

“Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation,
and argue with people in the best manner.” (The Holy Quran, 16:125)

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Exponent
of Islam
and the
Lahore
Ahmadiyya
Movement
for over
eighty
years
•

The Light

& Islamic Review

July – September 2003

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Presents
Islam as:
PEACEFUL
TOLERANT
RATIONAL
INSPIRING
•

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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

◆ Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A. ◆
P.O. Box 3370, Dublin, Ohio 43016, U.S.A.

The Light was founded in 1921 as the organ of the AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT ISLAM (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Islamic Review* was published in England from 1913 for over 50 years, and in the U.S.A. from 1980 to 1991. The present periodical represents the beliefs of the worldwide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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The main object of the A.A.I.I.L. is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world — Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by grave misconceptions and wrong popular notions.

Islam seeks to attract *the hearts and minds* of people towards the truth, by means of reasoning and the natural beauty of its principles.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), our Founder, arose to remind the world that Islam is:

International: It recognizes prophets being raised among all nations and requires Muslims to believe in them all. Truth and goodness can be found in all religions. God treats all human beings equally, regardless of race, nationality or religion.

Peaceful: Allows use of force only in unavoidable self-defence. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

Tolerant: Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any creed or religion. Requires us to tolerate differences of belief and opinion.

Rational: In all matters, it urges use of human reason and knowledge. Blind following is condemned and independence of thought is granted.

Inspiring: Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a Living God, Who answers prayers and speaks to His righteous servants even today as in the past.

Non-sectarian: Every person professing Islam by the words *La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur rasul-ullah* (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be expelled from Islam by anyone.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad taught that *no* prophet, old or new, is to arise after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. However, *Mujaddids* will be raised by God to revive and rekindle the light of Islam.

About ourselves

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has branches in many countries including:

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| U.S.A. | Australia |
| U.K. | Canada |
| Holland | Fiji |
| Indonesia | Germany |
| Suriname | India |
| Trinidad | South Africa |
| Guyana | |

Achievements:

The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, including French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic. The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world, including the first ever in Western Europe.

History:

1889: *Hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the Ahmadiyya Movement.

1901: Movement given name *Ahmadiyya* after Holy Prophet Muhammad's other famous name *Ahmad*.

1905: *Hazrat* Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.

1908: Death of *Hazrat* Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.

1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam founded at Lahore as continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.

1951: Death of Maulana Muhammad Ali after fifty years of glorious service to the cause of Islam. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (d. 1981) becomes Head.

1981–1996: Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent medical doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution.

1996–2002: Prof. Dr Asghar Hameed, a distinguished retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, served as Head.

2002: Prof. Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha elected Head.

Truth Unveiled

*A response to the book
'Unveiling Islam' by
Ergun Mehmet Caner and
Emir Fethi Caner*

compiled by directors of the AAIIIL Inc., USA

[A book under the title 'Truth Unveiled' is being compiled by the Board members of the AAIIIL Inc. U.S.A. Its preface was published in our last issue. Here is reproduced the reply to the Introduction of 'Unveiling Islam'.]

The hijackers and their supporters responsible for the events of September 11, 2001 were clearly misguided. The Holy Quran condemns both suicide and murder:

“And kill not *anfusa-kum* (i.e., your people or yourselves). Surely Allah is ever merciful to you” (4: 29).

The Arabic word *anfusa-kum* means your people or yourselves. In the first case, the significance is that life must be protected; in the second case, it is an injunction against suicide, which according to the law of Islam is a grave sin.

Taking advantage of the prevailing negativism against Islam, Christian evangelistic groups have rallied to portray Islam as a violent and evil religion and the Holy Prophet Muhammad as a false prophet. The book *Unveiling Islam* by Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner (Kregel Publications) clearly illustrates this mindset.

Richard Land, President the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, Southern Baptist Convention, in his foreword on *Unveiling Islam*, states:

“In the aftermath of the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Christians have searched for a trustworthy guide to the unfamiliar and suddenly threatening world of Islam. God, in His gracious providence, has provided precisely such an invaluable guide.”

He goes on to state:

“Ergun and Emir (the authors) are trophies of God’s grace — once devout followers of

Allah, now of Jesus of Nazareth ... *Unveiling Islam* is exactly what its subtitle describes; it is an insider’s look at Muslim life and beliefs.”

With this testimonial the authors don the garb of being authorities on the religion of Islam. They further support this position by their statement on page 17:

“We did our *rakats* (daily prayers); we celebrated Ramadan. We read the Quran and hadith regularly. In every way, we were devout, serious Muslims.”

The cat is, however, soon let out of the bag. Commenting on their strained relation with their father, on page 19 they state:

“Acar (the authors’ deceased father) disowned his sons, although it could have been worse: according to hadith (9.57), all three of us brothers should have been killed.”

Our response

If the authors of *Unveiling Islam* had carefully studied the Holy Quran, they would not have made this comment based on one hadith. We will discuss the whole question of apostasy in detail and will also discuss this particular hadith report.

Apostasy in the Quran

The Holy Quran, which is the paramount authority of Islamic law, is quite clear on the question of religious freedom:

“There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256).

“Say: The truth is from your Lord; then whosoever wants to, let him believe; and whosoever wants to, let him disbelieve” (18:29).

“Wilt thou then force men against their will until they become believers? (10:99).

If a person outside Islam is not to be compelled to become a Muslim, why should a person who is a believer be compelled to stay in Islam? But a rejector of Islam whether from outside or from inside does render himself liable to Divine displeasure, because he rejects the truth after having seen it. Then he has to be punished to cure him of

his spiritual revolt against submission to His creator. But the Holy Quran is quite clear that this would be in the life hereafter only. Before we quote the Holy Quran on that point, we would like to quote a fair-minded non-Muslim European, Heffeming, who begins his article on *murtadd* (apostate) in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* with the remark:

“In the Kuran the apostate is threatened with punishment in the next world only.”

Let us quote the Quran itself:

“How should Allah guide a people who disbelieved after their believing and (after) they had borne witness (i.e., after they had seen) that the Messenger was true, and clear arguments had come to them? And Allah guides not the unjust people. As for these, their reward is that on them is the curse of Allah, and of the angels, and of men, all together — Abiding therein. Their chastisement shall not be lightened, nor shall they be respited — Except those who repent after that and amend, for surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase in disbelief, their repentance is not accepted, and these are they who go astray” (3:86-90).

(Note: The persons spoken of in 3:90, the last verse above, are the same as those spoken of in 3:86, the first verse above. They believed in the previous prophets but rejected the Prophet Muhammad. Their repentance is not accepted, because they show no signs of real repentance. They continued to oppose, and tried to annihilate, the Truth.)

These verses speak of an apostate even getting the latitude to increase in his disbelief, and no immediate punishment is mentioned except the curse of Allah and the angels, etc., which means his being thrown away from Divine pleasure and from virtue, but there will be punishment in the Hereafter to curb the animal within him which revolted and persisted in revolt against his Creator. This is made clear in the following verses:

“Those who believe, then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allah will never forgive them nor guide them on the (right) way” (4:137).

“He who disbelieves in Allah after having believed — not he who is compelled while

his heart is at rest on account of faith, but he who opens his breast for disbelief — on these is the wrath of Allah, and they shall have a grievous punishment” (16:106).

“And they (the enemies) will not cease fighting with you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can. And whoever of you turns back from his religion, then he dies while an unbeliever, these it is whose works go for nothing in this world and the Hereafter, and they are the inmates of fire: therein they will abide” (2:217).

Here the apostate is clearly spoken of as dying his natural death. That the killing of the apostate was not in vogue in Madinah while the Holy Prophet was the ruler of the place is clear from the following verse:

“And a party of the People of the Book say: Express belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe, in the first part of the day, and disbelieve at the end of it” (3:72).

How could people living under a Muslim government conceive of such a plan to discredit the religion of the rulers if apostasy was punishable with death?

Hadith on apostasy

A careful study of Hadith leads to the conclusion that apostasy was not punishable unless combined with other circumstances which called for punishment of offenders. *Bukhari*, who is undoubtedly the most careful of all collectors of hadith, is explicit on the point. He has two “books” dealing with apostates, one of which is called *Kitab al-muharibin min ahl-kufr wa-l-ridda*, or “the Book of those who fight (against the Muslims), from among the unbelievers and the apostates,” and the other is called *Kitab istitabat al-mu’anidin wa-l-murtaddin wa qitali-him*, or “the Book of calling to repentance of the enemies and the apostates and fighting with them.” Both these headings speak for themselves. The heading of the first book clearly shows that only such apostates are dealt with in it as fight against the Muslims, and the second associates the apostates with the enemies of Islam. That is really the crux of the whole question, and it is due to a misunderstanding on this point that a doctrine was formulated which is quite contrary to the plain teachings of the Quran. At a time when war was in progress between the Muslims and the unbelievers, it often happened that a person

who apostatized went over to the enemy and joined hands with him in fighting against the Muslims. He was treated as an enemy, not because he had changed his religion but because he changed sides. Even then there were tribes that were not at war with the Muslims and, if an apostate went over to them, he was not touched. Such people are expressly spoken of in the Quran:

“Except those who join a people between whom and you there is an alliance, or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you, or fighting their own people; and if Allah had pleased He would have given them power over you so that they would have fought you; so if they withdraw from you, and fight you not, and offer you peace, then Allah has not given you a way against them” (4:90).

The only case of the punishment of apostates, mentioned in trustworthy Hadith reports, is that of a party of the tribe of ‘Ukul, who accepted Islam and came to Madinah. They found that the climate of the town did not agree with them, and the Holy Prophet sent them to a place outside Madinah where the state milk-camels were kept, so that they might live in open air and drink of milk. They got well and then killed the keepers of the camels and drove away the animals. This being brought to the knowledge of the Holy Prophet, a party was sent in pursuit of them and they were put to death (Bukhari, 56:152). The report is clear on the point that they were put to death, not because of their apostasy but because they had killed the keepers of the camels.

Much stress is laid on a hadith which says:

“Whoever changes his religion, kill him” (Bukhari, 89: 2).

This is the same hadith referred to by the authors of *Unveiling Islam* from the translation of *Bukhari* by Muhsin Khan:

“Narrated Ikrima: Some Zanadiqa (atheists) were brought to Ali and he burnt them. The news of this event reached Ibn Abbas who said, If I had been in his place, I would not have burnt them, as Allah’s Apostle forbade it, saying, ‘Do not punish anybody with Allah’s punishment (fire)’. I would have killed them according to the statement of Allah’s Apostle: ‘Whoever changed his *Islamic* religion (*dina-hu*) then kill him’.”

(Muhsin Khan has translated *dina-hu* as his *Islamic* religion but the Arabic text says only *his* religion.)

In view of what *Bukhari* itself has indicated by describing apostates as fighters or by associating their name with the name of enemies of Islam, it is clear that this refers only to those apostates who join hands with the enemies of Islam and fight with Muslims. It is only by placing this limitation on the meaning of the hadith that it can be reconciled with other hadith reports or with the principles laid down in the Quran. In fact, its words are so comprehensive that they include every change of faith, from one religion to any other whatsoever; thus even a non-Muslim who becomes a Muslim, or a Jew who becomes a Christian, must be killed. Evidently, such a statement cannot be ascribed to the Holy Prophet. So the hadith cannot be accepted, without placing a limitation upon its meaning. This example also illustrates how translation of one word erroneously, in this case *dina-hu*, translated as his *Islamic* religion, can add on a whole new meaning to a statement, which can then be used for anti-Islamic propaganda.

An instance of a simple change of religion is also contained in *Bukhari*:

“An Arab of the desert came to the Prophet and accepted Islam at his hand; then fever overtook him while he was still in Madinah; so he came to the Prophet and said, Give me back my pledge; and the Prophet refused; then he went away” (Bukhari, 94: 47).

This hadith shows that the man first accepted Islam, and the next day on getting fever he thought that it was due to his becoming a Muslim, and so he came and threw back the pledge. This was a clear case of apostasy, yet it is nowhere related that anyone killed him. On the other hand, the hadith says that he went away unharmed.

Another example of a simple change of religion is that of a Christian who became a Muslim and then apostatized and went back to Christianity, and yet he was not put to death:

“Anas says, there was a Christian who became a Muslim and read the *Baqarah* and *Al Imran* (2nd and 3rd chapters of the Quran), and he used to write (the Quran) for the Prophet. He then went over to Christianity again, and he used to say, Muhammad does not know anything except

what I wrote for him. Then Allah caused him to die and they buried him” (Bukhari, 61:25).

The report then goes on to say how his body was thrown out of the earth. This was evidently at Madinah after the revelation of the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Quran, when a Muslim state was well-established, and yet the man who apostatized was not even molested, though he spoke of the Prophet in extremely derogatory terms and gave him out to be an impostor who knew nothing except what he (the apostate) wrote for him.

Linking politics with Islam

In their effort to link the actions of the 9/11 terrorists with the teachings of Islam, the authors of *Unveiling Islam* state in the introduction on page 23:

“Considering the fate of one of the willing martyrs of that operation Bin Laden quotes the Hadith: ‘I was ordered to fight the people until they say there is no god but Allah, and his prophet is Muhammad.’ ”

After quoting more excerpts from the tape they conclude with the statement:

“For those not familiar with the Quran and Hadith, the tape was a shock. For those of us who know these foundations of Muslim faith, it was sad validation.”

Our response

Let us look at the original hadith which has only been partially and incorrectly quoted by the authors of *Unveiling Islam*:

“Narrated Ibn Umar: Allah’s Apostle said: I have been commanded that I should fight these people until they bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah’s Apostle, and keep up prayer and pay zakat (obligatory charity). When they do this, their blood and their property shall be safe with me except as Islam requires, and their reckoning is with Allah.” (Bukhari, 2:16. Vol. 1, Book 2, No. 24 of Muhsin Khan).

The hadith begins with the words, *I have been commanded* (or ordered), and the command to fight is contained in the Holy Quran in the following words:

“And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you and do not exceed this limit” (2:190).

Muslims, therefore, could not resort to fighting unless an enemy was the first to assume hostilities. What the hadith means is that fighting begun under these conditions is to cease when the enemy people accept Islam. Bukhari himself hints at this when he quotes the hadith under heading:

“But if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, then leave their way free,” i.e., cease fighting with them.

It is quite apparent that neither Bin Laden nor the authors have understood the hadith or have the knowledge of the Holy Quran they purport to have. One is guided by his political ambition, the other by his evangelical motives. Both are misrepresenting Islam.

In a similar attempt to link the current political situation in Palestine with the teachings of Islam, the authors quote President Yasser Arafat as follows:

“ ‘We will defend the Holy Land with our blood and with our spirit. We do not only wear uniforms; we are all military. We are all martyrs in paradise.’ At this point, as reported by the *World Tribune*, the crowd began to chant that millions of Palestinians were prepared to march as martyrs to Jerusalem. These chilling words represent a viewpoint that is more prevalent than most non-Muslims are willing to believe. In the second *surah*, or chapter, of the Quran (*Al-Baqarah*), two verses stand in mark contrast to one another. First, Allah encourages the Muslims to fight them until there is no persecution and the religion is Allah’s (2:193). But then Allah tells Muhammad not to impose Islam by force because there is no compulsion in religion (2:256).”

Our response

In order to convince the reader that Islam confuses its followers and that such political statements are rooted in the Holy Quran, the learned missionaries once more demonstrate their knowledge of the Holy Quran by pointing out, in their view, a marked discrepancy in two verses of the Holy Quran, which they quote. The first verse, which they conveniently quote only in part, is as follows:

“And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is only for Allah. *But if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.* (2:193).

I have *italicized* the last part of the verse to draw attention of the reader to the author’s intentional omission of this portion in order to then conveniently misinterpret it.

When persecution ceases, and men are not forced to accept or renounce a religion, being at liberty to profess any religion of the truth of which they are convinced, then there should be no more fighting. The words that follow (the part omitted) make the sense quite clear i.e., *if they desist from persecution*, the Muslims are at once to stop fighting and hostilities are not to be continued against any except the aggressors.

A comparison with 22:40 will show that this is the correct explanation. There the object of the Muslim fighting is plainly set forth in the following words:

“And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered, would have been pulled down”.

This shows clearly that the Muslims fought not only in defense of mosques, but also in that of churches and synagogues, and even of the cloisters of monks. The same object is stated here in the words *religion is only for Allah*, so that there is no persecution on the score of religion, and everyone is at liberty to hold any belief which he or she likes. The verse in fact lays down the broad principles of religious freedom. This is then complemented by the second verse the authors quote, “There is no compulsion in religion.” (2:256).

If we interpret these words as meaning that fighting is to continue until all people accept Islam, all those verses in which agreements with the enemy and desisting from fighting are spoken of become meaningless. Such an interpretation is belied not only by the Holy Quran, but by history itself, for many a time did the Holy Prophet make peace with the unbelievers.

The authors, to their credit, are quite clear about their intent to show this apparent dichotomy in the Quranic teachings. They are hoping that by doing so

they will plant the seed of doubt in the mind of the impressionable Muslim or Christian reader turned off by the horror of 9/11, and in their words they hope thus that:

May our churches be filled with a bold and gracious witness to the returning Christ, “which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15, KJV).

Our response

We certainly believe that:

“What they have wrought is only the trick of an enchanter, and the enchanter succeeds not wheresoever he comes from” (20:69).

We shall now proceed with our firm belief in this Divine promise and further unravel this deception. ■

Supportive messages from Americans in aftermath of September 11 tragedy

On the second anniversary of this tragedy we recall here the supportive e-mails we received at our website www.muslim.org from Americans in the days immediately following September 11, 2001.

“Hello!

I am not a Muslim, but wish to offer my support to your organization in this time of stress, and sorrow at the bigotry shown to Arab-Americans in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in NYC and DC. I appreciate the sentiments on your home page and recognize that terrorism is not part of Islam.

I tried to use the URL for ‘contact us’ and ‘webmaster’ but received the ‘Sorry--cannot be found’ message on both. I just wish to register my support and sorrow.

Thank you for passing on this message to whomever it will help.

Mary Beth Lundgren

Cape Coral FL”.

Editor's Note: Due to some of the angry, anti-Muslim reaction to the tragedy in its immediate aftermath, we had removed the contact information from our website for a few days; hence this writer's experience of not finding our contact page.

“I have felt the need to email you in an attempt to fortify your knowledge that not everyone harbours ill feelings towards Muslims. Personally, of my friends and family in Canada and the USA, I know of no one who does.

I am well aware that many of you also lost family, friends and loved ones in the attacks of Sept 11th and I mourn for you and share your prayers for all the victims and their loved ones and all the survivors. It is an event that will affect us all for a long time to come.

I spent much time this morning trying to find a site on the internet and email address I felt comfortable in using. Although I had some knowledge of Islam and what it meant to be Muslim I learned much more in my reading today. Admittedly though, some of what I read (not necessarily on your site) caused me to pause and think again about sending this email. My final decision was to express my heart, but to also ask a few questions in the hopes you might allay some of my new found concerns.

I think I have visited in excess of 30 websites this morning, all supposedly representing Islam and Muslims. Please forgive me but I cannot remember the organisations or their URLs. Some had discussion forums, some just information pages, and I do not remember what I read where.

I guess the one 'impression' I would like clarification on is the regard in which Osama Bin Laden is held within the Muslim community. I do not mean if you think he is behind the Sept 11th attacks. In my mind there has not been the significant proof presented in order to determine if he is actually involved or not. But after reading many posts in forums and information pages, I have developed the 'impression' that Bin Laden is being acknowledged as a 'saint' and is vying for 'prophet' status. Other sites seem to indicate that even if he is behind the attacks that he was fully justified. Also if any of the persons who died enacting the attacks are

Muslim they too are elevated to the level of saint or martyr (I read both designations being applied).

I realize I must learn more about Islam and Muslims to fully comprehend and understand the religion and way of life but I found much of what I have read this morning, that has been posted on various Muslim websites since Sept 11th, more than somewhat troubling. I would appreciate an enlightenment you can provide.

May we each find the healing we need to make our tomorrows better than our todays.

Take care

Peter Horan”.

“I am not sure how to write this, since you do not know me. I believe that you and I worship the same God, though I am Christian and you are Muslim.

I just want you to know that most Christians know very well that the atrocity of 9/11 does not represent Islam. I have heard that many Americans are writing Muslim sites and saying hateful things. In case this is true, I have taken it on myself to write as many Muslim sites as I can find and say Peace be unto you. Most of the Muslims that I know are good and honorable people and have taught my family about generosity and unflinching honesty.

I pray that the God and Father of us all will bless you and keep you from harm, accident, and evil, and I pledge to you that I will stand up to any Americans that I see that slander your faith and people.

Please feel free to forward my words (but not my email address!) to anyone else that you please.

Peace,

Peter Nuttall”.

“I write on behalf of my eighteen-year-old friends and myself, to share a message of love with you. Each and every one of you is as much an American as anyone else living here, and have just as much right as anyone else to live here. The terrorists must be found and brought to justice, but no one deserves to be condemned by a fellow citizen of these United

States of America simply because they are the same ethnicity or religion as the suspected terrorists. If this were the case, all Americans would deserve to be condemned because of the American who bombed the federal building in Oklahoma City. Our prayers are for your safety and equality, and we fully support you all. God bless America, and God bless the people of America, including everyone of every ethnicity and religion. We are “one nation under God, indivisible”.

Much love and prayers from Los Angeles, California.

P.S. I hope you will share this with anyone who seems to be afraid or losing faith. We are not all terrible monsters waiting to condemn those different from us.

Dan Cether ”.

“I know there’s a lot of anti-Muslim sentiment floating around America right now, but I just wanted to let you all know that not every non-Muslim thinks that way. I’m about as much of a good-ol’ Texan boy as they come, and it just gets my ire any time I hear my colleagues spoutin’ off and denigrating Muslims. I never let such talk go unchallenged.

Anyway, just wanted to let you all know you’ve got at least one Texan (and the heart of Texas — Austin — for that matter) down here watching your back.

You all hang in there!

Dion Alaniz ”.

Immediately after September 11, 2001, the requests for the pack of free literature that we offer, by means of a form that visitors can fill in on our website, more than doubled per day, for requests coming from within the U.S.A. from non-Muslims. Some of those making the request also posted encouraging comments with their requests. Some of these are quoted below.

1. My deepest sympathy to all Muslims who are being treated unfairly. My prayers are with you!!!

2. I want to know more about your religion so that I can better understand this diverse world we live in. I also want facts to tell people who want to persecute you.
3. My prayers are for all people of all Faiths.
4. I am a many generation American and my religion is Judaism. I want to refresh my education regarding Islam so that I can give the correct information when I hear false, bigoted statements.
5. All people are one family under God. As an American and a Christian, I want to learn more about the Muslim religion. I am appalled at the reaction of some Americans who hold all Muslims responsible for the deeds of a few fanatics.
6. I am interested in Islam. I feel a calling to learn and know more about the religion. I would really feel blessed to have the free packet sent to me.
7. I only have an academic interest in this religion. I hope that this literature gives as unbiased a description of Islam as possible. I would like to understand how such a religion can be so twisted by religious zealots.
8. Extremely interested in the Islamic faith.

Ahmadiyya view of miracles in the Quran

During August 2003 an e-mail was received at our website, with the subject:

Give honour to the Quran

which is as below:

Salam,

The major problem I found with the Ahmadiyya movement is that they deny the miracles in the Quran by explaining them off scientifically, this is quite stupid, I do wonder who they are trying to please!

That the movement has tried in bringing people to Islam is not in doubt, in fact the first Quran I

picked up was the one translated by the Ahmadis to English which led me to Islam, but I rejected your effort at demeaning the Quran by explaining off scientifically the miracles of the almighty Allah therein.

You people should do honour to the Quran, you can still repent it is clear now that the Quran throws light for science and not vice-versa as you people are doing.

Abdur-Rashid

To this I sent the following reply:

Dear sir

assalamu alaikum

Thank you for writing to us. I am sure you have misunderstood our position regarding the Holy Quran. We in fact regard the Quran itself as a miracle, containing knowledge that no human being could have known, but only Allah could know.

What you might be referring to are the baseless stories added by many commentators of the Quran; one example is that they say (in explanation of 34:14) that when Solomon died, Allah kept his body in the same upright posture, supported by his royal rod, for one year so that the Jinn (who were working under his charge) would not know that he had died, but a worm of the earth ate away inside his rod, till the rod became hollow and Solomon's body fell on the ground. There are numerous other examples like this. These are just people's own additions to the original words in the Quran. We don't believe in these because Allah or the Holy Prophet never mention them, but only commentators of the Quran do.

Here is what we believe. We believe that an angel called Jibreel, which we believe has a real existence, brought revelation to the Holy Prophet, which is something no one can explain scientifically, yet you say that we deny miracles!

We believe that there is a Being called Allah Who created the world, Who cannot be seen, but is everywhere. We believe that there is a soul inside human bodies, which after death continues to exist and then receives reward or punishment, and yet you say we deny miracles. None of this can be established scientifically, and is not recognised by

science as true, but we believe in it as our basic beliefs and proclaim it openly. And you say we deny miracles.

I am attaching with this e-mail an article about how we honour the Quran as a miracle. I hope you will read it and understand our position.

Wassalam

Zahid Aziz

In reply he asked me the following questions:

Salam,

Thanks for your reply.

I want you to further let me know the following:

- 1) What is your view about the ant that spoke to Solomon
- 2) The parting of the red sea by Moses
- 3) The fire Allah says should be a means of coolness for Abraham.

Hoping to read from you.

Thanks.

Abdur-Rashid

The following was my reply to this:

I am sorry for the length of my reply but it was also necessary to make some general points while answering your specific questions.

Upon completing one of his translations of the Holy Quran, Maulana Muhammad Ali said in a speech:

“... today, after the completion of this task, if on the one hand I am happy because of Allah's blessings bestowed upon me in the form of the service to the Quran, at the same time I am afraid in case any errors I may have made, due to human fallibility or because of lacking knowledge, may cause others to stumble. Every single word of the Quran is a guiding light and a conclusive argument for every Muslim. In my translation and commentary I have tried, according to the best of my understanding,

to subject my views to the word of God, the hadith of the Holy Prophet, and rules of the Arabic language. But still it is my interpretation and not binding upon anyone else unless it conforms with the word of God and the authentic hadith reports of the Messenger of Allah. My attempt is only to make people study the knowledge contained in the Quran and to turn their minds to its service.”

We do not consider our interpretations to be the last and final word. Someone could indeed come up with a better interpretation of a verse, and we would have to accept it.

Marmaduke Pickthall was an orthodox Muslim. When he reviewed Maulana Muhammad Ali’s book *The Religion of Islam* in 1936 (which covers metaphysical subjects, including miracles), he after writing in his review that:

“Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore. ... Such a book is greatly needed at the present day when in many Muslim countries we see persons eager for the reformation and revival of Islam making mistakes through lack of just this knowledge”

then writes, approvingly, that certain chapters in this book should be studied:

“to observe the difference between the rational views of a devout traditionist and the views of so-called rationalists”.

Our views are the “rational views of devout traditionists”, not of “rationalists”, as Pickthall has so aptly put it. Rationalists are those Muslims who place the laws of nature and science above the Quran. You, brother Abdur Rashid, have considered us to be rationalists. But Ahmadis are, as Pickthall says, “devout traditionists”, that is, those who respect and honour the traditional sources of Islam, but they apply rational thinking in understanding those sources.

Now I answer your three questions.

1. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, whose English translation is the most widely accepted translation among Muslims, writes in his footnote on the verse about Solomon and the ant:

“This verse and the next, read together, suggest the symbolical meaning as predominant.” (Note 3258 on 27:18)

He considers the ant as representing “the humblest people in the world”, and writes that Solomon in his prayer means that “he may not even unwittingly tread on humble beings in his preoccupations with the great things of the world” (Note 3259).

So even Yusuf Ali does not accept it as necessarily a literal miracle.

We Ahmadis give this incident various interpretations. The miracle is supposed to be that Solomon could understand what the ant said (to other ants). But this implies that ants have an understanding of human affairs and communicate among themselves about those matters (as the ant here says: “O ants, go into your houses, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you” — 27:18). Solomon being able to understand the ant could be a miracle, but how did that ant and all the other ants addressed by it have the capacity of knowing who Solomon was? If those ants had this level of understanding then ants throughout history, even now, would have the same capacity of knowledge. There is no authority in the Quran for believing that such creatures have human-like knowledge of current affairs (that Solomon is the king who is coming with his army).

So one of our Ahmadi views is that it is the action of the ants on the approach of Solomon that is referred to here, not anything that was said. Solomon was the ruler of a great, highly organized state with its disciplined and trained armed forces. Ants are a highly organized, socially cohesive community, and those who study their behaviour are absolutely amazed that an insect without intelligence can exhibit such communal behaviour. This is what was shown to Solomon, that no matter how advanced and organised a human state may be, of which its people are proud, yet lowly creatures like ants have been naturally gifted with that kind of civilization, in fact a more perfect one, by Allah. Ants show the social organisation taught to them through instinct by Allah. Human beings devise their own ways of organising society. But Allah’s work is superior to human efforts, and human beings can learn from Allah’s work.

So this is what Ahmadis believe: that Allah’s work is perfect and superior, and human beings can learn a lesson from it. Even today human beings can

go on studying creatures like ants, and learn lessons from them about community-minded and public-spirited behaviour.

Another Ahmadi interpretation is, of course, what is given by Maulana Muhammad Ali, that the word *naml* here is the name of a tribe or people, and does not refer to an ant, and no ants are involved in this incident.

2. Regarding both Abraham and Moses, we believe that Allah saves his prophets and righteous ones from the plans and designs of their opponents. To the world it appears that the opponents are about to succeed in destroying the believers, but Allah saves them when there is absolutely no chance (by human reckoning) that they would be saved. The way in which Allah saves them may even be by a common, everyday occurrence. Our Holy Prophet Muhammad while hiding in the cave of Thaur was saved because of a spider weaving its web across the entrance of the cave, an everyday occurrence but made miraculous because of when and where it happened.

Regarding Abraham and the fire (21:68-71), Yusuf Ali again is unsure whether it was a real, burning fire or a symbolic one. He writes:

“Through all the fire of persecution and hatred Abraham remained unhurt. The fire became cool, and a means of safety for Abraham.” (footnote 2724, on the word ‘fire’ in verse: “We said: O fire ...”)

“Perhaps some years passed before the incident of his being thrown into the Fire took place, or the incident may only be allegorical.” (footnote 2725)

Our interpretation is that the Quran does not say that Abraham was actually cast into the fire, only that his opponents planned to put him into fire and Allah saved him by cooling the fire and making it safe for him. How that happened we don’t know, and various stories about it have been discredited by some classical commentators themselves. Perhaps he escaped from being put in it by migration, as may be deduced from the verse 21:71, just as the Holy Prophet Muhammad escaped being murdered by the Quraish by migration. Perhaps a storm or rain put out the fire. The miracle is that his opponents, despite all their resources, could not kill him. As Yusuf Ali writes, the “fire” might even mean the fire

of opposition to which Abraham was subjected, and may only be symbolic, not literal.

I have quoted Yusuf Ali a few times to show that there are other Muslim scholars also, who are orthodox, who allow that these miracles may not be physical occurrences, as commonly thought.

3. Similar is the case of Moses going across the water. Whether that water was the Red Sea or the Nile or some other stretch of water no one knows. What we know is that a most powerful monarch with a huge army could not stop Moses and his followers from crossing this water, and themselves drowned in it. The idea that Moses parted the water by hitting the ground with his staff is not borne out by the words of the Holy Quran. Since Allah informed Moses of when to travel and which way to go, it is possible that Allah made them reach the water at a time when it would start receding (maybe due to tides or wind). Only Allah could know the time and place when there would be a dry path, which would close shortly afterwards.

Even today these miracles happen in the sense that, not necessarily an individual, but the cause of truth is always rescued by Allah from destruction by its opponents.

Finally, I will give an example of how not interpreting an event as a miracle makes it more of a miracle of the Quran. In 19:24-25 it is related that when Mary was suffering the pains of childbirth a voice told her to shake the trunk of the palm-tree under which she was resting and “it will drop on you fresh ripe dates”. Many Muslims consider it a miracle that dates on that tree ripened immediately for Mary, out of season. But the Quran does not say that the dates ripened out of season. Now if we simply consider that dates were ripe on the tree because it was the season for ripe dates, then this discloses that Jesus was born in July or August. This disclosure is indeed a miracle. In the last 100 or 150 years researchers, both Christian and others, have been trying to determine the month of the birth of Jesus, especially after they concluded that it could not have been any time in December or even winter. The Quran solved this for them. If we take the verse 19:25 as relating a natural occurrence, instead of miraculous ripening, then the mention of this occurrence becomes a miracle, because it solves the modern puzzle of which time of the year Jesus was born.

The very mission of our Movement is based on belief in miraculous help from God. At the time when Maulana Muhammad Ali published his English translation of the Quran, most people (Muslims or non-Muslims) considered that to try to propagate Islam to the West by these means was an utterly futile venture doomed to complete failure. But our Movement took up this mission because of its firm belief that, no matter how impossible it may look to human thinking, Allah has ordained that Islam will spread in the West and be accepted by the very people who today denigrate, abuse and detest it. The man whom you consider as denying miracles in his translation of the Quran, and as dishonouring the Quran, taught us that we should continue this work of propagation of Islam no matter how bleak the chances of success appear to be, because what appears impossible to man is possible for God. And that is exactly what a miracle is: that what appears impossible to man is possible for God.

I have done my best to explain our position in response to your comments. If we Ahmadis have dishonoured the Quran, as you assert, then I can only quote what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad announced in 1899:

“If we are not servants of Islam, then all our work is in vain and rejected, and shall be called to account by Allah.” ■

Continued from page 18:

adversity, he must follow the majority without giving any consideration to right and wrong, or to truth and falsehood, then Imam Husain would not have made Kerbala into a lasting memorial by sacrificing his blood, along with that of the youngsters and the old people who were with him, by the swords, spears and arrows of Yazid.

Note by Editor of *The Light*. Sectarian violence in Pakistan during the past ten years has escalated to the stage where even the majority Sunni Muslim population is facing violent attacks against its own leaders, members and mosques by its more extreme opponents. No longer can the Ahmadis be advised that they should join the majority in order to save their lives and property! ■

“Did Jesus die” (on the cross)?

A documentary on BBC television

Review and synopsis by the Editor

Did Jesus Die? was the title of a one hour long documentary broadcast on the digital television channel BBC4 on various days in August 2003. The name of the programme maker and producer is Richard Denton. The documentary was notable in that, towards the end, it dealt with the theory that Jesus, after surviving crucifixion, travelled to Kashmir and preached and died there, and his tomb is still to be found in Srinagar. This was presented as a plausible explanation, and not an outlandish and incredible fable.

It was stated at the outset of the documentary that as regards the traditional Christian belief that Jesus was crucified and died, and on the third day he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven:

“... throughout history people have responded differently to this story ... There have been heresies that suggest that Jesus was rescued from crucifixion and escaped to lead a secret life in southern France. And there have even been people convinced that Jesus survived and travelled to the mountain kingdoms of Kashmir, where he died at the age of 80. To try and solve this 2000 year old mystery, some of the most devout Christians and most expert scholars will suggest new ways of reading the Gospels, and ask the question: *Did Jesus die on the cross?*”

The first point put forward in the documentary was as follows:

“... many modern scholars and theologians, and even some who were training for the priesthood, now seem to doubt the historical accuracy of the Gospels. And even the literal truth of the idea that Jesus rose from the dead.”

Then a number of Christian professors of religion were shown expressing this view, one of whom,

John Dominic Crossan, Professor of Religious Studies, DePaul University, Chicago, said:

“I do not believe that gods and goddesses or anyone ever comes down from heaven and produces divine babies. I don’t believe it actually happens. Nor do I think that Jesus, in a literal sense, went up to heaven to take his place at the right hand of God.”

Later, some quotations from the Gospels about the events of the crucifixion were displayed, which, it was said, raise questions such as:

“Why did Jesus die so quickly? Why did Joseph and Nicodemus take so many herbs into the tomb?”

The discussion then moved to the so-called resurrection of Jesus, or his rising from the dead and post-crucifixion appearances. Father Jerome Murphy O’Connor, from L’Ecole Biblique, Jerusalem, said:

“The resurrection of Jesus, as far as all the Christian churches are concerned, is absolutely fundamental to the faith. There’s no question in my mind that it’s ever going to be changed.”

But the commentary of the documentary pointed out that the Gospel accounts of the resurrection “are full of inconsistencies and curious contradictions” so much so that:

“When it comes to the resurrection the Gospels literally lose the plot.”

Discussing this point, Elaine Pagels, Professor of Religion, Princeton University, said:

“The Gospels are written in the form of historical biography, so many people have assumed that they are exactly that. But that’s not actually what they are. They are written to demonstrate to people the importance and the meaning of Jesus and his teaching. That was what they were for and they do that very well. But they are not primarily interested in what actually happened back there.”

On this, the commentary to the programme said:

“So one is forced into the apparently blasphemous position of doubting the historical truth of the Gospels. ... These complications have led many modern

scholars to suggest that the Gospel stories were not written to tell of a miraculous event. But that they were written with an entirely different and political motive. ... Some scholars go so far as to suggest that the story of the resurrection was created not only to give authority to the church, but also as an extraordinary psychological tool to bring in new converts.”

Later, moving to the topic of “what might have happened to Jesus 2000 years ago”, James Talsor, Professor of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina, said:

“If you read the story of the Empty Tomb, and on Friday someone is killed and on Sunday they are gone from the tomb, and you ask the question, what might have happened? Either God raised him from the dead, which is the traditional Christian affirmation, or the body was carried away by someone. Body stolen. And those two possibilities are even talked about in the New Testament.”

The commentary then said:

“While the enemies of Christians immediately came up with conspiracy theories to explain the resurrection, the stories told by the Gospels are very down to earth. They describe how Jesus was alive again. He ate, he drank, and Thomas could touch his wounds. It’s therefore perhaps not surprising that *people who have always looked for natural explanations of miracles, have suggested that Jesus was alive because he didn’t die on the cross. ...* So is it possible that Jesus could somehow have survived? Certainly he was speedily executed. Perhaps too speedily.” (Italics ours for emphasis.)

Then James Talsor gave his opinion on this:

“When you look at the story of Jesus and how he was executed by the Romans, he’s on the cross for 6 hours. The assumption is that he’s dead. The Roman soldiers check the body. There were two others crucified according to the Gospel accounts. And they broke the legs of those to hasten their death because the Sabbath day was coming. When

they came to Jesus they said he's already dead. Presumably his body is motionless, he's quit breathing. They then prepare the body and put him in a tomb, and presumably it's sealed up and he's dead for all practical purposes. The question though is: *Is he clinically dead?*"

The commentary then gave the following explanation:

"The question of clinical death is certainly raised by the fact that the herbs Joseph of Arimathaea took into the tomb with the body of Jesus were aloes. These are healing, not embalming herbs. So could it be that Jesus was resuscitated in the tomb?... Whatever actually happened, the different Gospel stories do all agree that the disciples saw Jesus as if he were alive. But if Jesus survived, it doesn't necessarily mean that the resurrection was a hoax or a deliberate falsehood. At the end of the 19th Century the English writer, Samuel Butler, in his book on the resurrection, came up with the theory that if Jesus had collapsed in a shock induced coma on the cross, and then recovered, he and the disciples would actually have believed his recovery was a miraculous resurrection."

The documentary then moved on to discuss Jesus' life after crucifixion. James Talsor said:

"If Jesus was placed in the tomb and somehow was revived, he himself would certainly think that was an act of the grace of God. I came right to the bars of death and was brought back. But now there's a practical problem, it's a political problem actually. Romans basically do one thing to Messiahs: they crucify them."

The commentary then referred to the traditional Christian belief of the ascension of Jesus:

"It is clear that either through resurrection or resuscitation Jesus did survive the crucifixion. But he faces a problem. He's a condemned man. The Bible is said to solve this problem with a miracle called the Ascension. Jesus is taken bodily into heaven. But the original texts are even more confused when it comes to the Ascension

than they were about the resurrection. The Ascension does not actually appear in the original form of any of the Gospels. The Ascension references in Mark are among the verses which, as we have seen, were added 200 years after the events. There is one line in Luke which reads, 'and was carried up into heaven', but again this doesn't appear in all Bibles. It was in fact inserted simply because the Ascension is referred to in a later book of the Bible, the Acts of the Apostles."

One theory discussed was that as there is a tradition that some years after the crucifixion Mary Magdalene came to the Camargue region of the South of France, where she lived and died, it is possible that Jesus may have travelled with her, and may even have married her. The commentary said:

"The local legends [in the South of France] describe how Mary Magdalene came here with her brother Lazarus and her sister Martha, and a few companions. Perhaps then if the relationship between Jesus and Mary was as close as some sources suggest, one of those companions travelling incognito for fear of arrest by the Romans, was Jesus himself."

However, this theory was discounted a little later in the documentary, as the commentary said:

"But if Jesus did leave Palestine, France still doesn't seem a likely destination. It was after all a Roman colony. Some claim that if Jesus did survive the crucifixion his first priority would be to escape from the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire."

Peter Stanford, a religious historian, gave his opinion on this:

"If you just look at a map, Palestine is on the far eastern border of the Roman Empire. If you go west you're going right into the heart of Roman territory, where we have about 15 legions stationed around the world. If you go east you're crossing over into Parthia, and you are going towards Persia eventually *and India and Afghanistan*, that direction."

It was from this point on that the documentary took up the proposition that Jesus travelled to India after surviving death on the cross. It was not only to

escape Roman jurisdiction that Jesus would travel eastwards but as James Talsor explained:

“The people we know today as the Jews are only one tribe, the tribe of Judah. And we have in the Hebrew Bible the story of ten of the tribes being taken away to the east, to the northeast by the Assyrians in the 8th century B.C. They become known in history as the Lost Tribes, because nobody knows exactly what happened to them. We do though, we can speculate, that if Jesus thought of himself as the Messiah, he might have had in mind, I’ve got to go and present myself to these dispersed brothers and sisters, off wherever they might be.”

It was also explained in the commentary that:

“The journey east from Israel in the 1st century was surprisingly easy, by land or by sea on the silk route, or the spice route. It’s an accepted fact, for instance, that the disciple Thomas travelled to India, and founded a church there.”

Yet a further reason was then put forward as to why Jesus would be tempted to travel towards India: he had already been there earlier in his life, and lived there from the age of about 14 to 29, being trained as a priest by Buddhists. The documentary referred to the well-known story of the three wise men from the east who came to pay homage to Jesus at his birth:

“When a great Buddhist holy man, or Lama dies, wise men consult the stars and other omens and set off, often on extraordinarily long journeys, to find the infant who is the reincarnation of the Lama. When the child is old enough he is taken away from his parents and educated in the Buddhist faith. Could this be the origin of the story of the Three Wise Men? Could Jesus have been taken to India as a child and taught to be a priest?”

The Russian writer, Nikolai Notovitch, travelling in India in the 19th century, discovered an ancient manuscript in a Buddhist monastery in Tibet. In his book *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*, Notovitch translated this manuscript, and it tells of a divine child called Issa, born in the 1st century to a poor family in Israel. Issa came to India at the age of 14, where he learned

the laws of Buddhism before returning to Israel at the age of 29.

This idea would certainly explain the otherwise odd fact that from the age of 14 to 29 there is absolutely no record of Jesus’ existence in Palestine. Certainly the later teachings and miracles of Jesus have uncanny parallels with the teachings and miracles of the Buddha. Loving your enemies and the idea that the meek will inherit the earth have absolutely no tradition or precedent in Judaism. But they are entirely consistent with Buddhism.”

At this point the programme introduced the theory of Jesus travelling to Kashmir after the crucifixion. Scenes were shown from the streets of Srinagar, and the commentary stated:

“... the people here in Kashmir call their tribe, Bene Israel, and claim to be descendants of the lost tribes. And here there are stories that in the first century Issa, known locally as Yuz Asaf, meaning leader of the healed, returned to Kashmir in his 30s. Yuz Asaf’s ministry here can easily be seen as a continuation of the Jesus ministry.”

There then appeared in the documentary the veteran of our Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Kashmir, Abdul Aziz Kashmiri, to explain this more fully. He spoke in Urdu, with the following subtitles appearing in English on the screen:

“Kashmiri history books tell us that Yuz Asaf came from abroad. He was a prophet and a messenger. He came from Israel. He came to spread his teachings. He lived and died here. Yuz Asaf was Issa, he was Jesus. The meaning of Yuz Asaf is *The Healer*. Another meaning is *The Shepherd*, the one who teaches others. Our history books confirm that Issa was known as Yuz Asaf, here in Kashmir.”

The tomb of Yuz Asaf was then shown and the commentary said:

“Yuz Asaf continued to teach and to preach in Kashmir until he died around the year 80 A.D. He was buried in Srinagar. And this rather modest building is, they say, his tomb. The first shrine erected around the site was built in 112 A.D. In fact it is now a shared

grave site. In the 15th century the Islamic holy man, Syed Nazir-ud-Din was also buried here. Although both the gravestones under the cloth point to north/south in the Islamic tradition, the body of Yuz Asaf is buried beneath in a grave dug east/west in the Jewish tradition. But this is a sacred site, and short of exhumation there is no way of discovering whether the body buried here is that of a man who once survived crucifixion. However, next to the sarcophagus are the carved footprints of Yuz Asaf, and they do have marks or scars on them.”

Abdul Aziz Kashmiri explained:

“The footprints were carved as a sign, the scars are clearly visible, sustained as he was nailed to the cross. They show that this is the same person who came here from Israel. And that he lived and died here. You won’t find any footprints like these anywhere else in Kashmir.”

The commentary further added:

“The position of the scars, just behind the toes, do not match each other. But they would align if a single nail was driven through both feet with the left foot placed on top of the right.”

The implications of this being the tomb of Jesus were then stated in the commentary near the close of the documentary as follows:

“There are many who believe this to be the tomb of Jesus. If this is the tomb of Jesus, then he spent most of his life in the mountain kingdom of Kashmir. He did not die on the cross, there was no resurrection. He did not ascend into heaven, and he does not sit at the right hand of God. For many Christians this would be the end of Christianity as we know it. For some the original story would still have the power to comfort us as we approach death.” ■

An Ahmadi’s response to some friendly advice offered after September 7

An article from our Urdu sister organ ‘Paigham Sulh’

Compiled and translated by the Editor

In the history of the Ahmadiyya Movement the date that is infamous and notorious is ‘9/7’, the fateful day in 1974 when the Pakistan legislature amended the Constitution of the country to categorise all the Ahmadis as a non-Muslim minority, the day that changed subsequent Ahmadiyya history. Following that decision, many Muslims in Pakistan who knew that this was entirely wrong and unjust advised the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement to cut its association with Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in order to be included among Muslims. An article has been reprinted in a recent issue of our sister Urdu organ *Paigham Sulh* (May 2003, pages 12–13), written by Chaudry Shukarullah Khan Mansur, in which he has given his response to such advice. Some extracts from this are translated below.

The editor of the weekly *Asia* has advised the leaders of the Lahore Ahmadis as follows in its issue dated 15 September 1974:

“We suggest to the intellectuals and writers of the Lahore group that they should refrain from the fruitless efforts and useless activity of the advocacy of Mirza sahib. If they wish to remain among Muslims and to be counted in the *Umma* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad on the Day of Judgment, they should be content with just Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and not ruin themselves by following other persons.”

There is no doubt that this advice is based on sympathy and kindness towards us. However, the editor has left his submission incomplete. He must tell us what he has in mind when he writes: “Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad”. Our opponents themselves admit that:

“The Muslims of this time are of many kinds. I need not go into details. One can count the number of types of snakes, but the number of types of Muslims cannot even be counted.” (*Da‘wat Islam*, by Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi)

“The Islam that prevails in the Punjab is nine-tenths derived from *kufr*.” (*Khuddam-ud-Din*, Lahore, 16 August 1974)

Under these circumstances it was the duty of the editor of *Asia* to tell us what he is referring to by saying: “Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad”. Which Islam does he consider as the Islam of the Holy Prophet Muhammad?

Islam of Maulana Maudoodi or Islam of Ghulam Ahmad Pervez?

Islam of the Sunnis or of the Shiahs?

Islam of the Ahl-i Quran or of the Ahl-i Hadith?

Islam of the Debandis or of the Barelvīs?

Islam of the Sufis or of the literalist *Ulama*?

Islam of the spiritual leaders or of the rationalists and socialists?

According to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, as he writes in a poem:

“We are Muslim by the grace of God. The *Mustafa* is our Imam and leader.

That Book of God whose name is the Quran, the drink of our knowledge is from that cup.

To deviate even one step from this luminous Book, is in our view heresy, loss and destruction.”

We believe this to be “Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad”, and we rest upon that. We know not what the religious leaders of Pakistan call as Islam. We may not be Muslims according to their supposed Islam, but according to the Islam of the Holy Prophet Muhammad we shall *inshallah* “be counted in the *Umma* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad on the Day of Judgment”, as the editor has put it. In that venue, decisions will be made by God and His Messenger. No sign or trace will be found there of the authority of any human legislature or National Assembly or any religious leader of the masses and their propaganda.

Second advice

The friend of mine who asked me to comment on this editor’s advice to us also gave me some further advice from himself, which is as follows:

“What have you gained so far by associating yourselves with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, believing him to be sent by God, supporting him and calling on people to accept him? You faced constant failure, and you lost opportunities for worldly prosperity, progress and success. You needlessly earned the hostility and detestation of Muslims, became victims of killings and looting, and were targets of boycotts and hatred. It is not an act of wisdom to make yourself undergo this hardship and adversity.”

We have no hesitation in admitting that according to the attitude prevailing in the world of Islam today the advice of our friend is entirely right, beneficial and appropriate. By following his advice we would certainly be free of all the hardship and adversity that he has mentioned. However, he must also admit that we can only act upon his advice if the claim of Hazrat Mirza sahib to be from Allah is untrue. If he is true in his claim, as is our belief and conviction, then what we have to see is what is the teaching of Islam about facing the hardship and adversity that our friend mentions. The “Islam brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad” teaches that we bear all manner of trials and tribulation that come upon us when we accept and support the truth.

If our life was limited to the span of human life on earth, and the hereafter was merely a myth, then there would have been some weight in our friend’s advice. Unfortunately, this is not so. The life in this world is temporary and the one after death is eternal. Why should we ignore this teaching of “Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad”?

If the argument is that as a minority we must follow the majority, then this does not conform to the “Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad”. According to the Holy Quran, the majority of people have always followed falsehood and opposed the truth, and it is only a small minority that accepts truth and faith.

If it had been a Muslim’s duty that, in order to attain worldly success and to escape hardship and

Continued on page 13, column 2

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