

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

# ***The Light*** AND **ISLAMIC REVIEW**

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

**October – December 2004**

In the spirit of the above-cited verse, this periodical attempts to dispel misunderstandings about the religion of Islam and endeavors to facilitate inter-faith dialogue based on reason and rationality.

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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 founds 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.

## Eid-ul-Fitr Khutba, 2004

By Dr. Zahid Aziz

*[This article is a transcription of the Eid-ul-Fitr Khutba delivered by Dr. Zahid Aziz at Darus Salam, Wembley, London on November 14, 2004. It deals with three subject areas: 1) The Holy Quran's verdict on various approaches to determining the new moon; 2) Fasting teaching holding the Holy Quran as supreme guidance; and 3) Prayer must lead to practical nearness of man to Allah.]*

2:185: The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you and that you may give thanks.

2:186: And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way.

2:189: They ask thee of the new moons. Say: They are times appointed for men, and (for) the pilgrimage. And it is not righteousness that you enter the houses by their backs, but he is righteous who keeps his duty. And go into the houses by their doors; and keep your duty to Allah, that you may be successful.

### Entering houses by their doors, not by back

Immediately after the section in the Holy Quran dealing with fasting, this verse 2:189 occurs. Its opening seems appropriate because people ask about the new moon in connection with Ramadan, both at its beginning and its end. This verse says that the new moons are the means of indicating and fixing times. Then it says: "And it is not righteousness that you enter the houses by their backs ...". What has that to do with the new moon? It is said by commentators of the Quran that there was a custom among pre-Islamic Arabs that if one of them went out of his house for some important purpose and failed to achieve it, then when he returned back home he would not enter it through the door, but by going around the back. If these words are directed only against this superstitious custom, then they don't have any meaning for us today, as no Muslim is involved in this practice today. The classical commentators of the Quran also say that the words "go into the houses by their doors" mean in a more general sense that you should

adopt the proper method for doing something, and not a perverse, ridiculous and laughable method. Taking this as the meaning, we can certainly connect it to the subject of the new moon because the way that is being generally used for determining that the new moon has appeared is, indeed, like entering a house by ignoring its direct front door and jumping over its back wall, and moreover, believing that what you are doing constitutes righteousness. This verse instructs us to use the direct, obvious, straightforward method, not take a convoluted, tortuous route.

Let me explain briefly. A long time ago, the only way of determining that the moon was new, and thus that the new month had begun, was by someone sighting it with the human eye at sunset (which is when the new moon is about to set). But for many decades now, probably more than a century, published tables have been available showing the precise dates and times of the birth of the new moon, its setting times and position in the sky. There are even websites run by Muslim specialists in astronomy where these dates and times are published for the coming months and years.<sup>1</sup> Yet these specialists, and the Muslim organizations whom they advise, still wait to receive reports of the new moon being sighted by at least two Muslim eye-witnesses in order to announce the start of the new month. They claim that this is required by Islamic law; or in other words it is "righteousness" (to use the term in the above verse). They ask people to look out for the new moon and report whether they sight it or not. When the experts and their committees receive a report of a sighting, they compare it with the scientific figures about the position, shape and movement of the moon, and if the report conflicts with this data they reject the report as mistaken; they know it must be wrong.<sup>2</sup> They only accept a report of a sighting if the moon was seen in the position and the orientation which they *already* know from the scientific data it should have at the time of observation.

They now have the key to the door allowing them easy entry into the house. But they refuse to enter through that door, although they do open it and look inside! They prefer to enter by the old, inconvenient and uncertain way, claiming that it is righteousness to do it in this way, to go over a hurdle unnecessarily. They have the accurate information, they believe in its correctness, and yet they want it confirmed by a less reliable method of human observation. This is just as a few years ago we could only get news from someone in a distant country by letter, taking several days to arrive. Now we can speak to that person on the phone or communicate by e-mail. So when we receive news from him by these new means, do we demand that we still need to receive a letter from him sent through the postal service conveying the same news? If we study the injunctions of the Holy Quran, they lead us to the conclusion that all

inventions and developments which make things easier for mankind are blessings from God which we must use and accept, not reject and turn away from.

The result is that there is complete confusion just before Ramadan and just before Eid as to when it will be. It is not decided till the evening before. It causes inconvenience to people and brings Islam into ridicule. There is disagreement about the day among different groups, they hold it on different days, each group believing that it is following the way prescribed by the religion, and it is adhering to righteousness. But the Quran tells us in this verse that it is not righteousness to do something in an inverted, upside down way, departing from a straight and proper way.

It also tells us here what is righteousness: “he is righteous who keeps his duty”. The purpose of fasting, given in the very first verse about fasting, is to enable us to learn to keep our duty to God and our duty to fellow human beings. Those who learn this lesson from fasting are the righteous. It is not a condition of righteousness that you started and ended Ramadan on exactly the right date. As you may know, our Jamaat here in the U.K. uses a simple system based on the published data about the moon to fix these dates many years in advance. We don’t claim that this makes our fasting any more effective, any more accepted by God, than those who, in the traditional manner, don’t fix the date in advance. But we do say that we have made things more convenient for people, for making their arrangements, and we have shown how in Islam we can take advantage of scientific knowledge in organizing our religious activities. We are able to have this outlook because of the spiritual and intellectual heritage we have received from the great stalwarts of this Ahmadiyya Movement. They have shown how commonsense, reason and logic can be applied in the sphere of religion, while still treating religious teachings as supreme.

### **Brief note on what happened at this *Eid*?<sup>3</sup>**

It was announced on the Muslim moon sighting websites more than a month before this *Eid* that while the birth of the new moon is on Friday, 12th November at 14.27 GMT, the lunar crescent will not be visible on Friday evening at sunset anywhere in the world. It is declared on the [www.hilal-sighting.com](http://www.hilal-sighting.com) website in bold text, using the underlining and capital letters as shown below:

It is IMPOSSIBLE for the Hilal to be visible anywhere in the world on the evening of Fri 12 Nov 2004 CE. Hence, it is IMPOSSIBLE for EID-ul-FITR to be on Sat 13 Nov 2004 CE anywhere in the world.

The statement on [www.moonsighting.com](http://www.moonsighting.com) is as follows:

On November 12, the moon could not be seen anywhere on earth, with a possible exception of limited Polynesian Islands where telescope will be required to see.

However, on Friday evening in the U.K. the website of the Central London Mosque issued the following announcement:

#### *EID SPECIAL*

EID ON SATURDAY:

Moon sighting signals end of Ramadhan

The Central London Mosque follows Saudi Arabia, where Eid was held on Saturday. The following news item appeared in the Pakistani newspaper *The News International* and its Urdu sister paper *The Jang* on Saturday 13th November on their website:

#### **Eid in S Arabia, Gulf states today**

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia and some Gulf Arab states will celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr on Saturday, state media said on Friday.

Naturally, one wonders how the “impossible to sight” lunar crescent became visible in these countries. There exist only the following three possibilities:

The lunar crescent was actually sighted and therefore the calculations are wrong. If this is the case, then why aren’t the Muslim astronomy experts challenging the results of their scientific discipline and declaring that these have been proved to be in error by human observation?

The sighting was an error by the observer; something else was mistaken for the lunar crescent. In this case, it just shows the unreliability of the method of sighting by eye, and is a strong argument for using the method of calculation.

It was not an honest error but a deliberately false claim that the moon had been sighted. If this was the case, then it is highly deplorable that there are Muslims who, in collusion with their governments, are prepared to swear false oaths in a religious matter.

I leave this question for Muslim leaders in the fields of religion, science and national and community politics to answer, as to which of these three possibilities is true.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Fasting teaches that the Quran should be the supreme source of guidance**

I now refer to the beginning of the first verse that I quoted, which says: “The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion”. Ramadan was selected in Islam as the fasting month because it was the month in which the revelation of the Quran began upon the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alai-hi wa sallam*. The Holy Prophet, before being appointed to his mission, felt deep concern at the morally fallen state of humanity and used to pray to God to seek answers to the fundamental questions about life and solutions to the problems besetting the world. He also undertook very hard fasting in solitude for this purpose. God then granted him guidance in the form of revelation, later collected in book form as the Quran. Both Moses and Jesus had also undertaken hard fasting in solitude immediately prior to receiving their mission from God. Our fasting, much less severe than theirs, is also for a similar purpose on a more limited scale — that of becoming purified so as to be able to receive the understanding of the Word of God in our hearts. Then, while increasing our own understanding of the Word of God, and strengthening our connection with it, it is also our duty to teach its guidance to the world. As it is stated here, the Quran is a guidance to all human beings. The purpose of fasting is not achieved unless it leads us to make the Quran into a guidance for ourselves and then for the whole world.

It is in this respect that the Ahmadiyya Movement has rendered a unique service. When the Ahmadiyya Movement appeared, there was *no* concept among Muslims in general of:

- Learning anything from the Quran and acquiring knowledge from it,
- Applying the Quran to current problems and issues,
- Translating the Quran,
- Holding the Quran as the uppermost guide in life.

People did learn to recite the Arabic text of the Quran, and their religious scholars did know its language. But their understanding of its teachings was confined to the commentaries of the Quran written several centuries ago. They made little or no effort to understand or learn anything directly from the Quran and apply it to the situation of the current times. The commentaries of centuries ago, that they studied, related to the conditions of those times, and many things in them seemed rather strange, absurd and inapplicable now.

As to translating the Quran, a large number of Muslim ulama considered it disallowed by Islam to translate the Quran at all into any other language. Our Jamaat's English translation by Maulana Muhammad Ali appeared first in 1917. Twelve years later, when a famous British Muslim, Marmaduke Pickthall, also did an English translation, he took it to Egypt before publication to check it under the guidance of the Ulama there. But he found to his surprise that many of them declared it as unlawful in Islam to translate the Quran. Instead, they advised him to translate one

of the traditional commentaries. Pickthall has himself written an account of how he had to refute their objections, try to overcome their opposition and prove the urgent necessity of a translation.<sup>5</sup>

The Ahmadiyya Movement taught a hundred years ago that it was absolutely essential for scholars to translate the Quran into other languages and to write commentaries and explanations based on the Quran itself, instead of the classical commentaries, and apply the Quranic teachings to the questions and issues of the present age. The ordinary people too must study the Quran directly, with the help of these translations and explanations. But they must do this with an enquiring mind, and not blindly or regarding the explanations of the interpreters as being infallible like the word of God. It is their duty to apply their sense and reason to satisfy themselves that the meanings given by the scholars are confirmed by the Quran itself, and even to try to improve their interpretations further.

These days you see in the Muslim press and electronic media all over the world the meanings of the Quran being taught, *dars* and talks on the Quran and explanations of its passages being given, etc. Teaching the Quran in this way is a practice which was almost *unknown* among Muslims until long after the Ahmadiyya Movement instituted the teaching of the meanings of the Quran through books, lectures, *khutbas*, talks etc.

The last point I mentioned above is: Holding the Quran as the uppermost guide. Unfortunately, Muslim scholars and interpreters had been giving greater authority to books such as collections of Sayings of the Holy Prophet, works of what is called Islamic law, and even some books of unreliable history, than to the Holy Quran in determining both the spiritual teachings of Islam and its ordinances for this world's life. This led to the growth of certain concepts and views among Muslims which are opposed to the Holy Quran's directives and the actual practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Many of these wrong conceptions, regarded as Islamic, in fact cause damage to the dignity of Islam and create obstacles for its progress in the world. In this category are the wrong views on jihad, freedom of religion, rights of women, and the story of Jesus's life. The Ahmadiyya Movement cleared up these misconceptions by placing the Quran in the position of the highest authority and treating all other sources as secondary to it. If you read Maulana Muhammad Ali's commentaries on the Quran or his book *The Religion of Islam* you will see exactly how these wrong interpretations have been corrected by treating the Quran as the highest source of guidance.

So the Ahmadiyya Movement has fulfilled this key purpose of fasting — that we learn to hold the Holy Quran as the supreme guidance for our lives and we strive to make this

book reach all of humanity. If we are asked why *certain* of the Ahmadiyya views are different from the generally-held beliefs prevailing among Muslims, the reason is *only* that the Ahmadiyya Movement gives the highest place of all to the Holy Quran when deciding what our beliefs should be.

### Prayer and attaining closeness to God

The second verse I read out is the one in which Allah says:

“And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way”.

This shows that fasting should lead a person to realize that God is near him and, being near, answers his or her prayers. Therefore prayer is of the utmost importance in the month of fasting. No doubt all Muslims believe in the extra importance of prayer during the month of Ramadan. But two points should be noted here. Firstly, prayers had come to be regarded as a ritual to be performed by repeating set words and literally going through the motions. The involvement of the heart and mind was considered unnecessary. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement stressed that prayer is only meaningful if it comes from the depths of one’s heart and is not merely a ritual. Secondly, the Ahmadiyya Movement has stressed the importance of *tahajjud* prayers during Ramadan. Generally Muslims hold *taraweeh* prayers after *isha* prayers. But the Ahmadiyya Movement urged that, if possible, one should instead pray the solitary *tahajjud* prayers in the early hours. That is the prayer recommended by the Quran and spoken of very highly in it. It provides a unique opportunity for seeking closeness to God. Unless our fasting makes us realize practically that God is near, He listens to and answers our prayers, and that therefore we too should answer His call, it doesn’t become the true fasting as required by Islam.

Righteous and true Muslims in all ages have demonstrated proof to the world, through their lives, that God was near them and that He answered their prayers. In recent times, it is the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and then those who accepted him in his lifetime who showed to a very sceptical world that God is near and He hears and answers prayers. Their pure moral conduct and character was testimony that they felt that they were in God’s presence all the time. Their prayers were so effective that the seemingly impossible became possible through them. The power and efficacy of their prayers was widely recognised by other Muslims. It is impossible that we would be gathered here today, in this centre, doing the work of the propagation of Islam, if it were not for their prayers.

We must carry forward the mission they started, even though we cannot by any means reach their calibre of

scholarship, level of devotion, readiness to make sacrifices, and high standard of righteousness. The Holy Quran teaches that those who inherit faith from their spiritual forefathers can nonetheless preserve, safeguard and develop their heritage, even though they may not be anything like equal to them: “And those who believe and *whose offspring follow them in faith* — We unite with them their offspring and We shall deprive them of naught of their work” (52:21). There are people who inherit great monetary wealth from their forefathers, but themselves do not have the capability or knack of creating wealth from nothing as their forefathers did. They can **either** fail to value their inheritance, and let it deteriorate and go to waste, **or** they can make efforts to preserve it, maintain it and make it develop and grow by investment. The same applies to us in having received this inheritance of *gold mines of faith and knowledge* from the founding stalwarts of this Movement. Every generation can always progress, even if it lives in the shadow of the greatness of a previous one. ■

### REFERENCES:

- 1 See [www.moonsighting.com](http://www.moonsighting.com) and [www.hilal-sighting.com](http://www.hilal-sighting.com).
- 2 For an example of such a rejection at this *Eid* see [www.hilal-sighting.com](http://www.hilal-sighting.com), whose learned specialist Dr. Mohib Durrani rejected a reported sighting by a Muslim husband and wife in Illinois, U.S.A. on Friday 12 November on the following two grounds. The report stated that the ends of the observed crescent were pointing downwards towards the sun, which is the opposite of the way they should be. Also the moonset time that evening in that place was *before* the sunset time, so it was “impossible” (as Dr Durrani calls it) to have seen it.
- 3 I have added this section after *Eid* while finalising the published version of the oral *khutba*.
- 4 I should explain why the U.K. Jamaat predetermined the *Eid* date as Sunday 14th while the birth of the new moon was on Friday 12th at 14.27 (London time). In the unfortunate absence of a predetermination system agreed by Muslims generally, we have to resort to a system of my own devising. Our method requires that at the first sunset following the birth of the moon, the moonset time should be *after* sunset time or, if not, then the moon should be at least 18 hours old. This condition was not going to be met on Friday in London as moonset time was 15.57 and sunset time 16.14. On this basis we had announced our *Eid* date about a year in advance.
- 5 This account is given in Pickthall’s biography entitled *Loyal Enemy* by Anne Fremantle, published in London, 1938, from pages 408 to 420.

## Sources of “Christmas”

By Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din

*[This article consists of selected pages from the book ‘Sources of Christianity’ by Khwaja Kamal ud Din. In this book, the author examines the historical foundations from which common Christian beliefs and practices originated. The pages from this book selected for this article deals with several topics related to ‘Christmas’, including: the manner in which December 25th was chosen to be the birth date of Christ; the influence of mythical ‘virgin mothers’ on the story of Christ’s conception; and, the prevalence of ‘sun-God’s’ in pagan religions and its adoption into Christian theology in the form of the ‘son-God’ theory.]*

### Why December 25th?

Dean Farrar, in his *Life of Christ*, has very rightly remarked that there are no satisfactory proofs to locate the birth of Jesus on December 25th. The Bible is silent on the subject, though it makes mention of the shepherds being that night with their flocks in the fields of Bethlehem.<sup>i</sup> It makes it more difficult to accept December 25th as the real date of the Nativity, December being the height of the rainy season in Judea, when neither flocks nor shepherds could have been by night in the fields of Bethlehem. Usener says that the Feast of the Nativity was held originally on January 6th (the Epiphany), but in A.D. 353-4 the Pope Liberius altered it to December 25th, but there is no evidence of a Feast of the Nativity taking place at all before the fourth century A.D. It was not until A.D. 534 that Christmas Day and Epiphany were reckoned by the law-courts as “Dies Non.”<sup>2</sup>

The Greek Church, even today, does not observe Christmas on December 25th, but on January 7th. It was, however, not until the year A.D. 530 or thereabouts that a Scythian monk, Dionysius Exiguus, an abbot and astronomer, of Rome, was commissioned to fix the date and the year of the birth of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> He it was who assigned the day, and the date and the month now accepted in Christendom. The said monk does not give the data that authorized him to fix December 25th as the day of the Nativity, but the very date, within a day or two, is the date of the supposed birth of many of the sun-gods.

According to the Julian Calendar, ‘*this date is the date of the Nativity of the Sun.*’ Mithra, as I have said elsewhere, was born on the same date. Osiris, the Egyptian sun-god, according to Plutarch, was born on the 27th, and Horus, another sun-god, on the 28th of the same month, and Apollo as well on the same date, all these being various conceptions of the Sun-God in different countries where the worship of the sun was the popular creed, and the dates follow the Winter Solstice, when

the sun, after reaching the lowest declension, begins to ascend again, being appropriate for his birth.

### Following the stars

There are some other dates as well, in the Catholic Calendar, that give rise to the same presumption, that sky-scriptures, and not the sacred scriptures, are to be searched for their origin. Such are the Assumption of the Virgin; her Nativity, Annunciation and Purification, the birthday of John the Baptist, Candlemas and Lent. The Assumption of the Virgin—the Festival in honor of the miraculous ascent of Mary to heaven—occurs on August 15th, the date of the total disappearance of the Zodiacal sign Virgo into the rays of the Sun, as if taken away to heaven and disappearing from the human eye. The Nativity of the Virgin, again, takes place on September 7th, the very day when the same cluster, Virgo, reappears on the horizon. As to the connection between the Zodiacal sign and the Virgin, I will speak later. The word, “Lent” that comes from the German *Lenz*, meaning “Spring,” clearly shows why the festival in the Christian calendar comes in the days of spring. The Annunciation of the Virgin—the Angel’s salutation to the Virgin—occurs on March 25th, the day after the Spring Equinox. The day was to be fixed as a consequence of the day of Nativity being assigned to December 25th. Candlemas is the Festival of the Purification of the Virgin, which takes place on February 2nd, corresponding to the similar pagan festival of Juno Februata (Purified). It took place in the same month in Roman days, and included candle processions. The day allotted for the birth of John the Baptist is the day of the Autumnal Equinox. If Jesus had to represent the Sun in ascension, and his cousin the Sun in declension, the dates of their respective births could not better be chosen. After Christmas the sun increases in his light and warmth, and after June 23rd, the birthday of John the Baptist, he decreases. The force of the remarks becomes much more strengthened when we consider the following words, which the writer of John iii. 30 attributes to the Baptist: “He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease.”

### Virgin Birth: adoption of a popular creed

The Protestant Church does not recognize these ceremonies, but the religion reached them through hands that had to grapple with sun-worship, and they saw their victory in incorporating most of the current cult into their own faith in order to make it a popular religion.

The rebirth of the Sun on December 25th from a Virgin womb—and in like manner the birth of all Sun-Gods, Mithra, Osiris, Horus, Bacchus—is the theme of many a legend of the olden days. The Greeks, in the worship of Mithra at Rome, used to celebrate the birth of the luminary by a midnight service, coming out of the inner

shrine and crying: “The Virgin has brought forth, the light is waxing.”<sup>4</sup>

At the commencement of the Christian Era the Zodiacal constellation upon the eastern horizon was the sign Virgo. The constellation has always been represented by a woman with a sheaf of corn in her hand. On the Globe of Abuzar, the famous Arabian astronomer, the Virgin with the child has been portrayed with the same cluster. The figures of the infant Savior Horus and his Virgin Mother were also found on the margin of the Alexandrian Calendar, close to the same sign. The interior of the dome of the Temple of Denderah exhibited a map of the northern hemisphere of the sky and Zodiac, where again on the margin, close by the said constellation, stands a figure of Isis with Horus in her arms. This all goes to show that the Egyptians, as well as the other ancient astronomers, did recognize some connection between Virgo and the Virgin. The Virgo cluster being on the eastern horizon at the birth of the Sun, led to the idea of the birth of the deity from the Virgin Mother.

I saw the figure of Isis with the Sacred Infant in the Municipal Museum of Alexandria, and there I also found the figure of the Madonna and the Child, the only difference between the two being that Horus was on the knees of Isis, while the Child was in the arms of the Virgin. The temples of the two Mother Goddesses stood side by side in Alexandria in the fourth century of the Christian Era. The two ladies, though rivals to each other, received almost equal homage from the Christians and the Pagans of the day, their temples being equally frequented by the votaries of the two faiths.

The Emperor Hadrian, in a letter to Servianus concerning the inhabitants of Alexandria, remarks that “those who worship Serapis are likewise Christians; even those who style themselves the bishops of the Christ are devoted to Serapis (*Vosipiacus vit. Saturninus*).” Serapis was another conception of the Sun-God, as Macrabijs tells us in the following words: “The City of Alexandria pays almost frantic worship to Serapis and Isis; nevertheless, they show that all this veneration is merely offered to the Sun.” We read nothing of the Madonna and the Child, either in the evangelical record or in the writings of Paul and other apostles. The conception, most assuredly, came from Alexandria to the Western world, where the Mother of Goddess with the Child Redeemer Horus had been honored centuries before the Christian Era, and worshipped under the names of “Our Lady,” “Queen of Heaven,” “Mother Goddess” and so forth—words that were afterwards used in reference to Mary, the Mother Goddess.

Isis was not the only Virgin Mother worshipped in the olden days. Osiris had also been believed to be born of Neith, the Virgin of the World, as the Egyptians called her,

before Isis came to take her place. The sacred groves of Germany exhibited the image of the Goddess Hertha, a Virgin with a Child in her arms, in the old Teutonic days. She also gave birth to a child that was of Immaculate Conception. She was impregnated by the Heavenly Spirit.

Frigga conceived of the All-Father, Odin, bore a son, Balder of Scandinavia, called the Healer and Savior of mankind.<sup>5</sup>

The force of Cortez’s remark quoted elsewhere becomes significant when we read the following in Kingsborough’s famous book, *Antiquities of Mexico*:

An ambassador was sent from heaven on an embassy to a Virgin of Tulan, called Chimalman... announcing that it was the will of God that she should conceive a son without connection with man, and having delivered her the message, he rose and left the house; and as soon as he had left it, she conceived a son, without connection with man, who was called Quetzalcoatl, who, they say, is the god of air. Further, it is explained that Quetzalcoatl sacrificed himself, drawing forth his own blood with thorns, and that the word Quetzalcoatl means “our well-beloved son.”<sup>6</sup>

I think I have said enough to enable my readers to understand that the conception of the virgin-born God and the other features of the Christian mysteries cannot safely be ascribed to divine origin. Pagan literature is so full of it as to leave no doubt of itself being the origin of the Church mysteries. The Virgin Mother suckling her child is a common figure on the Mithraic monuments. So are other legends of these gods being born in a cave, which have been reported from Guatemala, the Antilles and other places in Central America.<sup>7</sup>

The Chinese had also a Mother Goddess Virgin, with a child in her arms.<sup>8</sup> The ancient Etruscans had the same.<sup>9</sup> In this connection Justin Martyr again comes with the same interesting apology when writing to the Emperor Adrian, the Devil being the only prop on which he could lay hands to strengthen him in his beliefs. He says:

It having reached the Devil’s ears that the prophets had foretold the coming of Christ (the Son of God), he set the heathen poets to bring forward a great many who should be called the sons of Jove. The Devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the true history of Christ was of the same character as the prodigious fables related of the sons of Jove... By declaring the Logos, the first begotten of God, our Master Jesus, to be born of a virgin, without any human mixture, we (Christians) say no more in this than what you (Pagans) say of those

whom you style the sons of Jove. For you need not be told what a parcel of sons the writers most in vague among you assign to Jove... As to the Son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be no more than man, yet the title of the son of God is very justifiable, upon account of his wisdom, considering that you (Pagans) have your Mercury in worship under the title of the Word, a messenger of God... As to his (Jesus) being born of a virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that... if Jupiter could send a parcel of sons out of virgin mothers; the Father in heaven assuredly could do the same at least in our case.<sup>10</sup>

The ancient literature of India also speaks of Virgin Mothers and their sons being worshipped.

The Gospel of St. Matthew no doubt makes the birth of Jesus a fulfillment of a prophecy by Isaiah,<sup>11</sup> which it quotes in the following words: "Behold a *virgin* shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."<sup>12</sup> But the oldest manuscripts of Isaiah do not read "virgin," but "young woman." And the original is not "shall conceive," but "is with child"—i.e. had already conceived. Moreover, it does not state that "they shall call" his name Emmanuel or Immanuel, but "thou shalt," it being a command to King Ahaz so to call a child about to be born; which child, as an encouragement to the King, Isaiah prophesied would be a boy, and therefore a sign of good luck. And the Child was Called—Jesus.

"The fact that in the later version of the Hebrew, such as the Septuagint and Vulgate, the word used for 'young woman' has been altered into 'virgin' is very significant. The misrepresentation of Isaiah's reference to a young woman, who, at the time the prophet spoke, was about to bear a child... is clear evidence of an attempt to connect, a presumably real Jesus with the Sun-God," all of whose other incarnations came from a Virgin Mother. The other circumstances mentioned in connection with the birth of Jesus lead to the same conclusion.

### Three (Heavenly) Kings

In other Gospels, Jesus is represented as being born in a stable, that stable being, according to some, in a cave. This is a reference to the fact that at the time of the birth of the Sun, the constellation directly under the earth was that of Capricornis, which was also called the stable of Augeas. Hence the saying of the Fathers that the Christ came as a second Hercules to clear out the stables of Augeas.<sup>13</sup>

We are told that the Magi came from the east in search of a king whose star they had seen in the east, and that star went before them and stood over where the young child was. Christians say that these Magi were three kings.

Now if, on a clear evening, about the commencement of a new year, we look eastward, we see the most glorious of all the constellations mounting the sky. And the three stars so conspicuously set together in Orion's belt, are pointing downwards to the east from which they came, as if signifying the advent of a marvel. "And the marvel comes. For in a direct line with those three stars, Sirius, the brightest of all the Host of Heaven, is soon seen rising in the East."<sup>14</sup>

The Egyptians used to set the Calendar by the heliacal rising of Sirius, and the Dog Star was accordingly known as the Herald of the Sun. And the old name given to the three stars in the belt of Orion was that of *the three Kings*. It was therefore true that the three Kings had "seen his star in the East," the herald proclaiming the advent of the "King of Kings." In the face of these facts of sky-scriptures—and they are facts, and not mere theories and conjectures—the birth of the Sun on December 25th from the Virgin Mother—the appearance of the Virgo,—Virgin— at that time on the eastern horizon (the constellation under the earth being Capricorn, called the stable of Augeas), and the rising of Sirius with the three stars in Orion's belt called three kings; could there be any doubt that the writers of the Synoptic Gospels received their inspiration more from the Mithraic cult than from the Holy Ghost, when they gave us the story of the birth of Jesus? The inference becomes conclusive when we find the phraseology of the Church in the West to be derived altogether from the same source.

### Son-of-God or merely another Sun-God?

I need not give here a detailed account of the other Sun-Gods, but I will mention some of the distinctive features of their stories which have a special bearing on certain of the Church beliefs. Osiris was born on December 29th. He was a *great traveler*. He tamed people *by gentleness* and not by force. He discovered corn and *wine*. He was *betrayed by Typhen, slain and dismembered*. He was *interred, but came again to life*. In the Mysteries of Osiris, his image was placed in a box and brought forth before the worshippers with cries of "*Osiris is risen!*"

Adonis, the Syrian God, born of a Virgin, was killed and rose again in the spring. Every year *the maidens wept for Adonis* (Ezekiel viii. 14), *and then rejoiced over his resurrection*. Attis, the Phrygian God, was also born of a Virgin named Nana. He was bled to death at the foot of a pine tree. *His blood renewed the fertility of the earth, and thus brought a new life to humanity*. He also rose from the dead... In celebrating his death and resurrection, his image was fastened to a pine tree on March 24th, and the day was called the "*Day of blood*," since on that day the deity was bled to death. The Image was then laid in a tomb with wailing and mourning, but the coming night changed sorrow to joy. The tomb was *found to be empty on the next day, when the festival of the*

*resurrection was celebrated.* These mysteries seem to have included sacramental meal and a baptism of blood.<sup>15</sup>

Quetzalcoatl, the Mexican Savior, was born of a Virgin, Chimalman. The Virgin Mother received the message of being the Mother of a Son without any connection with man, through an embassy from heaven. She conceived. Quetzalcoatl—the word in that language means “our beloved son”—also fasted forty days, and was tempted. He was crucified, when the sun was darkened and withheld its light. His second coming was looked for so eagerly that when Cortez appeared the Mexicans greeted him as the returning God.<sup>16</sup>

Bacchus, sometimes called Dionysius, was born of a virgin named Demeter on December 25th. Her other name was Semele.

Evil having spread over the earth, the God of Gods was begged to save mankind. Jupiter hearkened to the prayer, and declared that *his son will redeem the world from its misery.* He promised a *Liberator* to the earth, and Bacchus came as *Savior*. He was called *the only begotten son*. “It is I,” so says the Lord Bacchus to mankind, “who guide you; it is I who protect you, and who save you; I who am Alpha and Omega.”<sup>17</sup> He was also a great traveler, and brought the gift of wine to mankind. It will remind the reader of the first miracle of Jesus when he converted water into wine. “Suffering was common to all the sons of Jove.” As Justin Martyr says, and for this reason they were called “The Slain Ones,” “Saviors” and “Redeemers.” Bacchus was also slain for redeeming humanity, and was therefore called “The Slain One,” “The Sin Bearer,” “The Redeemer.” His death, followed by resurrection, was celebrated with festivities of a horrible nature. Then was celebrated the representation of *the passion of Bacchus, dead, descended into hell and risen.* Years ago, I could not understand why the birthday of the Prince of Righteousness and an ascetic, as Jesus was, could be celebrated in the mode in which it has been celebrated in Christendom from Medieval times. But if the story of Bacchus—like those of other Sun-Gods—be indeed the genesis of the story of Jesus, it is not improbable that a portion of the Bacchanalian orgies found its way into the Christmas festivities in certain quarters.

If these stories existed in the various cults of the Sun-Gods, a fact not only discovered but admitted by Tertullian, St. Jerome, Justin Martyr and others at the very time when the Mithraic and other sister religions of the sun-worship were at their prime in countries where Christianity had been introduced first, one might be excused for inclining towards skepticism and confessing inability to accept the genuineness of the Gospel story of Jesus. History, no doubt, repeats events; coincidence may occur in some instances, in the actions and words of great men (as in the case of Jesus and

Buddha); but the repetition, or coincidence of almost all the distinctive points of Christ’s life with those in the lives of the Sun-Gods are too numerous and curious to admit of such explanation. I have already said that the similarity between the various cults of star-and nature-worship is natural enough. The various phenomena and phases of nature, including the sun, are, and will be, the same; and they occur on the same dates everywhere in the Northern Hemisphere. The various founders of the Pagan mysteries may be distinctly located—one in Mexico and Peru, and the other in Persia and Ireland—with no means of communication and transmission between them; they may be separated by the impassable barriers of the olden days, but their hearts will throb with the same impulses. They will feel and imagine in the same manner, and formulate their impressions in the same terms. Had Jesus been one of the Sun-Gods, as he has been most unfortunately portrayed by some of his zealous followers—the builders of the Church in the early days—the position is quite tenable. But this great Messenger of Allah came to demolish Paganism, as the Quran says. His Church says the same. His story should be quite different and distinct that that of the deities of the ancient days. Let St. Augustine speak; “We hold this (Christmas) day holy, not like the Pagans, because of the birth of the Sun, but because of the birth of Him who made it.” And there are many other animadversions of the early Fathers, cursing the Devil for introducing into his cult almost all the Church mysteries, as shown above. This does not explain the case. On the other hand, it points to the real genesis of the Church mysteries.

### Simple Coincidence or Clear and Convincing Evidence

In some of the Gospels, Jesus is reported to have been born in a stable, and the others say that the stable was in a cave. The stable of Augeas was also said to be in a cave—a poetic representation of the dome of heaven. In those days the constellation directly under the earth at the winter Solstice was that of Capricorn, which was also called the Stable of Augeas. The fact has been admitted, in a way, by Justin Martyr when he says that the birth of Jesus in the stable was foreshadowed by the birth of Mithra in the cave of Zoroastrianism. But the others see the reverse of his proposition when they read the two events in the light of chronology. It may befit him to say that Christ was born when the sun takes its birth in the Augean stable, coming as a second Hercules to cleanse a foul world. Yet Hercules, after all, was not an historical personality, but a mythical conception of the Sun-worship cult. Moreover, the other point of resemblance of the Christian mysteries with those of the sky-scriptures are too conspicuous to admit of the explanation with which the Early Fathers satisfied skepticism. The birth of almost all the Sun-Gods—Apollo, Bacchus, Hercules, Mithra, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Horus, Baal, Quetzalcoatl—from Virgin Mothers, and on the same date, or within a day or two there-

of; the massacre of the innocents at that time and the flight into a distant country (the same we read of the Indian God Krishna); the death through crucifixion or otherwise, but always by the enemies of light and for the benefit of humanity; the coming of the weeping virgins to the grace; the empty grave; the resurrection; almost all of the gods accepted as redeemers of mankind and mediators between man and God; the number of their kind and mediators between man and God; the number of their disciples or of their works—twelve—the number of the Zodiacal signs or of months the same; the betrayal by one of the twelve—the sign at the entry into which the declination of the sun reaches its climax; the figure of the serpent, or scorpion as symbol of their enemy—the scorpion being the Zodiacal sign—the entry of the sun into which causes its declination. Again, some of the Church festivals strengthen the presumption likely to arise from the above coincidences—Candlemas, Lent, the Nativity of the Virgin, her Assumption and Annunciation, all these festivals of the Catholic Calendar being celebrated on the same date and in nearly the same way as in the olden days. ■

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- 17 See Beausobre, also Higgin's *Anacalypsis*, vol. i. p. 322.

## Jihad in Islam

By Dr. Mohammed Ahmad

[This article was presented at the Symposium on "Islam and World Peace" held in Columbus Ohio, July 31, 2004, in conjunction with the Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore (USA).]

### Misrepresentation of the Concept of Jihad

A Google search of the word "jihad" produces approximately one million, one hundred and thirty thousand entries, indicating this subject's popularity. Before I start my discussion on the subject of *Jihad in Islam*, I would like to draw your attention to some quotations I have gathered. These quotations reflect the evolution and misrepresentation of this subject during the past two decades and identify the factors behind this development. I will then discuss the subject in light of the teachings of the Holy Quran, the actions and the sayings (*hadith*) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and will conclude by examining the role the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement and its founder played in explaining and furthering the correct Islamic perspective on the subject.

### Quotation from Attorney-General Ashcroft in a radio interview with columnist Cal Thomas:

Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for Him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die for you.

### Quotation from the book *Unveiling Islam* by Evangelist brothers Caner and Caner:

Talking heads on television continually pass along the politically correct notion that **Jihad** means 'internal struggle for piety' and not military engagement. Yet it does not require a cleric's teaching to see that the Qur'an promises Paradise to those who die in battle for Islam more certainly than it promises salvation to anyone else. The Hadith makes it transparent that jihad has its primary characteristic a bloody struggle involving military battles...The promise of eternal security is the ultimate motive behind the passion for Allah in the eager young Muslim warrior. He follows the footsteps of the messenger Muhammad, who fought for the cause of Allah. He is obeying the noble words of the Qur'an and Hadith, which legitimize his use of the sword.

### Quotation from Bin Laden (as presented in *Unveiling Islam*)

In their effort to link the infamous day of 9-11 to the teachings of Islam, Caner and Caner, as cited above, state in the introduction to their book 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 Muhammad.'

After quoting more excerpts from the tape Caner and Caner conclude with the statement: "For those not familiar with the Qur'an and Hadith, the tape was a shock. For those of us who know these foundations of Muslim faith, it was sad validation."

### Quotations from the News Media

In a [CNN](#) World Affairs report by Ralph Begleiter, airing on March 7, 1999, entitled *Legacy of Afghanistan Haunts Both Cold War Superpowers*, the following dialogue transpired:

In the Afghanistan war, Washington, together with allies in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, had covertly trained and equipped **Muslim zealots** to help defeat the Soviets.

In September 1986, the first U.S.-made Stinger missiles arrived in Afghanistan, courtesy of the CIA.

MILTON BEARDEN, FORMER CIA CHIEF IN PAKISTAN: The turnaround in the war was almost instantaneous.

BEARDEN: The first Stinger shoot-downs of MI-24 (ph) helicopters sent a shockwave through the Soviet air force, and by late 1986 and into 1987, the **Mujahedin** were bringing down one aircraft per day...

MCINTYRE: Sources say the missiles were funneled to the Afghan resistance through Pakistan's intelligence agency. The CIA believes some were skimmed off by Pakistan before they were distributed to as many as seven different **Mujahedin groups**, groups then considered freedom fighters, groups who now provide refuge to Osama bin Laden, dubbed a terrorist kingpin by the U.S.

CARDAMONE: I think the worst thing that could happen would be for Osama bin Laden to have control over a handful of these that are very effective. They're among the best of the type in the world. It's just frightening what could happen with these missiles.

MCINTYRE: By the time the Soviets withdrew in 1989, the U.S. had smuggled some 2,000 Stingers to the **Mujahedin** by way of Pakistan. In the early '90s, the CIA, according to sources, managed to covertly buy back about 100 Stingers, paying as much as \$150,000 apiece for a missile that originally retailed for \$55,000. A decade later, at least 200 of the deadly missiles are still unaccounted for and now pose a potential threat to the United States and its interests around the world.

[Washington Post](#) investigators report that during the past twenty years the US has spent millions of dollars produc-

ing fanatical schoolbooks, which were then distributed in Afghanistan.

The primers, which were filled with talk of **jihad** and featured drawings of guns, bullets, soldiers and mines, have served since then [i.e., since the violent destruction of the Afghan secular government in the early 1990s] as the Afghan school system's core curriculum. Even the Taliban used the American-produced books... [*Washington Post*, 23 March 2002 (1)].

According to the *Washington Post*, the U.S. is now "...wrestling with the unintended consequences of its successful strategy of stirring Islamic fervor to fight communism."

[BBC News](#) reported on April 1, 2003 that the following message by Saddam Hussein was read out on Iraqi state television by Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf. In the statement, Saddam urges 'jihad' by stating:

...Yes, O brothers, for ages and ages, **religious scholars** could not reach such a consensus as they have reached today - that this aggression against the fortress of faith is an aggression on religion, wealth, honor and life and is an aggression against the homes of Islam.

Therefore, **jihad (holy war)** is a duty in facing them and whoever dies on its fields is rewarded by heaven.

Seize it (**jihad**), O brothers, for within it are one of two good deeds for the sake of God and great principles [*BBC NEWS*, Tuesday, 1 April, 2003, 22:05 GMT 23:05 UK].

I have deliberately put in bold the words, *Jihad* and *Mujahedin* in these quotations to underscore how terrorists, politicians, media and the extreme evangelical movement have either misunderstood, or deliberately misused the word *Jihad* to further their own agenda. These quotations also show how this misinterpretation has led to the greatest tragedies of our time. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out how the seeds of the worldwide terrorism we face today were sown and nurtured in the cold war era, eventually leading to the horror of nine eleven.

These quotations are meant to convey the message that, as Muslims, we are duty bound to understand the true meaning of *Jihad* as it applies to us, and to convey its real meaning to the rest of the world. This is the only way to advance the cause of our faith and our own spiritual reformation.

### The True meaning of Jihad

If one were to pick up an ordinary dictionary of the Arabic language, the meaning of the word *Jihad* could have been easily understood. Imam Raghīb (famous lexicologist) explains that the word *Jihad* is derived from *jahd* or *juhd* meaning *ability*, *exertion* or *power*, and *Jihad* and

*Mujahida* mean *the exerting of one's power in repelling the enemy*. The same authority then goes on to say: “*Jihad* is of three kinds; viz., the carrying on of a struggle: 1. against a visible enemy, 2. against the devil, and 3. against self (*nafs*). According to Lane's Lexicon, *jahada*, properly signifies *the using or exerting of one's utmost power, efforts, endeavors or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation*; and this is of three kinds, namely a visible enemy, the devil, and one's self; all of which are included in the term as used in the Kuran. The word *Jihad* is, therefore, far from being synonymous with the word *war*; the meaning of *Jihad* being “war undertaken for the propagation of Islam”, which is supposed by many Western writers to be the primary significance of the word, is unknown equally to the Arabic language and the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

We will discuss this subject in light of the Quran and Hadith to clarify this misrepresentation.

### Jihad in The Holy Quran

It is clear from the Qur'an that the word *jihad* has been used therein to mean ‘striving’ or ‘exerting’. For instance:

- “Those who strive (*jaahada*) for Us, We guide them in Our ways” (26:69). Here the meaning is to carry on a spiritual struggle to attain nearness to God.
- “Whoever strives (*jaahada*), he only strives for his own self” (29:6). The meaning here again is struggle for self-purification.
- “We have enjoined on man to do good to his parents. But if they *strive* (*jaahadaa*) with you to worship that of which you have no knowledge [i.e. false gods], then obey them not” (29:8). Here the meaning is that of ‘arguing’ or ‘disputing’, and is applied to an act of unbelievers.
- “Strive for God a true striving (*jihad*):” (22:78); “Obey not the unbelievers and hypocrites, and strive against them a mighty striving (*jihad*) with it [i.e. the Qur'an]” (25:52). Both of these verses give the command to conduct *jihad*. The first refers to a *jihad* for attaining nearness to God. The second mentions a *jihad* against the deniers of Islam, not by the sword, but by means of the Qur'an itself. It is called a “mighty jihad”, and is a constant duty.

The Qur'an has also used the word *qu'ood* to mean the opposite of the word *jihad*, thereby clarifies the meaning of *jihad* itself. For instance:

Those believers who *sit back* (*qaidoon*), not disabled by injury, are not equal to those who do *jihad* in the way of God (*mujahidoon*) with their wealth and lives. (4:95)

Accordingly, *Qu'ood* is to sit back and be lazy, whereas *Jihad*, in contrast to this, means ‘making a full effort’ even at the cost of one's life. Islam's greatest jihad is, therefore, not by means of the sword, but by means of the Holy Qur'an, that is, a missionary effort to establish Islam. We are further told that there should always be among Muslims a party who invite people to Islam:

And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful (3:103).

Thus the missionary jihad of Islam is to be carried on in all circumstances. The sword could never be used to force Islam on others, compulsion in religion being forbidden in clear words: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2: 256).

Imam Fakhur-ud-Din Razi, the great classical commentator of the Quran, writes in his renowned exposition of the Quran:

As for the verse, ‘Strive against them a great *jihad*’, some say that this refers to efforts in preaching. Others say that it refers to fighting. Some others say it includes both. The first meaning is the most accurate because this verse was revealed at Makka, and the command to fight came after the emigration (*Tafsir Kabir*; vol. iv, p. 330).

Similarly, another classical commentary, the *Ruh al-Bayan*, comments on the hadith, “The best *jihad* is to speak a word of truth to a tyrant”, by stating: “It is the best because *jihad* with arguments and proofs is a *jihad* which is greater as compared to *jihad* with the sword which is a lesser *jihad*.”

### Example of The Holy Prophet At Makka

Although the Holy Prophet Muhammad had received revelations ordering *jihad* while he was still a resident of Makka and before the emigration to Madina [“Strive for God a true striving (*jihad*)” (22:78); “Obey not the unbelievers and hypocrites, and strive against them a mighty striving (*jihad*) with it (i.e. the Qur'an)” (25:52)], he did not raise the sword against the unbelievers who were bitterly persecuting him and his followers. Notwithstanding, he was most certainly conducting a *jihad* in Makka in obedience to these verses. This was a *jihad* of following the word of God and propagating the message of Islam. This mode of conduct clearly proves that *jihad* was not equivalent to *war* in the Holy Prophet's eyes. During this period of persecution at Makka, when some of his Companions asked permission to fight, the Holy Prophet said: I have been commanded to forgive, so do not fight (Hadith collection *Nasa'i*, Book of Jihad).

### Example of the Holy Prophet At Madina

The Muslims emigrated to Madina and took refuge there, yet their enemies from Makka did not leave them alone.

They threatened the then chief of Madina, Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, in a letter as follows:

O people of Madina, you have given refuge to our adversary. We swear by God that if you do not fight them or expel them, we shall come against you and kill your fighting men and capture your women (*Abu Dawud*, vol. ii, p. 495).

Not content with this threat, the unbelievers of Makka decided to attack Madina and annihilate Islam and the Muslims by the sword. It was then only that God permitted the Muslims to conduct *jihad* with the sword, because not to do so would have meant suicide for the Muslims. Therefore, in year 2 of the *Hijra* (emigration to Madina) the following Quranic verse was revealed:

Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made, because they have been wronged — and God is well able to help them. Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly, only for saying, ‘Allah is our Lord’. And if God had not allowed one group of people to repel another, then there would have been pulled down cloisters and synagogues and churches and mosques, in which God’s name is remembered (22:39,40).

Four conditions are given here for allowing *jihad* by the sword: 1) Fighting has to be initiated by the unbelievers, as is clear from the words “those upon whom war is made”; 2) There has to be extreme persecution of the Muslims — “because they have been wronged”; 3) The aim of the unbelievers has to be the destruction of Islam and the Muslims and freedom of worship, as is clear from the words “there would have been pulled down cloisters and synagogues and churches and mosques in which God’s name is remembered.”; 4) The object of the Muslims must only be self-defense and protection, as shown by the words “if God had not allowed one people to *repel* another”.

The only other verse allowing fighting in the Quran states: “Fight in the way of God those who fight you, but do not go over the limit” (2:190). Hence, the command in the Holy Quran to fight, or conduct *jihad* with the sword, is subject to the above conditions.

### Invitation to Islam

The Holy Prophet himself wrote letters to kings in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of *Hijra*, inviting them to accept Islam. For instance:

Ibn Abbas reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) wrote to the Caesar inviting him to Islam, and sent his letter to him with Dihyah al-Kalbi, and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) ordered him to make it over to the Chief of Busra that he might send it to the Caesar”. (B.56: 102).

It should be noted that this hadith forms part of the chapter on *Jihad* in *Bukhari*, again illustrating the wide sense in which *jihad* was interpreted by Muslims. The subject matter of the letter written, presented in the next hadith, should be treated as a supplement to the previous hadith.

Ibn-Abbas reported...And this (letter) ran as follows: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad, the servant of Allah and His Messenger, to Heraclius, the Chief of the Roman Empire. Peace be with him who follows the guidance. After this, I invite thee with invitation to Islam. Become a Muslim and thou wilt be in peace - Allah will give thee a double reward; but if thou turnest away, on thee will be the sin of thy subjects. And, O followers of the book! Come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah, and that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah; but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.” (B.1: 1).

As is can be seen, in none of these letters is the use of force even implied.

### Complete Religious Tolerance

The Holy Prophet Muhammad taught that every person is responsible only to God for his beliefs, and no man is entitled to question or persecute another for conscience sake. The Prophet condemned all religious persecution when he said that people will not be punished for their disbelief or erroneous beliefs in this life, but rather in the life after death. In this life, he continued, they have only to account for their actions. Thus, he preached a religious toleration that had never been known to the world before.

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) put the religion of universal toleration into practice; he awarded protection of life and property to the followers of other religions in the same way as he did in the case of a Muslim. He permitted them to follow their own religion and observe their own rites.

The Holy Prophet granted numerous concessions to Christians. No conquering race of faith has given to its subjects a nobler guarantee than is to be found in the following words of the Prophet:

To the Christians of Najran and the surrounding territories the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion and their property to the present as well as the absent and others besides; there shall be no interference with (the practice of) their faith or their observances; nor any change in their rights or privileges; no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric, nor any monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his priesthood, and they shall continue to enjoy everything,

great and small, as heretofore; no image or cross shall be destroyed: they shall not oppress nor be oppressed: they shall not practice the rights of blood-vengeance as in the days of ignorance: no tithes shall be levied from them nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for the troops (Syed Ameer Ali, *Spirit of Islam*).

Similar concessions were granted to the Zoroastrians in Arabia. I'll give a few extracts from the Prophet's letter to Farrukh bin Shakhshan, the head of a fire-temple:

This is the letter from the Apostle of God (may God bless him!) to the freed man Farrukh B. Shakhshan, brother of Salman Farsi (may God be pleased with him!), and to his family and posterity that he may have, as long as they exist, regardless of which of them will turn Moslem or will remain faithful to his (original) creed.

This is my letter: verily upon him (i.e., Farrukh B. Shakhshan) be the protection of God, also upon his sons with regard to their lives and property, in the lands in which they live, plains or hills; as well as freedom of use of the wells and pastures which they possess. They must not be treated unjustly or oppressed. And those who this my letter will read must protect them (i.e., the Zoroastrians), leave them free, prevent offences from others, and show not hostility to them by insult or by using force.

They are entirely free in their possessions of fire-temples as well as the land and other property attached to the latter. No one also should restrict them in the use of rich dress, the use of stirrups, construction of buildings or stables, performing burials, or observing anything which is accepted in their religion or sects. They must be treated better than all other (non-Muslim) peoples under protection (*Ahad Namah*, published by the Iran League, Bombay).

Appreciation of this spirit of tolerance is best illustrated by the memorable sentence of the Nestorian Patriarch Isho' Yahb III (A.D. 650-660) in which he stated:

The Arabs to whom God has given at this time the government of the world,... do not persecute the Christian religion; on the contrary, they favour it, honour our priests and the saints of the Lord, and confer benefits on churches and monasteries.

### Jihad in The Hadith

Just as the Holy Quran has used the word *jihad* in a very wide sense, so to is it used in Hadith. For instance:

- The Holy Prophet said: Do *jihad* against the idolators with your wealth, lives and tongues" (*Mishkat*, Book of *Jihad*, ch. 1, sec. 2).
- The Holy Prophet was asked: Which *jihad* is best? He said: He who does *jihad* against the idolators with his wealth and life (ibid.).

- A group of Muslim soldiers came to the Holy Prophet [from a battle]. He said: Welcome, you have come from the lesser *jihad* to the greater *jihad*. It was said: What is the greater *jihad*? He said: The striving of a servant against his low desires (*Al-Tasharraf*, Part I, p. 70).
- The Holy Prophet said: The greatest *jihad* is to speak the word of truth to a tyrant (*Mishkat*, Book of Rulership and Judgment, ch. 1, sec. 2).
- The Holy Prophet said: Do *jihad* against your desires as you do *jihad* against your foes (*Mufradat*, under root *j-h-d*, p. 100).
- The Holy Prophet said: Do *jihad* against the unbelievers with your hands and tongues (ibid.).
- *Jihad* involves four things: enjoining the doing of good, forbidding the doing of evil, speaking the truth in a situation of trial, and having enmity for the wrong-doer.
- The most excellent *jihad* is the Hajj. (*Bukhari*, Book of Sacrifices, 25:4)
- The *mujahid* [one engaged in *jihad*] is he who strives against his own self to obey God.

These hadith make it clear that *jihad* means to exert oneself to the utmost, whether by means of one's wealth or tongue or hands or life, whether it is against one's desires or a visible enemy, whether its aim is to attain nearness to God or to propagate the word of God. To summarize, the Holy Quran and Hadith speak of three kinds of *jihad*: 1) A great *jihad*; 2) The greatest *jihad*; 3) A lesser *jihad*. The first two are to be undertaken constantly, while the third, which includes *jihad* by means of the sword, is only undertaken if specific conditions are satisfied.

### Hadith to be interpreted in light of the Quran

Misinterpretation of Hadith has occurred due to the disregard of the most fundamental rule of Hadith interpretation; that is, interpreting it subject to the principles set by the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Prophet himself laid down this rule: "My sayings do not abrogate the word of Allah, but the word of Allah can abrogate my sayings" (*Al-Mishkat al-Masabih* 1:6, iii).

Disregarding this principle rule can lead to misinterpretation and misdeeds. This is well illustrated by the Bin Laden statement referred to earlier:

**Quotation from "Unveiling Islam":** "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 Muhammad."

Let us closely look at this Hadith and then study it in light of the Holy Quran. The Hadith states:

Ibn Umar reported, The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said: "I have been commanded that I should fight these people till they bear witness that there is no god but Allah and keep up prayer and pay zakat. When they do this, their blood and their property shall be safe with me except as Islam requires, and their reckoning is with Allah (B.2: 16)."

It should first of all be noted that the hadith begins with the words, "I have been commanded", and the command to fight is contained in the Holy Qur'an 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 Holy Qur'an). Muslims, therefore, could not resort to fighting unless an enemy was the first to assume hostilities. Keeping this in mind clearly indicates that what the hadith means is that fighting begun under these conditions is to cease when the enemy accepts Islam. Bukhari himself hints at this when he quotes the hadith under the 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. Misinterpretation of this Hadith clearly shows the willful ignorance of both parties, i.e., Bin Laden and the hostile evangelical composers of the Book, "Unveiling Islam."

#### Directions Relating to War

The Holy Prophet's directions to his soldiers also show that the wars he engaged in were not due to any desire to enforce religion. For instance, "Abd Allah ibn Umar reports that in a certain battle fought by the Holy Prophet a woman was discovered among the slain. On this, the Holy Prophet forbade the killing of women and children (in wars)" (Bu. 56:147, 148). Hadith relating to this prohibition are repeated very often in all collections (See: AD. 15:112; Tr. 20:18; Ah. I, p. 256; II, pp. 22, 23; III, p. 488; M. 32:7). Now if the wars of Islam had been undertaken with the object of forcing Islam upon a people, why should women and children have been exempt? It would rather have been easier to win them over by holding the sword over their heads, because women and children naturally do not have the power to resist, like men who can fight. The fact that there is an express direction against killing three fourths of the population, that is all women and children must be in every community, shows that the propagation of religion was far from being the object of these wars. In some Hadith the word *'asif* is added to *women* and *children*, showing that there was also a prohibition against killing people who were taken along with the army as "labour units" (Ah. III, p. 488; IV, p. 178; AD. 15:112). There is yet another Hadith prohibiting the killing of *shaikh fāni* (very old man) who is unable to fight (MM. 18:5-ii). Monks were also not to be

molested (Ah. I, p. 300). It was only in a night attack that the Holy Prophet excused the chance killing of a woman or child saying, "They are among them" (Bu. 56:146); what he meant was that it was a thing which could not be avoided, for at night children and women could not be distinguished from the soldiers.

The above examples may be supplemented by some others taken from Sayyid Amir 'Ali's *Spirit of Islam*. The following instructions were given to the troops dispatched against the Byzantines by the Holy Prophet: "In avenging the injuries inflicted upon us, molest not the harmless inmates of domestic seclusion; spare the weakness of the female sex; injure not the infant at the breast, or those who are ill in bed. Abstain from demolishing the dwellings of the unresisting inhabitants; destroy not the means of their subsistence, nor their fruit trees; and touch not the palm" (p. 81).

#### Prisoners of War

The treatment of prisoners of war, as laid down in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, also bears evidence of the fact that the idea of enforcement of Islam by the sword is entirely foreign to the conception of Islamic warfare. If the wars, during the time of the Holy Prophet or early Caliphate, had been prompted by the desire of propagating Islam by force, this object could easily have been attained by forcing Islam upon prisoners of war who fell into the hands of the Muslims. Yet this the Holy Qur'an does not allow, expressly laying down that they must be set free:

So when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, smite the necks; then when you have overcome them, make them prisoners, and afterwards set them free as a favour or for ransom until the war lays down its burdens (47:4).

It will be seen from this that the taking of prisoners was allowed only as long as war conditions prevailed; and even when the prisoners are taken they cannot be kept so permanently, but must be set free either as a favour or at the utmost by taking ransom. The Holy Prophet carried this injunction into practice in his lifetime. In the battle of Hunain, six thousand prisoners of the Hawazin tribe were taken, and they were all set free simply as an act of favour (Bu. 40:7; IJ-H. III, p. 132). A hundred families of Bani Mustaliq were taken as prisoners in the battle of Muraisi', all being set at liberty without ransom being paid (IJ-H. III, p. 66). Seventy prisoners were taken in the battle of Badr, and it was only in this case that ransom was exacted, but the prisoners were granted their freedom while war with the Quraish was yet in progress (AD. 15:122; Ah. I, p. 30). The form of ransom adopted in the case of some of these prisoners was that they should be entrusted with some work connected with teaching others some form of knowledge (Ah. I, p. 247; ZI, p. 534). When war ceased and peace was established, all war-prisoners are to be set free,

according to the verse quoted above. It is recorded that a prisoner of war testified that he was kept in a family whose people gave him bread, while they themselves had to live on dates (IJ-H. II, p. 287). Therefore, prisoners of war were not only set free but, as long as they were kept prisoners, they were kept honourably.

### **Jihad — today's situation and a hundred years ago.**

There are amazing parallels between the situation today and over a hundred years ago when the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), began his mission of presenting the religion of Islam to the world. One of the most formidable obstacles he faced was that there was a slur and stigma widely prevailing against Islam relating to the concept of *jihad*. It was alleged, mainly by Christian and Western critics, that Islam tells its followers to indulge in acts of violence against people of other faiths and that it highly commends and extols those of its followers who perpetrate such violence and promises them a place in paradise in the next life. On the one hand this was thrown as an accusation against Islam, but on the other a handful of Muslim religious leaders and their followers reinforced exactly the same idea by their statements and their actions, that Islam does indeed allow, encourage and urge the use of violence and shedding of blood in order to conquer and subdue people of other religions.

This slur was not only causing hatred and prejudice against Islam in the world, and hindering the progress and understanding of it, but it meant that when someone like the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement arose with the mission of spreading Islam it was suspected that their objective was to start an armed uprising to overthrow the existing rulers by violence and acts of terrorism. So the Founder of this Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, had to explain in detail, and repeatedly, that the popular notion of jihad in the minds of people, whether non-Muslims or a large section of Muslims, was entirely contrary to the real teachings of Islam. Reading his lengthy statements on this subject, one striking point is made plain: he is very anxious to convey his message to Muslims of other Islamic countries, outside his own country India, that they should reject the wrong concept of jihad.

### **Position of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad on Jihad**

Hazrat Mirza had written:

I wrote books in Arabic and Persian in order to spread this teaching of the prohibition of *jihad* to other countries, thousands of rupees being spent on their printing and publication. All those books were published in *Arabia, the lands of Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Baghdad and Afghanistan*. I believe some day these will show their effect. (*Kitab al-Bariyya*, p. 7–8)

Amazingly, these are the very countries in the news nowadays in connection with the wrong and twisted doctrine of jihad. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement sent good advice to these countries for their own benefit, a hundred years ago. Perhaps the All-Knowing Allah had shown him the dangerous consequences that may befall these countries as a result of pursuing the wrong concept of jihad.

Hazrat Mirza's Urdu Pamphlet *The British Government and Jihad* is also very much applicable today to the relations between Muslims and Western governments. In this publication, Hazrat Mirza explains that the Holy Prophet was not the first to raise the sword, yet when he did it was only after suffering intense persecution from his enemies for a long time. His followers also acted on the same principle. They showed such patience and perseverance and restraint that there is no other example of it in the world. However, this was not because they were weak or cowardly or unable to retaliate. They were courageous, brave and strong people. This was proved after they were permitted to fight, when they fought against enormous odds and won. So they displayed patience and restraint while possessing the capability and skill of fighting in battle. During this period of persecution, the Holy Prophet never tried to think of some means of fighting back but told his followers that Allah had commanded him to show patience. Hazrat Mirza then asks: As Muslims have this most excellent example of forbearance and restraint, of which they can be proud over the whole world, then to discard this example is the height of foolishness and a great misfortune by your own hands. Then he goes on to depict the kind of atrocities that are perpetrated in the name of Islam and religion. He argues that the ignorant religious leaders have greatly deceived the masses and declared acts of brutality, cruelty and inhumanity to be the key to attaining paradise, and then poses the question:

Is it a virtuous deed that there is a man going about in the market place, we have no connection with him so much so that we don't know his name and he doesn't know our name, but despite this we take a shot at him intending to kill him? Is this religious behaviour?

He then contrasts this type of behaviour with those holy early Muslims whom Allah instructed in Makka not to respond with violence even if they were cut to pieces and states:

Alas, today the religious leaders have forgotten all those events, and think that to fire a gun at an innocent man constitutes Islam.

He again asks:

It is a matter of regret and of shame that a man whom we do not know at all, who has no enmity with us,

and he is going about his lawful business, we shoot him dead and in an instant make his wife a widow, his children fatherless and his house a place of mourning. Is such killing taught in the Quran or Hadith? Can any Muslim religious leader answer?

Today, the ignorant ones have merely heard the word *jihad* and are using it as a pretext and cover for satisfying their own selfish ends, or purely out of fanaticism and lunacy are perpetrating bloodshed. In those days the wrong view of *jihad* was being propagated particularly in the North-Western Provinces of India, adjacent to Afghanistan, and within Afghanistan itself. Referring to it in this book, Hazrat Mirza advised the king of Afghanistan to gather a forum of learned, distinguished Islamic scholars to discuss the doctrine of *jihad*, and then through these scholars to educate the general public of the country on the error of the misconceived view of *jihad*. He proposed that books should also be published on this subject and widely distributed. In this way, he explained, the fervour for indulging in acts of violence in the name of *jihad* will be reduced. It would be a great service by a Muslim ruler, he says, to get the general Muslim public freed from the clutches of the ignorant religious leaders who are inciting them to commit violence under the name of *jihad*.

Hazrat Mirza, therein, also points out to the British government of India that the second reason why these atrocities are being committed, in the name of becoming a hero or martyr for the religion of Islam, is that the Christian and Western critics of Islam have reinforced the false idea that Islam teaches this kind of *jihad* through their books and magazines spread throughout the country. This, he says, has led to many ignorant fanatics who know nothing of their own religion to actually believe that it is an act of great reward to kill the unbelievers. These writings have damaged harmony and reconciliation in the country, and sown the seeds of enmity between the communities. To deal with this problem, he advised the government to follow the example of the Turkish government (the biggest and main Muslim government of that time) which adopted a trial measure that for a few years it would be prohibited for any religious faction, in their writings or speeches, to make any mention of other religions, but only to teach the good points of its own religion. In this way, new discords will not develop, old grudges will gradually be forgotten, and people will turn towards mutual harmony and concord.

In another publication, addressing the government of his time, Hazrat Mirza has summarized the teachings of Islam on the point regarding the use of violence against others in support of one's religion in the following way:

The Quran teaches that Muslims, bearing the persecution and pain inflicted upon them, must invite others to the truth with gentleness. In particular with

regard to Christians the Holy Quran instructs: "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them in the best manner" (16:126), best manner meaning politely and in a civilized way. The truth does not stand in need of force to spread it. Use of force actually proves that your arguments are weak. God also revealed to His Holy Prophet: "Be patient as are men of resolution patient", meaning that the Holy Prophet should show such patience that it is no less than the sum total of the patience shown by all the previous prophets. Then God also revealed: "There is no compulsion in religion". And again He said that the true believers are those who "restrain their anger and forgive people". Can the God Who gives this teaching also say that you should kill those who don't accept your religion, rob them of their property and make their homes desolate? This is only the misconception of the ignorant among the common Muslim religious leaders and the unwise Christian and Western critics of Islam, which is groundless and without foundation.

#### Message to Members of his Movement

It has been shown by the foregoing that it is the *jihad* of "self-purification" that is a fundamental, permanent and unconditional part of Islam. He writes:

Those who join my army, I order them to give up these misconceived ideas of *jihad* with the sword, and to purify their hearts, develop and nurture their feelings of mercy towards all humankind and be helpers of those in distress and suffering. They should spread peace on the earth, as this is how their religion will spread. Be not surprised as to how this can happen. For just as God has created the modern inventions of the present times for the physical needs of man, similarly He will meet the spiritual needs of mankind by causing the light and the message of truth to spread widely and far by means of these very ways of communication and transport. ■

#### PRIMARY SOURCES:

- 1 *The Religion of Islam* by Maulana Muhammad Ali.
- 2 *The Ahmaddiyya Case* by Maulana Hafiz Sher Muhammad, edited by Dr. Zahid Aziz.
- 3 *The Ideal Prophet* by Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din.
- 4 *Speech at the A.A.I.L. U.S Convention, August 2002 Convention, August 2002* by Zahid Aziz, Editor *The Light*.

**Note:** For key to the abbreviated references of Hadith, refer to *Religion of Islam* by Maulana Muhammad Ali.

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