for example, the speed of your Internet connection, are not in our control. We will certainly make our best efforts to improve the quality of transmission, and we expect that, with time, as technology progresses, the reception at your end will continue to improve.

Questions and answers

The following questions were received by e-mail at one of our websites and answered.

Question: At their 2005 annual gathering the Qadiani Jama'at claimed that their membership was 200 million. You may have more accurate information about their numbers. Please advise.

Answer: The Qadiani Jama'at claim has been that of 200 million. In their Press Release from their 2003 main *Jalsa* in U.K. (when Mirza Masroor Ahmad became *Khalifa*), it is stated on page 2:

"In a little over a century, the Community has spread to 174 countries with 200 million followers."

"Ahmadiyya Muslims number 200 million worldwide. With 20 million accepting the faith in 2002, ..."

But the following year, in 2004, in the similar Press Release at their *Jalsa* they mentioned no number at all. On their website home page www.alislam.org if you select the link to *Ahmadiyyat* in the right-hand column you reach a webpage on which it is stated in the 2nd sentence:

"...with worldwide membership exceeding tens of millions."

So I think they are backtracking on the absurd claim of being 200 million.

If you look up the population statistics of various countries of the world for 2005 you find that there were only four countries whose populations were more than 200 million (China, India, U.S.A. and Indonesia). All other countries in 2005 had populations less than 200 million. For example, Pakistan's population was 158 million and Bangladesh's 142 million. It is the most unrealistic fantasy to claim that there are more members of the Qadiani Jama'at in the world than the total population of Pakistan!

In debates with us on the Internet and elsewhere, members of the Qadiani Jama'at have told us that a proof of the truth of their movement is that their numbers are always increasing, that their Jama'at invariably grows in size, and that it is an immutable law that after the passage of each year their numbers are always greater at the end than they were at the beginning. Going by their own figures, as they have dropped from 200 million to "tens of millions" (which must mean much less than 100 million), the proof of their truth is shattered by their own criterion.

The interesting number to discover would be how many members of the Qadiani Jama'at know the real beliefs of their movement about the claims of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and about the issue of whether other Muslims are Muslims or *kafir*. Probably this number is not even in the hundreds, let alone millions!

Question: Does your Jama'at believe in the second advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) in the person of Promised Messiah?

Answer: Please make clear what you mean by "second advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad"? Does it mean that someone can appear in this world

who should be regarded as being the Holy Prophet Muhammad in person, and Muslims should follow him exactly as they should follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad! Of course we do not believe anything so absurd and heretical.

The fact is that certain successes which Allah promised to the Holy Prophet Muhammad were not attained during his lifetime, but were achieved later on, at the hands of his true followers. Those true followers represented the Holy Prophet and received the success on his behalf. This is what we believe about the Promised Messiah. He himself wrote about this concept as follows:

“An example is the prophecy of our Holy Prophet Muhammad that the keys to the treasures of Qaisar and Kasra [kings of the neighbouring Byzantine and Persian empires] have been placed in his hand, whereas it is clear that the Holy Prophet had died before the fulfilment of this prophecy, seeing neither the treasures of Qaisar and Kasra, nor the keys. But as it was destined that Hazrat Umar receive those keys, and the person of Hazrat Umar was, as it were, the person of the Holy Prophet Muhammad by way of *zill* (image), therefore in the realm of revelation the hand of Hazrat Umar was considered to be the hand of the Messenger of God, the Holy Prophet.” (*Ayyam-us-Sulh*, p. 35)

The concept applied here to Hazrat Umar also applies to the Promised Messiah. He again writes in the same book:

“It is admitted that the miracle of a *wali* (saint) is the miracle of the prophet whom he follows” (p. 74).

The achievements of a Muslim saint are, in fact, the achievements of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. *Only in this sense* can any righteous Muslim, whether it is the Promised Messiah or Hazrat Umar, be identified with the Holy Prophet because promises made by God with the Holy Prophet have been fulfilled through him in his time.

A new publication

A booklet has been placed on our website entitled *An Account of the Last Days and Death of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Lahore with a Brief History of Ahmadiyya Buildings*. It is the English translation of an Urdu booklet compiled by Mr Nasir Ahmad which was published in 2004. Our respected compiler has long experience of editing, compiling and publishing books of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore. Having lived and worked all his life in Ahmadiyya Buildings he has quite intimate knowledge of the area and its history. In his *Compiler’s Note* Mr Nasir Ahmad writes:

‘Id-ul-Adha

‘Id-ul-Adha is on New Year’s Eve,
Sunday 31st December 2006.

Prayers at Darus Salaam will start as usual at 11.00 a.m.

‘Id prayers **must** start promptly because:

1. In winter time *Zuhr* prayers are early.
2. The live Web broadcast must begin on time.

“In compiling this brief account of the events of the last days and the demise of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, at Ahmadiyya Buildings, Lahore, and a brief history of the Ahmadiyya Buildings, I have made extensive use of the two source books in Urdu: *Mujaddid-i ‘Azam* (The Great Reformer of the Time), the biography of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad by Dr. Basharat Ahmad, and *Mujahid-i Kabir* (The Great Striver for Islam), the biography of Maulana Muhammad Ali by Mr. Muhammad Ahmad and Mr. Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqi. This booklet was originally compiled in Urdu and published in 2004. I am also grateful to Sheikh Fazlur Rahman, Treasurer of the Central Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore (Pakistan) for providing useful information, to Capt. Abdus Salam of U.S.A. for producing the initial translation of the text of this booklet from Urdu into English, and to Dr. Zahid Aziz of Nottingham, England, for thoroughly revising the translation, formatting it for publication and making many valuable suggestions.”

The book can be read at: www.ahmadiyya.org

The name *Ahmadiyya Buildings* became famous in the world as the headquarters of the Muslim organisation — Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore — that was propagating Islam all around the globe. Eminent Muslim leaders and distinguished visitors of all kinds went there to meet leaders of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, most notably to call upon Maulana Muhammad Ali. Divine Providence had ordained that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad should spend the last month of his life at Ahmadiyya Buildings, Lahore, in May 1908, six years before the Ahmadiyya Anjuman of Lahore came into existence. This set the seal of approval on the “members in Lahore”, his beloved devotees, who served him till the end of his life.