



The Light — London edition

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Next Meeting at Darus Salam:

Date: **Sunday 5th February 2006**

Time: **3.00 p.m.**

Topic: **The Annual Gathering in Lahore**

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.

An alleged 'miracle' in the Holy Quran

Baseless argument presented to prove that Quran is a revelation

by Zahid Aziz

There is an article posted on various Muslim websites and Internet discussion forums arguing that the number of times certain words occur in the Holy Quran, for example 'man' and 'woman', or 'month', 'day', etc., has, in each case, a special significance and is a miracle showing that the Quran was revealed by God. The following are the webpages on some of the Islamic websites where this article is published:

www.islamawareness.net/Miq/stat.html

www.answering-christianity.com/equality_men_women.htm

www.islamicway.net/firms.com/interesting_islamic_facts.htm

The first example mentioned is that the word for 'man' (*rajul*) and the word for 'woman' (*amra'* or *mar'a*) both occur in the Quran exactly 24 times each. The article claims this shows that man and woman are equal. However, at least two Islamic websites inform us that 'man' and 'woman' occur 23 times and they call this a miracle because they say that this is also the number of "the chromosomes from the egg and sperm in the formation of the human embryo. The total number of human chromosomes is 46; 23 each from the mother and father". Please refer to these two webpages:

www.miraclesofthequran.com/mathematical_01.html

www.muhammedhasenoglu.com/miracles_quran.htm

So, whether these words occur 24 times or 23 times, it is called a miracle in each case!

The whole argument is baseless in the first place. The number of times the words ‘man’ and ‘woman’ occur has absolutely no relevance to the teachings about men and women. Imagine that a book contains a sentence saying: “A man is vastly superior to a woman. A man has all rights, a woman has no rights at all.” The words ‘man’ and ‘woman’ both occur in this sentence the same number of times, but does that mean this sentence is saying that men and women are equal?

Coming to the counting, if you only count *rajul* (a man) and *imra’a* (a woman) then as far as I can see these do occur 24 times each, as stated by these people. I admit that I wasted time in tracing these occurrences and these are as follows. *Rajul* occurs in the following verses: 2:282; 4:12; 6:9; 7:63; 7:69; 7:155; 10:2; 11:78; 17:47; 18:37; 23:25; 23:38; 25:8; 28:20; 33:4; 34:7; 34:43; 36:20; 39:29 (3 times); 40:28 (twice); and 43:31. *Imra’a* occurs in the following verses: 3:35; 3:40; 4:12; 4:128; 7:83; 11:71; 11:81; 12:21; 12:30; 12:51; 15:60; 19:5; 19:8; 27:23; 27:57; 28:9; 29:32; 29:33; 33:50; 51:29; 66:10 (twice); 66:11; and 111:4.

Certainly they do occur 24 times each *in this form* but these words occur *in other forms as well*. Also, there are other words in the Quran for ‘man’ and ‘woman’ apart from these two. The word *imra’a* has a masculine form *mar’*, and although it usually means human being (for example in 8:24 “Allah comes in between a man and his heart”), there are cases where *mar’* means specifically a male. These are:

1. “between a man and his wife”, 2:102.
2. “If a man dies who has no son”, 4:176.
3. “your father was not a wicked man”, 19:28.
4. “The day when a man flees from his brother”, 80:34.

So why is this word not counted as an occurrence of ‘man’? It is most strange that they count the word *imra’a* for ‘woman’ and yet they do not count its masculine form (*mar’*) for ‘man’, when this form, on four occasions, can only mean a male human being.

Plurals are also not counted by them. Hence the words *rijāl* (men) and *nisā’* (women), occurring so frequently, are not included despite their usage in fundamental verses like 4:1 about men and women. The words *rajul* and *imra’a* also occur in dual forms *rajulān* (2:282, 5:23, 16:76, 18:32, 28:15) and *imra’atān* (2:282, 28:23) meaning ‘two men’ or ‘two women’. They do not count these dual forms. But, interestingly, if they did include them then the

question would arise whether each of these is to be counted as *one* occurrence or as *two* occurrences because the word means ‘two’, men or women!

Our readers will be surprised to know that one of the occurrences of *rajul* which they have counted is in the following text:

“And Moses chose out of his people *seventy men* for Our appointment.” — 7:155.

Now you will ask why have they counted this because it reads ‘men’ and not ‘man’? It is because, due to Arabic grammar, the text says literally “seventy man (*rajul*)”. So they count it as an occurrence of ‘man’! It is most bizarre that where the Quran says ‘two men’, they don’t count it as an occurrence of ‘man’, but where the Quran says “seventy men” they count it as an occurrence. Again the question may be asked, how is one to decide whether to count this as *one* or as *seventy*?

A further point is that there are other words for ‘man’ and ‘woman’ in the Quran, for example the well-known *zakar* and *unth*. See 3:195, 92:3, and 4:11. Using these terms it is stated in 49:13: “We have created you from a male and a female”, from a man and a woman. Yet according to their way of counting ‘man’ and ‘woman’ in this very important and fundamental verse are *not* to be counted!

Word ‘month’ occurring 12 times

Another example of a “miraculous” number of occurrences is claimed to be that the word for ‘month’, *shahr*, occurs 12 times in the Quran, and there are 12 months in the year. In a similar vein it is claimed that the word for ‘prayers’ (the plural word *ṣalawāt*) occurs 5 times because there are 5 daily prayers in Islam. This line of argument would suggest that as Islam teaches that there is only **one** God, and this is its most basic teaching, so the word *Allah* should occur in the Quran *only once*! And how many times should the word for ‘fasting’ occur? Thirty times for the thirty fasts, or once for one month of fasting? It actually occurs more than once but far less than thirty times.

These twelve occurrences of *shahr*, ‘month’, are in the following verses as far as I can trace them: 2:185 (twice), 34:11 (twice), 2:194 (twice), 97:3, 2:217, 9:36, 46:15, 5:2 and 5:97.

Again, they do not count the occurrences of the dual *sharain* (‘two months’, 4:92, 58:4) or the plurals *ashhar* and *shuhūr*. As with ‘man’ above, we have the bizarre situation that they *count* as one occurrence the ‘month’ in the following verses:

“...and the weaning of him is **thirty months**” — 46:15

“*Lailat-ul-Qadr* is better than a **thousand months**” — 97:3

because the word *months* occurs in the singular, but they do not count it in verses that have the words “four months” or “three months” (2:226, 2:234, 9:2, 65:4) as the word happens to be in the plural. The most blatant example of this is the following verse:

“Surely the number of months with Allah is twelve months...” — 9:36

Just guess how many times the word ‘month’ they consider to occur in this text! The answer is *one occurrence* because in the construction “twelve months” the word ‘month’ is in the singular. The first ‘months’ here does not count as it is the plural *shuhūr*.

It could be asked: Instead of counting the number of times the word ‘month’ occurs, why not add up the total length of time represented by those months? First of all we have the 1000 months in 97:3, then the 30 months of 46:15, and so on. Does that total number have any significance?

Word ‘day’ occurring 365 times

Before becoming ecstatic and jumping with joy that the word for ‘day’ (*yaum*) occurs 365 times in the Quran, the enthusiasts of this theory should have considered that Islam uses the lunar calendar of 356 days. Again the same considerations apply to ‘day’ as to ‘month’, since it also occurs in the dual (*yaumain*) and the plural (*ayyam*) which are not counted. If each occurrence of ‘day’ counts as one day towards the total of 365, then shouldn’t the dual ‘two days’ be counted as two days, rather than *not counted at all*.

Furthermore, the Quran talks about “a day (*yaum*) the measure of which is a thousand years as you count” (32:5) as well as “a day (*yaum*) the measure of which is fifty thousand years” (70:4). According to the upholders of this theory, the day of a thousand years and the day of fifty thousand years each count as just one day in their total of 365 days!

Word ‘prayer’ or ‘prayers’

The crass ignorance of the promoters of this theory is shown by the fact that in some versions of this article we are astounded to read that the word *ṣalāt* (prayer) occurs in the Quran 5 times, and of course this is the number of prayers ordained for Muslims daily. Any reader of the Quran will immediately realize that the word *ṣalāt* occurs so frequently in the Quran that it is vastly more numerous than five. It seems to me that the original versions of this article did not mention *ṣalāt* but its plural *ṣalawāt* as occurring five times, and some people copying

the original versions have misread or misunderstood *ṣalawāt* as *ṣalāt*. But even if we consider the occurrences of *ṣalawāt*, we find that it does not always mean the five daily prayers. In 2:157 occur the following words:

“...on whom are blessings (*ṣalawāt*) and mercy from their Lord”.

Look in any English translation of the Quran (Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, and the recent one by Abdel Haleem) and you will find the word *ṣalawāt* in this verses translated as “blessing”.

In its occurrence in verse 22:40 this word refers to **Jewish synagogues!** Just read its translation:

“...cloisters, and churches, and synagogues (*ṣalawāt*), and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered...”

This proves the whole argument to be entirely nonsensical and shows that its proponents have not bothered to check the meaning with which this word is used in the Quran.

Another occurrence of *ṣalawāt* is in the verse “And those who keep a guard on their prayers” (23:9). However, in two other places the same expression is employed but using the singular word *ṣalāt*: “And those who keep a guard on their prayer” (70:34 and 6:92), the meaning being exactly the same as in 23:9. The two words are synonymous in this case, but this counting theory counts only the occurrence in 23:9.

In fact, on the very numerous occasions that the Quran uses the singular *ṣalāt* (‘prayer’) it most often means the five daily prayers and not one prayer. This is exactly the case in the frequently-occurring expressing “keep up prayer” (see for instance 2:3; 2:177; 4:162; 5:55; 6:72; 8:3; 9:11; etc.). The word *ṣalāt* here means not one prayer but the institution of prayer, consisting of the obligatory five daily prayers. But these occurrences are *not* counted by the originators of this theory.

I think I have now wasted enough space and time to demonstrate the absurdity of these claims that there is some special significance underlying the number of times these words occur in the Quran. In the first place, there is no rule or principle for determining which word or concept must always occur a special number of times. Secondly, the criteria for selecting which occurrences of a word should be counted are highly subjective and always open to challenge. Most importantly, we gain no increased knowledge about, or insight into, any teaching of Islam from knowing the number of occurrences.

Muslim website welcomes return of Jesus!

Asks people to prepare for his coming

It is with much disappointment and regret that we have received news from a good friend about a Muslim website, www.jesuswillreturn.com, which looks forward to the imminent return of Jesus to this world. It has been set up by the Turkish Muslim author who writes under the penname Harun Yahya. On a page entitled *Welcoming Jesus in the best possible way*, it is stated on this website:

“All people, especially believing Christians and Muslims, must prepare in excitement, vigor, and great exuberance for his arrival.”
(Ref: www.jesuswillreturn.com/s1_9.html)

The articles on this website teem with such expressions, using also words such as “joy” and “eagerness” to tell us how we should enthuse about Jesus’ second coming, which is described as a “very great gift of God for all humanity”.

Regarding the purpose of his return we are told:

“ It is very important for a Muslim that Jesus is going to come back to the earth again. ... Together with his return to earth, the lack of understanding between Christians and Muslims who believe in the same God, share the same moral values ... will be repaired, and these two greatest of the world’s religious communities will be united. ... the Jews will also accept Jesus as their true Messiah and find their way to the true religion ... there will be one single religion on earth based on faith in God and obedience to Jesus, His Prophet. This religion will defeat the atheistic philosophies and pagan beliefs with intellectual means; ... Humanity will enter a ‘Golden Age’ of peace, happiness and well-being.

Certainly, this will be the greatest event in the history of the world. In this situation in which the three monotheistic religions will unite, the whole American continent, Europe, the Islamic world, Russia and Israel will be allied on the basis of a shared faith, and no such unity has ever occurred before. The peace, well-being, stability and happiness to be established in the world by this union has never been known in any previous period; its likeness has never been seen.”

(Ref: www.jesuswillreturn.com/a_1.html)

Whether the Muslim writer of these lines has given any thought to his statements we do not know, but they are nothing less than shocking and

highly dangerous. Does he really mean to say: “there will be one single religion on earth based on faith in God and obedience to Jesus, His Prophet”? In Islam, since the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the basis of the religion has been faith in God and obedience to Muhammad, His Prophet. This would apparently change in the religion envisaged by Harun Yahya and Jesus would replace and displace the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the primary authority. It is because of such disastrous consequences of the return of Jesus that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote that his coming again into this world is “tantamount to the departure of the religion of Islam from this world” (*Izala Auham*, p. 586) and that the coming of any prophet according to the real meaning of prophethood would “destroy the entire fabric of Islam” (*Kitab-ul-Bariyya*, p. 184, footnote).

We recoil at the description of the so-called return of Jesus as the “greatest event in the history of the world”. Greater than the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, greater than the revelation of the Quran, we ask? And the peace, unity, happiness Jesus will supposedly establish upon his return is said to be entirely unprecedented, which neither the Holy Prophet Muhammad nor any of his followers acting upon his teachings were able to match at all!

The website’s message to Christians is as follows:

“As Muslims, we are very excited about the imminent return of Jesus and are doing all we can to prepare ourselves and the world to receive this blessed guest. We call on Christians to be as sensitive, aware and eager as possible about this. ...

All Christians should be eager, excited, aware and filled with love as they await this blessed event. And we, as Muslims who have this eagerness, excitement, awareness and love, say to Christians:

Come, let us prepare together for the coming return of Jesus.”

(Bolding is in the original. See the webpage www.jesuswillreturn.com/a_1.html)

It seems from these words that the mission of Islam, according to the author, is now no more than to call on people to await the return of Jesus. Instead of inviting Christians to accept the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as Muslims have been doing since the beginning of Islam, they should now abandon that, and ask Christians to look forward to the coming of Jesus as the one to accept.

On this website, we are also told in clear and categorical terms that Jesus will appear as a prophet:

“For the first time ever in their lives, all people alive at that time will see a Prophet of superior human qualities. God willing, his second life will be as full of miracles as was his first life. All people will admire him for his virtue and unrivalled wisdom. His every word will be inspired by God, and his every decision will be accurate.”

(www.jesuswillreturn.com/s1_9.html)

In an article entitled *Who Will Be Able to Recognize Jesus* on this website it is written:

“Another subject that has received a great deal of attention is how Jesus will be recognized or by what features we will know him. As a person who was created superior in terms of knowledge, intelligence, physical appearance, and character, he will have the facial expression of a Prophet. His God-fearing nature and deepest faith will shine on his face so much so that people will instantly realize that they are looking upon someone quite superior.

... Like all Prophets, he will be known to those people surrounding him as an embodiment of God’s Word, ... It will be possible to identify him by a Prophet’s attributes, which are described in the Quran.”

(www.jesuswillreturn.com/s1_7.html)

Commenting on some verses of the Quran, the author of this website argues that apart from being taught the Torah and the Gospel “the Quran is the third book that Jesus will be taught. But this will be possible only when he returns to Earth, for he lived 600 years before the Quran’s revelation” (webpage www.jesuswillreturn.com/s1_3.html). The question naturally arising from this is: If people will have before them Jesus as a Prophet of God, having all the attributes of a prophet, whose “every word will be inspired by God”, who will have been taught the Quran by God Himself, then (God forbid) what place will remain for the Holy Prophet Muhammad and why will people stand in need of him?

When you consider the damaging implications of the belief in the literal second coming of Jesus, it is then that you realize the tremendous service rendered by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in clarifying this whole issue. He rejected this belief outright as being a threat to the very basis of Islam,

but he did not reject the prophecies from which it has been derived. He gave an interpretation to those prophecies to make them accord with the dignity of Islam, explaining that they can only refer to one of the saints and *mujaddids* who arise among Muslims as deputies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad to spread *his* name and *his* authority and *his* greatness in the world.

Lord Headley’s Hajj in July 1923

*Reported at the first annual meeting of
the British Muslim Society*

In our last issue we reprinted excerpts from various reports published at the time in *The Islamic Review* relating to the Hajj of Lord Headley, accompanied by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. In addition to those extracts, we also find in *The Islamic Review* news of the First Annual General Meeting of the British Muslim Society at which Lord Headley presided and spoke about his Hajj. The meeting was held on Sunday 21st October 1923 at 111 Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London, W. 8.

Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, Imam of the Woking Mosque and son of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, while introducing Lord Headley as the speaker of the evening, said:

“ I do not wish to stand between the speaker of this evening — the Rt. Hon. Lord Headley — and yourselves. But I think it my duty to mention certain facts which are of some importance, and which his lordship, modest as he is, would probably like to overlook. ...

Lord Headley was for ten days dressed in two single sheets. He faced the scorching heat of Arabia, a heat of which even our Syed Mufti Abdul Mohyi, an Arab by birth, complained. But Lord Headley bore it with a smile on his face, and never complained. He slept four nights on the ground without a bed. All this he did for his love of the Faith he has adopted, and not for any political end. These hardships were to him blessings, for his reward lies elsewhere.

Lord Headley, my father [Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din] and Abdul Mohyi Arab, were the guests of King Hussain during their stay in Arabia. Arab hospitality is known in history; and King Hussain did nothing more than keep up the traditions of his family and race. ...

A friend of mine pointed out to me that the fact that Lord Headley and my father were the guests of King Hussain is a sufficient proof that the brotherhood of Islam is too, like that of Christianity, becoming an empty phrase. I will leave the question for his lordship to answer. I will only refer to an editorial note of *Al Qiblah*, the semi-official organ of Mecca. After welcoming Lord Headley and my father and stating that theirs was not a political mission, it goes on to say that his lordship went to the sacred city as a Muslim. The Arabs respect him because of the Faith he has adopted. He was the first Muslim to go there from Great Britain, and, as such, was a representative of the Western Muslims. They, the Arabs, honoured him as a servant of the Faith of Islam and not as a peer of Britain.”

— *The Islamic Review*, December 1923, p. 443–445

The report of this meeting goes on as follows:

“ Lord Headley gave an account of his experiences, on his recent Pilgrimage — at Mecca, on his journeys thither and thence, at Cairo and elsewhere. The speaker acknowledged himself to have been, first and foremost, profoundly impressed with Islam and the universal spirit of Islamic brotherhood, and in an address, lit by constant flashes of characteristic humour and insight, conveyed to his rapt and attentive audience his own conception of the reality of that brotherhood as revealed to him by what he saw and heard and experienced for himself, in Egypt and in Arabia. He narrated, with zest, how a certain British Consul had urged him to travel in some sort of disguise — advice at which he was forced to smile, while expressing gratitude to his adviser for the kindly thought; and he desired to record his thanks for kindness shown to him, to H.M. the King of Egypt, H.M. the King of Hedjaz, H.H. Prince Ali, H.H. Prince Tusan, the Najib-ul Ashraf Syed Muhammad Biblavi, Ahmad Najib Bey Bourada Eff., Ismail El Baroudy Eff., Syed Ehsan El Bakery Eff.

A comprehensive vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. Habibullah Lovegrove, the Secretary of the Society, and an appeal for subscriptions, which met, there and then, with a most encouraging response, brought the proceedings to a close. ”

Letter of Lord Headley from the *Hajj*

The previous issue of *The Islamic Review* (November 1923, p. 417–418) publishes a letter by Lord Headley sent by him from Mecca:

“ I have seen it stated that the Mecca pilgrimage is made use of by political

propagandists to further their own ends. Nothing is further from truth, and were politicians of any kind to air their views in Mecca, they would find themselves in about the most uncongenial atmosphere possible.

The first thing that struck me on arriving here from Jeddah was the complete elevation of the mind above earthly matters. All the tens of thousands of pilgrims, and indeed all the people in the place, are so much bent on serving God that they have no room in their minds for other considerations.

The most impressive sight of all is the service at the big courtyard surrounding the Kaaba. At the appointed times, five times a day, the *Muazzin* calls to prayer, and the whole huge area is filled with earnest worshippers. *In unison* they bow and prostrate. The ladies occupy a large area specially set aside for them, and they take part just like the men in every portion of the service.

It must be remembered that this huge congregation consists of representatives from all parts of the world. A Chinese may be worshipping next to a South African; a Punjabi may be next to a Malay, and so forth. There is only one thing that draws them all together, and that is the unanimous worship of the One and only God. All day long one hears “*Allah-o-Akbar! Allah-o-Akbar! La illah ill-Allah wallah-o-Akbar lillahilhamad.*” Everywhere the intense desire to thank God for His goodness and implore His direction in the right path is so strongly manifested that there is no room for worldly considerations. Unlike certain other faiths, there is no bid for temporal power. There are no priests by whose aid alone heaven can be reached; there are no wild, fanatical statements that the followers of other religions are all doomed to damnation. Every true Muslim would like to see that happiness he himself knows spread to his brethren all over the world; but he is forbidden to use any compulsion.

I believe that the future state is of such infinitely greater importance to the Muslim than any worldly consideration that he will never presume to condemn others for not being able to see with his eyes.

As far as I can see all the people in Mecca are so earnestly engaged with the religious observances connected with the pilgrimage, that there is actually very little time for outside considerations, political or otherwise.

EL FAROOQ (HEADLEY)

MECCA, July 21, 1923.

”

*Commentary on the Holy Quran,
Continued from the last issue:*

An-Najm: 'The Star'

Chapter 53 of the Quran

Explained by Dr Basharat Ahmad

**Translated from Urdu by
Kalamazad Mohammad, Trinidad**

The following poetic verses of his serve as an example of how boldly Mirza Sahib proclaimed his challenge to the whole world:

I let my imagination travel to all directions
But I could not find any other religion like the
religion of Islam.
There is no religion on the face of the earth
that can produce signs.
This fruit I ate from the garden of Muhammad.
I have tried Islam myself and found it full of
light.
Arise and listen to the truth I am telling you.
All the religions I have seen are bereft of light.
Can anyone point out to me if I have not
spoken the truth?
No one has come to put my assertions to the
test,
Although I have challenged every opponent to
a contest.
O people! Come and you will find the Divine
light in this religion.
I am just disclosing to you a means for your
own consolation.
Thy boundless blessings and peace be upon
Mustapha, O Allah,
Verily through him we received light from Thy
court.
It was because of you, O Prophet of Allah, the
best of all prophets, that we became the best of
all nations.
As you marched ahead of all others, so, too we
advanced in your footsteps.

The outstanding achievement of the *Mujaddid* of the Age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, is that at the time when atheism and materialism were flourishing, he furnished living and palpable proof of the truth of Islam that gave it supremacy over all false religions and creeds, for it was so potent a proof that it provided definite and incontrovertible evidence for any religion that claimed to be a true and living one. What kind of road is it, he asked, that will not lead a traveller to the destination he

seeks, or what teaching is it that if someone should act on it, he will still find the door of salvation closed?

The true path is indeed the one that can lead us to the desired destination in any age and so he proclaimed to the world, in the most forceful and vociferous manner, that by following the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet he had found the living God Who is the only One deserving of worship and devotion. Furthermore, that was now the only road that will make a person meet his Creator for all other avenues were blocked. Look at how trenchantly he declared his conviction in poetic style:

Do not run away from Islam for this is the path
of true guidance,
O you sleeping ones, awake, for this is the
mid-day sun.
I swear by God Who made me,
This is now the religion that provides true
guidance under the heaven.

This is the demand made by the Holy Quran upon all those idol-worshippers: "Have you ever seen or met those gods whose idols you worship?"

This is a rhetorical question implying that they had not seen them, nor witnessed any miracle from them. Thus, without any sight or proof of them and without any other tangible evidence, they were content to follow their ancestors blindly in this kind of false worship. Further, how strange it is that these people do not realise how laughable is their position to ascribe daughters to Allah, Most High, whilst having daughters themselves is considered a hateful thing by them! We can see from this how erroneous was their concept of the Almighty. If they had possessed even an inkling of spiritual insight or true knowledge of their Creator, they would always have ascribed beautiful names to Him and would never have entertained anything of Him that they regarded as bringing shame and disgrace upon their own selves (whether they were right or wrong in considering it a matter of disgrace). This does not mean that what displeases God is that they are not ascribing sons to Him but daughters. This is certainly not what is meant because the Quran itself says "He begets not, nor is He begotten" (112:3) and "It beseems not Allah that He should take to Himself a son" (19:35). These verses only tell these people that their concept of God is so degraded that they do not hesitate to ascribe to Him what they do not like for themselves. The concept of God in the mind of His servant should be very lofty, not so low that we ascribe the best things to ourselves and apportion to God what we regard as inferior. ■

Diary and News

Our title

With the approval of the Central Anjuman Lahore, the title of our magazine has been changed from *Bulletin to The Light — London Edition*.

1. Annual Gathering at Lahore

The Annual Gathering of the Central Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore was held from Thursday 22nd to Monday 26th December 2005. Participating from the U.K. were the following: Mr Nasir Ahmad, Dr M. Hami, Mr Shahid Aziz, Mr and Mrs Ross Mahmood, Mrs Fauqia Aziz, and Dr Jawad Ahmad and family. When fuller details of the proceedings are received we will be pleased to publish them here.

2. Prayer services at U.K. Centre

In the absence of our regular prayer leaders and deliverers of *khutbas* other members filled in. The Friday *khutba* on 23rd and 30th December was given by Dr Zahid Aziz. The Friday *khutbas* on 6th and 13th January were delivered by Mr M. Haroun and Mr Faiz Khan respectively. The *Id-ul-Adha* prayer was led by Dr Mujahid Saeed and the *khutba* delivered by Mr Mustaq Ali.

3. False conclusions about Islam

Charles Moore, in his regular column in the *Daily Telegraph* of 10th December 2005, writes that Muslims believe the Quran to be actually the word of God, as distinct from the way in which Christians look upon the Bible as a writing of men inspired by God, and from this he draws the conclusion that:

“... all Muslims are fundamentalist in a way that no Christian can quite be. One man, the Prophet, was given the perfect truth in one form, and so the truth, and the form, are absolute. To question the status of the Quran as described above is to insult God.”

Then he further jumps to the conclusion that as Islam has prescribed the law of blasphemy therefore Muslims are duty-bound by their religion to enforce it, as has been done in Pakistan. As Mr Moore has connected the so-called law of blasphemy in Pakistan directly with the Quran, and with the Muslim belief that the Quran is the word of God, we wish to make clear that **no** such teaching or law is to be found in the Quran. *It does not prescribe any punishment whatsoever* that should be imposed by a Muslim state or legal authority upon someone who allegedly offers an ‘insult’ to Allah, the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, the Quran or the religion of Islam. Furthermore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad never applied any punishment to anyone for insulting him, even though there were plenty of his opponents who had abused him and who were later in his power to deal with as he wished. Any Muslim who actually puts into practice his belief that the Quran is the literal word of God will have to act, for example, on this command: “you will certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from the idolaters much abuse. And if you are patient and keep your duty, surely this is an affair of great resolution” (3:186), or the injunction: “bear patiently what they say” (20:130; 38:17; 73:10).

Mr Charles Moore has failed to realize, although we do not blame him for it, that believing the Quran to be the actual word of God implies believing that any human understanding of it is bound to be imperfect. The speaker of the words is God but the hearers, interpreters and followers of it are merely fallible human beings. This consideration gives each and every Muslim, man or woman, the freedom to differ with the greatest of their religious authorities and interpreters if he or she (and yes, women have done it in the history of Islam) can show that their interpretation is contrary to the Quran.

Regarding his comment that this belief makes Muslims “fundamentalist in a way that no Christian can quite be”, we may point out that while both the Bible and the Quran mention the creation of the world in six days, very few Muslims have taken this as meaning six days each of 24 hours length. Rather, Muslims generally consider ‘day’ here as meaning an ‘age’ extending to thousands of years, on the basis of the Quran itself. Yet a very large number of Christians, especially in the highly advanced U.S.A., hold that God created the world in six days each of 24 hours length. We are not aware of any Muslim country or society in which the teaching of scientific theories and explanations of the creation of the world and the origin of life is treated as a threat to Islam. If the values approved of by Mr Moore were to prevail all over the world, we would find the legal controversy spreading from the U.S.A. to every country as to whether ‘evolution’ or ‘intelligent design’ should be taught in schools.

We may also point out that the system of apartheid in South Africa was enforced by devout, Bible-following Christians who justified holding black people in what was effectively slavery on the basis of the Bible. ■